



Information Governance

MEMO of the week

Protecting patient information is everyone's responsibility



Patient records are not for curiosity.

Only access patient records when you have a legitimate, work-related reason as part of your role.



We are trusted custodians.

We hold a large amount of sensitive patient data and must treat it with the respect and care it deserves.



All access is tracked.

NHS computer systems record who views patient files. Inappropriate access is detectable through regular audits.



Do not look at your own records, family or friends'.

Unless you are directly involved in their care, it is a breach of confidentiality.



Follow your organisation's policies.

Be familiar with your confidentiality, data protection and information governance policies and complete all required training.



If you are unsure – ask.

If you are not sure whether you can access a record, speak to your line manager, IG lead or Caldicott Guardian before you do.



Inappropriate access can have serious consequences.

NHS staff suspected of unlawful access may face immediate suspension and a complete lockout from NHS systems while investigations take place.



Keep information secure.

Do not share passwords, leave screens unlocked or discuss patient information in inappropriate settings.



Access is only for a legitimate purpose.

This includes providing direct care, supporting care, audit, quality improvement, complaints, teaching or other authorised work.

Remember...

- ✓ Think before you click
- ✓ Access with a purpose
- ✓ Keep it confidential
- ✓ Report concerns



Even accidental access matters.

If you accidentally open the wrong patient record, close it immediately and report it in line with your organisation's policy.



Read the national guidance for health and care professionals.

For full details, including examples and responsibilities, visit:

digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/information-governance

*Information Governance.
A shared responsibility for safe, high-quality care.*



**Respect information.
Protect people.
Do the right thing.**