

Summary Care Records

Helping to care for
you in an emergency

FACT SHEET FOR PATIENTS

A Summary Care Record is a secure electronic summary of key health information available to authorised healthcare staff providing care to patients in an emergency.

About Summary Care Records

Summary Care Records will give healthcare staff access to key health information, which means they can provide safer care and treatment to you if ever in an emergency, for example, when providing care in hospital.

A Summary Care Record will hold limited essential information such as details of any medicines you are taking and any allergies or adverse reactions to medicines you may have had.

Why are they being introduced?

Summary Care Records are being introduced to improve the safety and quality of patient care.

Patient records are kept in all NHS organisations but they can usually only be shared by letter, email, fax or phone. At times this can slow down treatment and sometimes information can be hard to access, especially during an emergency.

Summary Care Records will make it easier for healthcare staff to share resources and communicate between other healthcare providers. It will also help to reduce prescribing errors and the time it takes to reconcile medicines.

Because the Summary Care Record is an electronic record it will provide faster, easier access to essential information about a patient to support their treatment and care during an emergency.

Who will have access?

Healthcare staff involved in supporting or providing your care if ever in an emergency will be able to access your Summary Care record if you have one.

To access your Summary Care Record healthcare staff will:

- Need to be directly involved in caring for you;
- Will need to ask your permission every time they need to look at your Summary Care Record;

If a patient cannot be asked, for example if they are unconscious, it is possible for the healthcare staff to look at the patient's record without asking them. In this instance, a note will be made on the patients Summary Care Records that permission to view was not gained.

How secure are Summary Care Records?

By law everyone working for the NHS must keep all patient information secure.

Summary Care Records are stored securely on NHS computers. There are measures in place to ensure the information is stored safely, stays private and can only be looked at by those authorised to do so.