Application for Access to General Practice Medical Records
Information for Applicants


- Primary Care Support England stores medical records on behalf of NHS England. These medical records comprise of paper records and computer print-outs from GP practices for patients who are deceased or not currently registered with a GP practice. We can only administer requests for access to GP practice records – we do not store electronic records, x-rays, hospital records, community services (e.g. health visitors, district nursing, school nurses) or records relating to private treatments and clinics or consulting rooms. For access to any other types of records you should contact the clinician or organisation who created them.

- Patients who are currently registered with a GP practice should contact their GP surgery to apply for access to the records.

- People who can apply for access to medical records include:
  1. The patient about whom the record has been compiled.
  2. Someone acting on behalf of the patient, for example:
     - A legal representative (e.g. a solicitor or insurance company) acting with written authorisation of the patient.
     - A parent on behalf of a child aged less than 16 years, unless the child is able to understand the nature of the request and apply in their own right.
     - By court order or appointment.
     - A deceased patient’s personal representative – this is the executor/administrator of their will.
     - Someone with a claim arising from the death of the patient.

- When making your application we ask that you give details of the time periods and parts of the health record which you require. This will help save PCSE and NHS time and resources.

- If you are using an authorised representative to make your application, you need to be aware that in doing so they may gain access to all health records about you. If this is a concern, it is your responsibility to inform them of what information you wish them to request specifically.

- If you are the executor/administrator of a deceased person you will need to provide documentary evidence of this. If there is more than one executor / administrator then all parties must sign the application form.

- To make an application, you must provide evidence of your identity – this must include one form of personal photographic ID and one form of proof of address. Further information of what forms of identification can be accepted is stated in the application form.
• If you are making the application as an individual's legal representative (e.g. you are a solicitor or insurance company), you **must** provide written authorisation from the applicant to act on their behalf and receive their medical record.

• There is a £50 administration charge for the provision of a copy of a health record to cover the administration and photocopying costs incurred by PCSE to meet your request. Any fees will be payable prior to your application being finalised. There are circumstances in which you may be entitled to a refund of this charge – we will discuss this with you during your application as necessary.

• Fees must be paid by cheque (pounds sterling) payable to ‘Capita Business Services Ltd’. PCSE is not currently able to accept payment by debit / credit card or BACS transfer.

• If you would prefer to view the record rather than receiving a copy of it, please state this in your application and we can schedule an appointment at an appropriate time. Record viewings carry no charge, however we are only able to provide this service in the PCSE office in Preston, Lancashire.

• Please send your completed application form, copies of relevant identification documentation and a cheque (if applicable) for £50 made payable to ‘Capita Business Services Ltd’. The postal address is stated on our application form.

• Once your completed application form – together with the appropriate supporting evidence of your identity, authority to make the request and the applicable payment – is received, PCSE will retrieve the health records.

• We will endeavour to deal with your application within 21 days, in accordance with the Access to Health Records Act 1990. If you are requesting a medical record under the Data Protection Act 1998, we will endeavour to provide you with the record within 40 days. In exceptional circumstances this may not be possible but we will update you and keep you informed of the delay and likely timescales.

• PCSE will consult an appropriate health professional who will review the records and decide which records may be released. There are certain circumstances in which the health professional may deny access to the complete records or to certain parts of the record:
  • Where access would disclose information likely to cause serious harm to the physical or mental health of an individual.
  • Where an individual other than the patient could be identified from the information (unless the individual consents).
  • In the case of deceased records, the deceased person stated that they did not wish their records to be released after death, or the records were such that the deceased person expected them to remain confidential.
  • In the case of deceased records, access cannot be given to records made prior to November 1991.
Once the fee is received and a health professional has assessed the record’s suitability for disclosure, copies of the records will be sent by post.

PCSE can only provide copies of health records which we hold. Parts of a person’s medical record may be held with hospital, community or mental health trusts, as well as previous primary care practitioners. PCSE cannot provide access to these records and you therefore may wish to make a separate application to another health organisation.