

Data Protection & Freedom of information (FOI)

Data Protection

The practice complies with Data Protection and Access to Medical Records legislation. Identifiable information about you will be shared with others in the following circumstances:

- To provide further medical treatment for you e.g. district nurses and hospital services.
- To help you get other services (e.g. social work department) requires your consent.
- When we have a duty to others e.g. in child protection cases anonymised patient information will also be used at local and national level to help the Health Board and Government plan services e.g. for diabetic care.

If you do not wish anonymous information about you to be used in such a way, please let us know.

Reception and administration staff require access to your medical records in order to do their jobs. These members of staff are bound by the same rules of confidentiality as the medical staff.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, with full access granted in January 2005. The Act sets out exemptions to that right and places certain obligations on public authorities.

Data Protection and FOI – how do the two interact?

The Data Protection Act 1998 came into force on 1 March 2000. It provides living individuals with a right of access to personal information held about them.

The right applies to all information held in computerised form and also to non-computerised information held in filing systems structured so that specific information about particular individuals can be retrieved readily.

Individuals already have the right to access information about themselves (personal data), which is held on computer and in some paper files under the Data Protection Act 1998.

The right also applies to those archives that meet these criteria. However, the right is subject to exemptions, which will affect whether information is provided. Requests will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

The Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act are the responsibility of the Lord Chancellor's Department. A few of its strategic objectives being:

- To improve people's knowledge and understanding of their rights and responsibilities
- Seeking to encourage an increase in openness in the public sector
- Monitoring the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information
- Developing a data protection policy which properly balances personal information privacy with the need for public and private organisations to process personal information

The Data Protection Act does not give third parties rights of access to personal information for research purposes.

The FOI Act does not give individuals access to their personal information, though if a request is made, the Data Protection Act gives the individual this right. If the individual chooses to make this information public it could be used alongside non-personal information gained by the public under the terms of the FOI Act.

If you would like this leaflet in large print or you would like a translation of this leaflet to another language please ask at reception.

