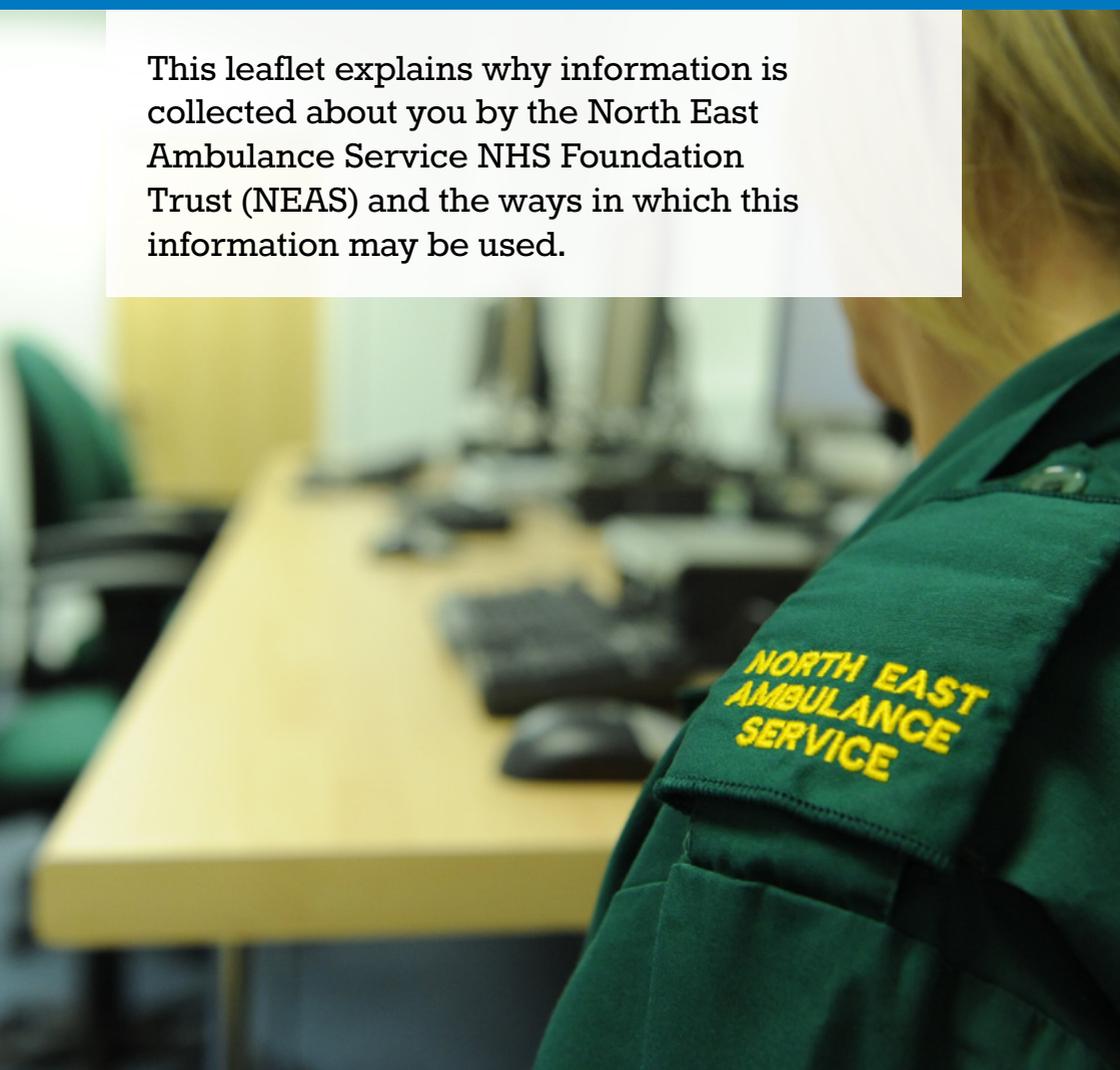




# Patient Information & Confidentiality

This leaflet explains why information is collected about you by the North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS) and the ways in which this information may be used.



NORTH EAST  
AMBULANCE  
SERVICE

# Why does NEAS need my personal information and what is it used for?

NEAS offers emergency care, non-emergency patient transport and access to urgent care services to the population of the North East. These services will require a certain level of information about you. They may be written (manual records), or held on a computer (electronic records).

The information can include:

- Basic details about you, such as name & address
- Medical condition
- Current medications

NHS staff use your information to give you the care and treatment you need. They will share relevant information with other NHS staff involved in your care including your GP. This makes caring for you safer, easier and faster.

For example, information is shared if:

- We take you to hospital
- You are moved from one hospital to another
- You need support at home such as a visit from a district nurse
- You need to be referred to another NHS provider

## Is my information shared with anyone else?

Your personal health information may be given to other people who need to know relevant information about your health – for example a carer, a home help, or another professional. Usually, it will only be given to them if:

- you have agreed, and they need it to be able to give you care and treatment.

Usually the NHS will not share your personal health information with people such as a relative, carer or friend without your permission. However:

- If you are a child, and a health professional does not think you can make decisions about your health care, someone with parental responsibility for you may be allowed to see your records and discuss your care.
- If you are an adult who cannot make decisions for yourself, or cannot tell others your decisions, the law allows someone to see your records and discuss your care, if:

- you have given them a power of attorney, or
- a court has appointed someone to deal with decision making.

In these cases, the person allowed to see your health information:

- will only be able to see information that is necessary for them to make particular decisions for you about your health care, and
- will not receive information that staff feel would be harmful to your health or the health of others.

Sometimes the law allows the NHS to share your personal health information without your permission, for example, to investigate a serious crime or to protect a child.

Sometimes the law requires us to pass on information: for example, notification of births and deaths. This is only provided after formal permission has been given by a qualified health professional.

## What if I do not wish to give NEAS any personal information?

You can decide how much information you wish to give; you can also use the service anonymously if you wish. Certain information will, however, be needed for us to treat you safely. NEAS also records all calls for training and quality control purposes.

## Why do you need to know about my ethnic background, sexual orientation and religious affiliation?

This allows us to monitor our services more effectively and to plan services which are most appropriate to patient need.

## How can monitoring of patients improve the planning and delivery of services?

Population data about the North East (Census data) provides us with information about our local population. If, through our monitoring of patients, we find people from these groups are not accessing our services we can then look at why this may be happening and so we can improve the ways we plan and deliver our services.

Also if we have more complaints from people from these groups we need to know so we can find out what the reasons are and find ways to address the issues.

## Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

For the safety of our staff and service users, NEAS employs CCTV in vehicles and at our sites for the prevention and detection of crime. This records images and in some cases audio for up to 30 days, which is then automatically overwritten. Footage is only accessed in the event a reported adverse event, which will result reviewing footage to ascertain facts.

## How is my information kept confidential?

Everybody who works for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. For NEAS, this includes the information recorded during the call, the information kept on the computer system, the paper records detailing your care and any verbal discussions you have with our staff.

All NEAS locations and staff are subject to the same data protection and confidentiality procedures.

## Can I have access to my records?

You have a right of access to the information we hold about you on our records. If you have any concerns about the accuracy of the information held please let us know.

If you want to see your health records then you should write to the Caldicott Guardian at NEAS. The Caldicott Guardian is a senior health professional who is responsible for overseeing the use of patient information and for improving security and confidentiality within the organisation.

Please be aware that a charge is usually made for a copy of your records. In certain circumstances your right to see some details in your health records may be limited in your own interest or for other reasons.

## Is there a law that covers the use of my information?

Personal information collected and used by the NHS is controlled by the Data Protection Act 1998. This Act contains eight principles. One of these is that information must be processed 'fairly and lawfully'. This means that you have a right to know how we intend to use the information you provide. It also means that you have a right to privacy, which is respected through any use of your personal information by the NHS.

Further information on the Data Protection Act can be obtained from:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House, Water Lane  
Wilmslow, Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745

<http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

# How else does NEAS use my information?

NEAS uses relevant information about you to help improve NHS services and the health of the public. Your information may be used to:

- Help staff review the care they provide to ensure it is of the highest standard
- Teach and train staff
- Protect the health of the public
- Provide statistics, performance and planning information
- Provide information to our Commissioners and to potentially charge other health care providers for the service we have given to you
- Find out how many people have a particular illness or disease
- Carry out health research and development
- Investigate complaints, legal claims or untoward incidents

When information is needed to manage the wider health service, careful measures are taken to ensure that individual patients cannot be identified. Your name, address and other information that identifies you

is removed wherever possible. For health research and audit only, properly anonymised data will be used. All NHS research is approved by a group of ethics experts before being carried out.

Sometimes the NHS uses information that does identify you. If this happens, they will usually explain how and why your information will be used and obtain explicit consent.

## What if I don't want my information to be used?

If, for any reason, you do not wish to have your information used in any of the ways described in this leaflet other than that required by law, please contact:

The Caldicott Guardian  
North East Ambulance Service  
NHS Foundation Trust  
Bernicia House  
Goldcrest Way  
Newburn Riverside  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE15 8NY

# Contact Us

This publication can be made available in large print, Braille or on audiotape and can be translated into other languages on request.

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For further copies of this publication please also contact the Communications Department on the above numbers.

More information on NEAS can be found on the website [www.neas.nhs.uk](http://www.neas.nhs.uk)

