

Your sexual health records

Information for patients

The way we store sexual health information is changing. This leaflet answers some of the questions you may have about the introduction of our new electronic health record and the storing of your sexual health records. If you have any other questions or concerns, please speak to the team caring for you.

From 5 October 2023, King's College Hospital (KCH) and Guy's and St Thomas (GSTT) NHS Foundation Trusts are introducing a new electronic health record. This system will be used across all departments in both Trusts, including in sexual health, contraception and HIV services. This will affect our clinics at Camberwell Sexual Health Centre, the Caldecot Centre, King's offsite HIV Clinics, Beckenham Beacon Sexual Health and HIV Service, Burrell Street Sexual Health Clinic and the Harrison Wing at Guy's Hospital.

This means that your sexual health records can, for the first time, be stored alongside your general health records. Your sexual health records can be stored under your main hospital number or NHS number. Having one health record with all your information stored in one place is much safer for your care and will allow you to benefit from supportive technologies (such as those used to deliver results, view letters and track and change appointments). By joining up your records in this way, it allows your sexual health doctor or nurse to easily access all your records which could be relevant to your attendance at the clinic.

Importantly, however, your sexual health attendance record will be protected from view from doctors, nurses or other staff who do not work within the sexual health clinic. This means they will not be able to view the reason why you came to the clinic, your notes from the attendance or the results of any tests requested in clinic or any past or future appointments you may book within the clinic.

Confidentiality in the Sexual Health and HIV Service

Everyone working in the NHS is bound by a legal duty of confidentiality to protect your personal information. This is not just a requirement of their employment contract but also a requirement within the common law duty of confidence and data protection law.

We recognise that information collected in sexual health services is sensitive and personal and we only collect and store information that is needed to ensure that you have the correct tests, investigations, treatment and care. We will only share information with other healthcare professionals (for example, your GP or other healthcare professionals in the hospital) if it is necessary for your care. We will only do that with your consent.

What information do you keep about me?

All the information we hold about you is called your health record.

It includes general personal information (such as your name, address, date of birth, and GP), your upcoming appointments and sensitive information (such as your medical details, test results and prescriptions).

These records are kept in an electronic form.

Until 5 October 2023, your records in sexual health have been stored on an electronic system which has no link with any other medical health records such as those kept within main hospital records or your GP records.

Will other health care professionals be able to see my sexual health notes?

Your sexual health notes and test results will not be visible to other doctors, nurses or admin staff who work in other parts of the hospital.

However, other health care professionals will be able to see if a medication was prescribed while you attended our department. For example, if you are prescribed a vaccination or any medication, this will be merged with your other prescriptions on your health record. Within these sorts of prescriptions, there will be no indication of the reason for which the prescription was given. For example, if you are prescribed an antibiotic in the clinic, there will be no indication as to what infection you were being treated for.

Some prescriptions (such as HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)) are only prescribed in sexual health services so doctors or nurses from other departments will know that this was prescribed with a sexual health clinic. By sharing these prescriptions across your whole health record, this will improve the safety of prescribing, alert clinicians to important drug interactions and avoid duplication of prescriptions if you are seen in other hospital departments.

Will my sexual health doctor or nurse be able to see my other health records?

Although doctors or nurses working in other parts of the hospital cannot see your sexual health notes, your sexual health doctor or nurse will be able to read your medical notes from other hospital departments (such as the Emergency Department or other outpatient departments). Your sexual health doctor or nurse will also be able to see any tests results from other departments or upcoming appointments you may have elsewhere in the hospital.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of linking my sexual health record with my other health records?

By linking your sexual health records and other health records together, your sexual health doctor or nurse will have easy access to all important prescriptions, results and medical summaries. This makes your visit safer as the clinician can easily see all relevant and accurate information.

All patients who attend KCH or GSTT will have access to a personalised portal called MyChart where you can securely access portions of your own medical records, including test results and prescriptions. MyChart is a new online service that allows you to access your health record securely and easily. You can use the MyChart app on your mobile, tablet or computer. For more information, please search 'MyChart' on www.kch.nhs.uk.

By linking your sexual health records with your other health records, you will be able to see all your future appointments, sexual health tests results and prescriptions within MyChart, alongside prescriptions and appointments from other hospital departments.

Prescriptions issued within the department can be seen by doctors or nurses working in other hospital departments. It is important to be aware, however, that certain prescriptions (for example, certain vaccinations, PrEP or contraception) may suggest that you have attended our service. If you are worried about this, please speak to a member of the reception team about setting up a separate, unlinked sexual health record.

I don't want my sexual health records linked with my other health records. What do I do?

If you don't want any linkage with your other health records, please let the reception staff and your clinician know. They will create an unlinked ('standalone') sexual health record. To do this, you may register under your real name or a fake name ('pseudonym'). If using a fake name, it is important to use something which is memorable so you can easily access results and use the same profile next time you come to the clinic.

By using an unlinked sexual health record, sexual health test results or prescriptions will not be shared with other healthcare professionals in the hospital and will not appear on your standard MyChart account. It is important to be aware that unlinked health records (most notably in regard to your prescribed medications) could result in important information for your care not being shared between professionals.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: 01689 863252

Email: kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net