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What is GDPR?

GDPR stands for General Data Protection Regulations and is a new piece of legislation that will supersede the Data Protection Act. It will not only apply to the UK and EU; it covers anywhere in the world in which data about EU citizens is processed. The GDPR is similar to the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 (which the practice already complies with), but strengthens many of the DPA's principles. The main changes are:

- Practices must comply with subject access requests.
- Where we need your consent to process data, this consent must be freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous.
- There are new, special protections for patient data. There are also new rules about sharing information between organisations providing care.
- The Information Commissioner's Office must be notified within 72 hours of a data breach.
- Higher fines for data breaches – up to 20 million euros.

What is 'patient data'?

Patient data is information that relates to a single person, such as his/her diagnosis, name, age, earlier medical history etc.

What is consent?

Consent is permission from a patient – an individual's consent is defined as “*any freely given specific and informed indication of his wishes by which the data subject signifies his agreement to personal data relating to him being processed.*”

A History of Data Sharing at Courtyard Surgery

When the practice was called Littleton Pannell Surgery. Drs and nurses wrote notes by hand and read them before seeing a patient. If you were referred for care a secretary would type out information from these handwritten notes and post them to the hospital. If you changed practice a bundle of notes would be posted to a central hub, before being sent to your new GP. Your notes were the property of the NHS. Before moving, the practice became computerised making it easier to find relevant information, but referrals still involved typed letters and bundles of paper being posted between practices, delaying care and notes being lost.

Over the years computers have had a bigger role, with patients having control over how data is shared. At various times you may have been asked if you either wanted to allow or block sharing and how much of your information you wanted to share. Prior to GDPR it was assumed that apart from a small amount of core information, nothing could be shared without the patients consent.

After GDPR the assumption is that information can be shared for the patients benefit and care, within the NHS. For instance identifiable data cannot be accessed outside the practice for research or checking bills.

There are three levels of data sharing, and three ways of allowing sharing.

3 levels: Share all information, share core information only, share no information apart from Name, address and registered GP. Anyone who has previously placed a limit on sharing will continue to have these limits in place.

You can decide how much information can be shared.

3 ways: share information with all parts of the NHS, share information with organisations that this practice works with regularly and trusts, share information with no one.

This practice has decided to share with local trusted organisations, a list is pinned up or you can ask for a copy at reception. If you are referred to a hospital outside our area, you may be asked to give permission for the hospital to access your data. If another organisation within the NHS wants to access your data they will need your e-mail address and/or mobile number for you to be sent a PIN number to pass to the person you are with. Please provide us with your contact details. If you are registered for online access you can alter your permissions online. If not, there are forms at reception, but the staff are very busy and it may take a couple of weeks to make changes.

If you are taken to hospital severely ill or unconscious your core information will be available to the staff treating you.

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