

# Secondary Care ePMA Data Collection Privacy Notice guidance



## 1. Background information

This document is intended to support hospital trusts when they add information about this data collection to their websites, or if they want to include information about this collection in other places, such as on posters or in leaflets. Our rationale is to improve transparency to patients about the use of NHS health data.

### Why providers need to inform patients about this collection:

The DAPB4005 Information Standards Notice (ISN) Requirements Specification includes a requirement that providers should inform patient that NHS England is collecting data from provider's ePMA (electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration) systems. We recommend this is by an addition to the provider's web site - privacy notice, transparency notice, or other data protection web page provided for the purpose of informing who patient data is shared with.

The Data workstream of the Digital Medicine's Programme has created this information with the assistance of some hospital trusts that have reviewed it with their patient representative groups, information governance and data protection leads. We have also had input from members of the Association of Medical Royal Colleges.

## 2. Summary of the data collection

We recommend you use the wording in the box below for your web page, which will meet the Information Standards Notice's requirements of being transparent with patients about the collection. If you wish to use any of the other information in this document please feel free to do so.

### The Secondary Care ePMA Data Collection

NHS England is collecting information for medicine given to patients by hospitals in England when that data is recorded on a computer system.

Protection has been put in place to ensure the information is securely transferred from hospitals to NHS England, is stored safely, and can only be accessed by organisations that have a legal basis and legitimate need to use it. The information will be analysed with the main objective being that it will improve safety for patients.

Some examples of what this data will be used for are to examine how antibiotics are used in hospitals, to see how new medicines are used, and to monitor medicine usage.

NHS England will collect the information every week from 13 January 2025, and will collect older information back to June 2018 (or from when the computer system started to be used if after June 2018).

### Patient's rights

To read more about the information NHS England collects, the reasons for collecting this information and what choices and rights patients have, see NHS England's [keeping patient data safe](#) web page.

NHS England has published a [Transparency Notice](#) which shows the legal basis for collecting and sharing this data.

Because legal Directions have been issued for this collection patients [cannot opt-out](#) of this data being provided to NHS England, but can opt-out of NHS England providing it for research to organisations applying through the [Data Access Request Service](#).

## 3. Data Access Request Service

Background information about how organisations apply to access the data:

Organisations who want to access the data must achieve permission by completing NHS England's [Data Access Request Service](#) process which examines why the organisation wants access, what the benefits will be, that cyber security and restricted access mechanisms are in place, along with a suitable Data Sharing Agreement (or Data Sharing Framework Contract).

NHS England takes its responsibility to safeguard patient data extremely seriously and data shared by us is subject to strict rules around privacy, security and confidentiality. NHS England does not approve Data Access Request Service requests for insurance or marketing purposes, promoting or selling products or services, market research, or advertising.

The data will be viewed in a [Secure Data Access Environment](#) within NHS infrastructure which securely contains and provides access to sensitive data for approved analysts. Secure Data Environments do not allow users to download or remove the data from the environment.

Information about the data that NHS England shares, including who with and for what purpose is published in the NHS England [Data Release Register](#).

## 4. The legal basis for secondary care providers to provide this data to NHS England

NHS England has been legally [directed](#) to collect and analyse this data by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, by Directions known as the [Secondary Care ePMA Directions 2024](#). The organisations (for example, hospitals) who hold the data have a legal

obligation to provide this data to NHS England. NHS England has also issued an [Information Standards Notice](#) and [Data Provision Notice](#) to support the Directions.

## 5. What data fields will NHS England collect?

NHS England will collect information about medicines that have been prescribed to patients, and how and when the medicine was taken (administration), the reason for prescribing (known as the indication), and what stage of the patient's journey through the hospital the data relates to (for example: admission, inpatient, discharge, outpatient). The patient's NHS Number is also collected as this allows the information to be identified so it can be joined together, and if approved by the Data Access Request Service can also be joined to other information about that patient from other data collections, for example the [Hospital Episode Statistics](#).

## 6. Examples of what the data can be used for

NHS England has collected a range of prospective use cases for this medicine data and we have included 3 of them here. Patients are likely to be interested so you might like to include them in the information you provide to patients.

### i) Antimicrobial stewardship

Antibiotics are medicines used to prevent and treat bacterial infections. The overuse of antibiotics in recent years means they're becoming less effective and has led to the emergence of 'superbugs' - strains of bacteria that have developed resistance to many antibiotics. Antibiotic resistant infections can be serious and difficult to treat and are becoming an increasing cause of disability and death across the world. The biggest worry is that new strains of bacteria will emerge that cannot be treated by existing antibiotics.

Collecting and analysing hospital medicine data will show how antibiotics are used, including reason for prescribing, dose and length of treatment, whether planned doses have been given later than planned or not given at all, and if this is joined with the outcome for the patient (whether they survived, how long they were in hospital), it should help inform decisions about how antibiotics are used in the future.

### ii) COVID-19

To help inform critical decisions on the treatment of patients with COVID-19 NHS Digital was given Directions in 2020 to collect and analyse healthcare information about patients. That collection was from a small number of England's hospital trusts, but analysis confirmed that the medicines remdesivir and dexamethasone, used to treat other diseases, were also effective for treating COVID-19 and they became recommended treatments for patients.

Being able to collect data from most of England's hospital trusts on the use of these repurposed medicines means it may be possible to identify whether differences in dose and

length of treatment alter their effectiveness. We could do the same for other medicines which are being re-purposed to treat COVID-19; tocilizumab, sarilumab, ivermectin, fluvoxamine maleate. The data can also be used to see if patients across England are given equal access to treatments that are known to be effective.

### **iii) Medication safety**

Analysing hospital medicine data can support the continual monitoring of the benefit-risk profile of new medicines as they are brought into general use, and it can also enable monitoring of existing high-risk medicines that are prescribed in hospitals.

If problems are identified with medicines the NHS can improve patient safety by developing recommendations that change the way high-risk medicines are prescribed and used, and making sure these problems are widely known about.

## **7. Support**

Any general questions regarding this document should be directed to the Data project team by email to [medsdata@nhs.net](mailto:medsdata@nhs.net). For other issues you may encounter we recommend you contact (as is appropriate) your ePMA system supplier's local representative or national help desk, or your organisation's IT help desk.