

What happens if I choose not to have a summary care record (SCR)

If I do not have a summary care record

The NHS will do its best to provide you with safe, efficient care whether or not you have a SCR. The purpose of this information sheet is to ensure that you are clear what your decision could mean for your NHS care.

The SCR's purpose is to ensure that anyone treating you has basic but important information about you – especially when care is unplanned, urgent or during evenings and weekends.

At first your SCR will contain key health information such as details of allergies, current prescriptions and bad reactions to medicines. After that, each time you use any NHS health services, details about any current health problems, summaries of your care and the health-care staff treating you may be added to your SCR. As new information is added to your record you can discuss what is being added and how sensitive information is handled. If you choose to have a SCR, you will be asked if staff can look at it every time they need to.

The information in your SCR could save you and the NHS time, but could also one day be lifesaving. The NHS has significant problems now with lost records and test

results and treatment and prescribing errors.

With a SCR doctors and nurses would know at a crucial time:

- what medications you are taking, especially if they are many and complex
- what medications have not agreed with you in the past
- whether you have any allergies
- that new medications they prescribe may react badly with things you are already taking
- that you have a condition that means you shouldn't have certain medicines

In addition, you would have the benefit of:

- 24-hour access to your own SCR to check it for errors and to see what those who are treating you have recorded if you choose to view it through HealthSpace
- peace of mind that wherever in England you need care, anyone treating you will have essential information even if you were distressed or didn't remember details

And later on, as your SCR develops you may be able to use it to:

- see summaries of other episodes of care, for example a discharge summary from a hospital
- remind yourself about important things said to you about your treatment
- inform NHS health-care staff about your needs and how you want to be treated

It would be misleading to pretend that there are no risks to information held in the SCR. But it is also misleading to suggest that not having such a record is risk free. Substantial work is taking place to modernise the NHS, including the introduction of the SCR, in order to reduce errors, save lives and improve health outcomes for a great many people. Modernising and computerising the NHS also brings with it new safeguards to ensure that information in your record is held more securely than in the past.

Risks and protections

Staff disclosing information.

The NHS already shares information widely and most NHS staff are honest and trustworthy. There are occasional problems with staff accessing records and disclosing information inappropriately. With the new NHS systems, the number of staff who will have an opportunity to look at your clinical records when they shouldn't will be greatly reduced.

Only staff with special security cards can log onto the new NHS system. This allows the NHS to track precisely who has done or seen what – and you can ask for this information. Unlike today, staff will have to be involved in your care to access your records and they will only see information appropriate to their role. You will be asked if staff can look at your SCR every time they need to.

Hackers. Safeguards that will protect the summary care record from hackers have been designed by security experts. They are far stronger than the safeguards in place anywhere within the NHS today.

Wrong information. It is important that the information about you is accurate. All data that goes into a SCR will have to pass quality controls. Once you are able to access it, you too can check it and point out any remaining errors.

Access by the state. No other part of government will have direct access to your SCR. As now, any information from your record that the NHS gives to others, such as the police, would be very strictly limited by law. In fact, the SCR gives the opportunity to improve things by ensuring that any such disclosures follow consistent procedures and are recorded and monitored.

More control by the patient.

The greatest safeguards for your SCR are that you will know who else has seen it and have more control than ever before over what it contains and who has access. You can ask for it to appear as a blank screen, or ask for information to be removed or not added in the first place. Later on, additional controls will allow you to let staff see some parts of your SCR but not others.

We hope that the information provided has made clear the practical results of your decision. Please be assured that the Department of Health is committed to honouring your decision and doing all it can to ensure you get the best health-care possible. You can, of course, change your mind at any time. We urge you to review your decision from time to time.



Request for all clinical data to be withheld from the summary care record.

To be completed by the individual (data subject) making the request.
Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS.

Title _____ Surname / Family name _____

Forename(s) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Tel No _____ Date of birth _____

NHS number (if known) _____

What does it mean if I DO NOT have a summary care record?

Health-care staff treating you may not be aware of your current medications in order to treat you safely and effectively.

Health-care staff treating you may not be made aware of current conditions and/or diagnoses leading to a delay or missed opportunity for correct treatment.

Health-care staff may not be aware of any allergies/adverse reactions to medications and may prescribe or administer a drug/treatment with adverse consequences.

If you have any questions, or if you wish to discuss your choices or concerns, please telephone the NHS Care Records Service Information Line on 0845 603 8510.

If you remain unsure about whether or not to have a SCR please contact your participating practice.

Signature _____ Date _____

Actioned by practice:

Date: