

## **How to get a copy of your medical records**

Everyone has the right to have a copy their medical records under the Data Protection Act 1998. You have a right to view medical records if they have been amended in the last 40 days. The records should be presented in a format which a patient will understand.

Access may be refused if healthcare professionals believe that information in the records is likely to cause serious harm to the patient or another person.

- Details about third parties might be removed from the records.
- If you are applying for access on behalf of someone else, you will need a letter giving their consent, or a power of attorney.

### **Request access formally:**

To apply formally for access to your medical records you need to do it in writing. If records are held at your doctor's surgery, you should write to your doctor or to the practice manager. The Information Commission recommends that you send the letter by recorded delivery.

If the records are held at a hospital, you should address the letter to the patients' services manager or medical records officer. It is worth asking if there is a form you can fill in.

The advantage of applying in writing is that you are entitled by law to receive a response no later than 40 days after your application was received.

### **Charges for accessing medical records:**

There is usually a charge to see or get a copy of your records. This charge is £10 if you just require information that is held in a computerised format, but if there are also manual records it could be up to £50.

The fee often depends on the amount of information in your file. You can find out the exact amount by ringing your surgery, hospital or health authority. Send a cheque or postal order for the amount with your written request.