

NHSScotland is improving the way it uses information from GP patient records.

To find out more visit [spire.scot](https://www.spire.scot)

It helps me.

GP, Lanark.



And us.

A change for the better.

The way information from GP patient records is used to help plan health and care services in Scotland is improving.

You, and everyone who lives with you, should be aware of the contents of this leaflet and decide what you want to do.

What is this leaflet about?

This leaflet describes how use of information from GP patient records will be improved to help plan and improve health and care services in Scotland.

It tells you about SPIRE (Scottish Primary Care Information Resource) – a service that has been developed to help GPs, the NHS in Scotland and researchers learn from information held at GP practices.

It explains the benefits of the service and details how your information will be kept secure and confidential. And it explains what choices you have about the way in which your health information can be used.



What are the benefits of sharing my information?

SPIRE is a service that will be used to help NHSScotland and the Scottish Government plan for Scotland's health and care needs. It allows information from GP patient records to be transferred electronically and held securely at NHS National Services Scotland. NHS National Services Scotland support the NHS by gathering information and producing statistical information and analysis that helps NHSScotland make the right decisions for patients.

SPIRE uses information from GP practices all over Scotland in a safe and secure way.

NHS organisations and approved researchers will be able to use SPIRE in ways that could help you and everyone in Scotland, such as:

- Improving the quality of care for all patients.
- Planning services and care for people who have a condition or a health need.
- Responding to major public health issues like flu epidemics.
- Improving the provision of health and care to vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.
- Developing knowledge about the uptake of vital medicines and vaccines.
- Supporting research into new treatments for particular illnesses.

What information will be used?

To understand and analyse the data, information such as your date of birth, gender, vaccinations, diagnoses and prescribed medicines, will be used from your GP patient records. To protect your confidentiality, these details will be encrypted before they are sent. So you can be confident that your information is secure at all times.

Do I have to take part?

No, if you don't want to you can opt out by downloading a form from spire.scot or by telling your GP practice.

Who will be able to access the information gathered through SPIRE?

The information will be used by trained and authorised analysts at NHS National Services Scotland. For example, to work out the total number of people in Scotland with a particular illness. Individual data will be grouped together to produce national and local Health Board summaries, which will be publicly available. You will not be able to be identified from these reports.

Some NHSScotland organisations such as Health Boards will be able to request information to perform their own analysis, for instance, to understand what is happening within local services.

Health researchers from outside the NHSScotland (for example, charity or university researchers) will have to apply to an independent steering group if they want to use the information. Permission will only be considered where there is a clear health benefit and where patient confidentiality can be maintained at all times. The steering group includes members of the public who represent patients' interests.



Will information from my GP patient records be sold?

No.

Will solicitors, insurance, drug or marketing companies be able to access information from SPIRE?

No.

How will my information be kept safe and secure?

There are strict rules governing how information is managed and all staff involved have a legal duty to keep information safe and secure. Visit spire.scot to find out more about how NHS National Services Scotland safeguard patient confidentiality.



Can I opt out?

It is easy to opt out if you do not want information from your GP patient records to be used in this way, by notifying your GP practice. Write or speak to your GP practice and tell them that you “want to opt out of SPIRE”. Opt out forms can also be downloaded at [spire.scot](https://www.spire.scot)

If you're happy for NHSScotland to use information from your GP patient records for planning health and care services and for research, then you don't need to do anything. It will happen automatically.

If you have any questions about SPIRE or want to know more about how confidential information is managed, just visit [spire.scot](https://www.spire.scot). Alternatively call NHS inform on 0800 22 44 88 to find out more.

When do I need to make a decision?

You can opt out at any time. If you do, NHS National Services Scotland will no longer receive information from your GP patient records. NHS National Services Scotland support the NHS by gathering information and producing statistical information and analysis that helps NHSScotland make the right decisions for patients.

You can change your mind at any time. Your choice will not affect the care you receive from your GP.

Visit the website at
spire.scot
for more information,
to find out how to opt
out and to read a list of
common questions.

Call NHS inform on
0800 22 44 88.

Speak to staff at your
GP practice.

This leaflet is available
in Arabic, Mandarin, Polish
and Urdu; other languages
are available on request.
An Easy Read version has
also been produced.