

# Carer's guide to confidentiality

## Introduction

We hope this guide will help you understand what confidentiality means for the trust, its staff, the person you care for and for you as a carer.

A carer is anyone supporting their partner, friend or relative.

As a carer, you play an important role and we work with you and try to make sure you have the right information you need, and have the right support.

## What does this mean for me?

We understand that healthcare is a wider partnership which includes families and carers.



Involving you in the care and treatment of the person you are caring for is important and sharing information can be vital. However we must balance this against confidentiality laws placed upon us.

There are likely to be times when you will ask us for information about the person you are caring for.

When this happens we will discuss your request with you to understand if it is in any way affected by the confidentiality laws.

Where necessary we will take advice from the person concerned regarding the sharing of information.

If the person requests to withhold information, this must, other than in exceptional circumstances, be respected by our staff.

If you are involved with providing care at home we will ensure you have adequate information to do this without affecting anyone's personal safety.

Our aim is to ensure that confidentiality is not used as an excuse or barrier to information sharing.

*Brilliant care through brilliant people*





## Information sharing

We will work with the person being cared for to understand what information they are happy for us to share with you. This will be reviewed regularly. We will ensure the person you're caring for understands the benefits of information sharing and the possible consequences of not sharing information with you.

### Where full consent is given

This means the person you are caring for has agreed to your involvement and is happy for us to share information with you about their care and treatment. Therefore we will help you with the following:

- to understand the person's treatment plan and its aims
- receive information about the person's illness that will help you to support them
- take an active role in care planning
- receive a copy of the care plan, crisis plan or other relevant documentation.



### Where consent is refused

This means that the person you are caring for has expressed concerns about information being shared and has refused, or is reluctant to agree to it happening.

If this happens we will explore the reasons behind this to see if we can work to agree and select information they are happy to share.

If these circumstances arise, we will explain to you what kind of information may and may not be shared.

### Where consent cannot be given

In some circumstances, a person may lack the capacity to understand and make decisions about the sharing of their personal information because of their illness.

In order to advocate for our patients, at that time their decision is respected with the recognition that their capacity can fluctuate and be a temporary or intermittent impairment which may alter as they get better.

Where this is the case our staff may disclose only the most pertinent and immediately relevant information with

you unless there is a lawful reason such as the presence of a registered Lasting Power of Attorney. They will however always be able to listen to your perspective and any information that you want to provide

Our staff will take into consideration any previous views or wishes the person you are caring for has made and we will work with you to decide on what would be appropriate level to share, always ensuring the care of the patient remains at the heart of any decision made.



## Information sharing without consent

There may be some situations where information needs to be shared without consent or against the expressed wishes of the person you are caring for.

This may be where there is an emergency situation involving either the person or yourself; a safety concern; or where failure to share information may put someone at risk.

This will be carefully considered by our staff and only the minimum amount of information required on a “need to know” basis will be shared.

We will clearly explain to the person you are caring for the reasons why we believe this is necessary and a note will be made in the clinical record.



## Listening to you

You may already know that a person is receiving services from us.

If so this duty of confidentiality does not prevent us from listening to you should you want to speak with us.

There is no breach of confidentiality or requirement for consent in order to meet with, see and listen to you.

Your views are important and help us to provide care to the person you are caring for. The information you provide will also remain confidential.

If we are unable to give you detailed information about the person you are caring for, we can support you in other ways.

We can provide general information about the illness and we can share information about local and national support groups which can offer emotional and practical support for you.



## Where do I go for more Information?

If you have any questions, or you would like to know more about confidentiality and how it affects you, please contact the Information Governance Department on 01795 514525 or write to us as St Michaels House, St Michaels Road, Sittingbourne, ME10 3DW or via email to [kmpt.ig@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.ig@nhs.net)

If you feel that information has been shared unnecessarily, or not shared when it should have been, you can discuss this with the health and social care professional or team leader.

You could also discuss this with the Information Rights Department (as above).

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and Complaints

Should you have a concern about your care and treatment, we welcome your comments and ask that you speak with the staff providing your care. If you feel unable to and would rather speak to the PALS and Complaints team direct please contact us and we will support you through the process. All complaints will be carefully listened to and thoroughly investigated.

### Compliments

If you have something positive to say about our service we would love to hear from you. Please speak to staff direct or you can log your compliment at [www.kmpt.nhs.uk/contact-us/feedback](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/contact-us/feedback)

## Contact details for PALS and Complaints

**East Kent: 0800 783 9972**

**West Kent and Medway:  
0800 587 6757**

**Email: [kmpt.pals.kmpt@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.pals.kmpt@nhs.net)**

Or write to: KMPT  
PALS and Complaints  
St Martins Hospital  
Littlebourne Road  
Canterbury  
Kent CT1 1TD



Please call **01622 724131** if you would like this leaflet in a different language or format.

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