

Using Your Information Confidentially for Risk Stratification - an explanation for patients

What is risk stratification?

There are two kinds of risk stratification:

1. **The first kind** is a process for identifying some patients within a Practice who might benefit from extra assessment or support with self-care because of the nature of their health problems. The process is a mixture of analysis of information by computer followed by review of the results by a clinical team at the Practice.

The analysis can, for example, help predict the risk of an unplanned hospital admission so that preventative measures can be taken as early as possible to try and avoid it. In the end, it is the clinical team of the GP Practice that will decide how your care is best managed.

2. **The second kind** is a process for identifying patterns of ill health and needs across our local population. This will be done by pulling together all the information in an anonymised file (where your identity has been removed) to look at patterns and trends of illness across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland as a whole. This will help our Public Health Department and those in the NHS who are responsible for planning and arranging health services across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (known as commissioners) better understand the current and possible future health needs of the local population. This will help them make provision for the most appropriate health services for the people of this area. This group of staff will not be able to identify you as an individual under any circumstances.

In both cases secure NHS systems and processes will protect your health information and patient confidentiality at all times.

What information about me will be analysed?

The minimum amount of information about you will be used. The information included is:

- Age
- Gender
- GP Practice and Hospital attendances and admissions
- Medications prescribed
- Medical conditions (in code form) and other things that may affect your health such as height, weight for example.

How will my information be kept secure and confidential?

Information from your GP record will be sent via a secure computer connection to a special location called a 'safe haven' at NHS Arden and Greater East Midlands Commissioning Support Unit (NHS Arden & GEM CSU) in Leicester. This safe haven carries special accreditation from the NHS. It is designed to protect the confidentiality of your information. There are strict controls in place. It enables information to be used in a way that does not identify you. The GP Practice remains in control your information at all times.

Before any analysis starts, any information that could identify you will be removed and replaced by a number. The analysis is done by computer. The results are returned to the GP Practice. Only your GP Practice can see the results in a way that identifies you.

What will my GP Practice do with the analysis?

The results can help the clinical team decide on some aspects of your future care. For example, if the clinical team at the Practice think that you might benefit from a review of your care, they can arrange this. You may then be invited in for an appointment to discuss your health and treatment. If the Practice thinks you might benefit from referral to a new service, this will be discussed with you firstly.

What should I do if I have further questions about risk stratification?

Please ask the Practice staff if you can speak to someone in more detail.

What if I want to opt out?

If you feel satisfied that you understand what risk stratification is but you do not wish to be included, you can choose to opt-out. In this case, please inform the Receptionist who can ensure that your information is not included.

Making you aware of how your information is used

This leaflet is intended to supplement the more general leaflet “How we use your medical records” (also available on our website or from Reception). It explains how you can access your own health records, how you can get further information and what to do if you any concerns about your information.