



Guidance on requesting medical records

This guidance is designed to help you request your medical records.

This guidance also covers how to access someone else's medical records (with their consent) and how to access the medical records of a deceased family member.

We recognise that accessing your medical records is not always straightforward, so if you have any questions or require assistance then please feel free to contact the Inquiry Team at contact@infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk or Freephone 08081691377 and the Inquiry Team will be happy to help.

1. How to request your own medical records

The General Data Protection Regulation, in conjunction with the Data Protection Act 2018, gives every living person the right to apply for access to his or her medical records.

The request must be in writing

Your request must be made in writing to the appropriate healthcare provider. You should state that you require a copy of your medical records and specify whether you would like all or part of your records. You will often be able to submit your request via email or by post.

Some healthcare providers will have a specific request form that you must fill out. If your healthcare provider does not have a specific form, we are providing a request form that outlines all of the information that you need to include.

Verification of Identity

Before access to your medical records can be granted your identity must be verified. You must provide two forms of evidence of your identity; this must include one form of personal photographic identification and one form of proof of address. Acceptable documentation includes: passport, photo driving licence, bank statements and utility bills, but not mobile telephone bills, as they can be sent to different addresses.

Response Times

You are entitled to receive a response from the healthcare provider no later than 28 days after your completed application has been received, provided that you have given enough information to identify you. The 28 days can be extended by a further two months where requests are deemed to be 'complex' or 'numerous'.

Access to your medical records can only be denied in exceptional circumstances. If your access request is declined then please get in touch with the Inquiry Team.

Applying to separate healthcare providers

You will need to apply for your GP records and then separately to each hospital or healthcare provider that you have received treatment at.

i) GP records

If you are currently registered with a GP you will need to send a request in writing to the practice manager at your GP surgery. Your GP record should include copies of hospital letters.

ii) If you are not currently registered with a GP

If you are not currently registered with a GP then your records may still be held by the last GP surgery that you were registered with. If your last GP surgery no longer holds your records then, depending on the location of your last GP surgery, you should apply to:

- **England** - Primary Care Support England
Address: The Records Manager, Primary Care Support England, PO Box 350, Darlington, DL1 9QN
Email: pcse.accessrequests@nhs.net
- **Wales** - NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership
Address: The Records Manager, NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership, HRR Department, NWSSP, Cwmbran House, Mamhilad Park Estate, Pontypool, NP4 0XS
Email: nwssp-primarycareservices@wales.nhs.uk
- **Scotland** - NHS Scotland Practitioner Services
Address: Records Manager, Practitioner Services, NHS National Services Scotland, Gyle Square, 1 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 9EB
Email: adam.bates@nhs.net
- **Northern Ireland** - Medical Services Department, Business Services Organisation
Address: The Records Manager, Medical Services Department, Business Services, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 8DQ
Email: dpa.bso@hscni.net

iii) NHS hospital records

To obtain a copy of your hospital records you will need to apply in writing to the hospital's records manager at the hospital where you received your treatment.

Below are links to the various NHS hospital trusts:

- NHS England: [NHS England Provider Directory](#)
- NHS Wales: [NHS Wales Hospital Directory](#)
- NHS Scotland: [NHS Scotland Health Boards](#)
- NHS Northern Ireland: [Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts](#)

iv) Haemophilia centres

If you are currently registered with a haemophilia centre then you can apply to that centre for a copy of your records.

The National Haemophilia Database (NHD) is a register of UK patients with all kinds of bleeding disorders, which was established in 1969. The database is managed by the UK Haemophilia Doctors' Organisation (UKHCDO), they are required by the Department of Health to collect data on diagnosis, management and complications of bleeding disorders. A complete list of the information that the UKHCDO collect can be seen on their website www.ukhcdo.org. If you would like to request a copy of any information that the NHD holds about you then you will need to complete the application form on this [website](#).

2. Can someone else request your medical records on your behalf?

Medical records are strictly confidential so you can only access someone else's records if you:

- are acting on their behalf and have been given their consent to do so;
- have legal authority to make decisions on their behalf (power of attorney);
- have another legal basis for access.

If you wish to access someone else's medical records you will need to submit a request in writing to the relevant healthcare provider with the patient's written consent. If the healthcare facility does not supply an application form, we have provided a request form that outlines all of the information that you need to include.

3. How to access the medical records of a deceased family member

Retention periods for the medical records of a deceased patient

GP records are generally retained for 10 years and hospital records for 8 years after a patient's death.¹

What information should you include in the request?

The applicant must provide details and evidence of their relationship to the deceased. If the healthcare provider does not have their own form, we have provided a request form that outlines all of the information that you need to include.

¹ <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/ethics/confidentiality-and-health-records/retention-of-health-records>

Next of kin do not have an automatic right of access and requests will be considered by the record holder on a case-by-case basis to decide whether disclosure is in the public interest. You should make clear the purpose of your request.

Who should you send the request for a deceased family member's records to?

The request for a deceased family member's health records should be made separately to each hospital where they received treatment and their last registered GP practice.

If the hospital is closed, the record holder is the trust or health board which the hospital was a part of. Links to the NHS hospital trusts can be found under section (1)(iii) above.

If the GP practice is closed, the record holder is one of the services outlined above under section (1)(ii), depending on where the deceased person last resided.

If the deceased family member had a bleeding disorder, you can request a copy of information held about them by the National Haemophilia Database. The application form can be found [here](#).