Gloucestershire Hospitals – Access to Records Portal

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Gloucestershire Hospitals Access to Records Portal?

The Gloucestershire Hospitals Access to Records Portal is a secure, centralised online gateway managed by the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

It allows patients, current or former staff members, job applicants, legal representatives, and regulatory bodies to safely request and download copies of personal data, clinical files, and corporate records them.

The portal organises requests into dedicated pathways to ensure applications are sent to the Trust's Information Access Team.

How does it work?

The portal removes the need for paper applications by allowing users to complete forms electronically, securely upload digital identity verification documents (such as passports, driving licences, or staff ID badges), track the real-time progress of their request, and securely download their digital files once approved.

Can I request access to my information?

Yes, you can request copies of your personal data through the online portal by visiting: https://demo.ams-sar.com

Click the get started online button, then follow the prompts to set up your secure account or log in if you have an existing account. A user guide is available on the platform to help you through each step of the registration process.

What can I request through the portal?

- **Clinical & medical records**: Living patients can request copies of their complete medical histories, including pathology results, consultant letters, discharge summaries, and radiology medical imaging like X-rays or MRIs.
- **Non-Medical information**: Individuals can request copies of their personal data held outside of core medical records or clinical systems, such as security CCTV footage, telephone call recordings, and PALS or complaint correspondence.
- **Workforce and recruitment records**: Current or former staff members can request copies of their core HR files or occupational health records. Job candidates and applicants can request application forms and interview scoring charts.

- **Third-Party and legal requests**: Solicitors, authorised representatives, law enforcement bodies, or individuals executing a Court Order or requesting deceased patient records can also make a request.
- **Data Protection Complaints**: Users can electronically lodge a formal complaint if they are unhappy with how their request was handled or suspect a statutory infringement.

When can I request information on behalf of others?

You can legally make a request on behalf of another individual if you fit into one of the following categories:

- You are a solicitor or formal legal representative acting on behalf of a client.
- You are a parent or legal guardian requesting records for a young child.
- You have been granted explicit, signed written consent by a living friend, relative, or colleague to act as their representative.
- You hold a legally registered Lasting Power of Attorney for health and welfare that is currently active.
- You are the court-appointed Personal Representative or Executor of a patient who has passed away.

How do I make a request on behalf of others?

To submit a request for someone else, you must log onto the portal at https://demo.ams-sar.com and select the applicable form relevant to a third-party - request depending on your situation.

When filling out the form, you must upload a clear digital copy of your own photo identification along with the necessary legal credentials. These credentials include a signed letter of client authority dated within the last six months, a registered Lasting Power of Attorney document, a child birth certificate, or a formal Grant of Probate. Our team will verify these documents before any personal information is released.

How long will it take to receive my records?

We have one calendar month to respond to your request under data protection legislation. This statutory timeline officially begins on the day we receive and verify your valid identity documents and search parameters. If your request is exceptionally complex, we may extend this period by up to two additional months, and we will write to you within the first month to explain why.

Can I see the progress of my request?

You can track the live status of your application at any time by logging onto the online portal and visiting your dashboard. You will also receive automated email notifications from the Trust if our team requires further details or clarification to complete your search. You can log onto your secure account at any time to check progress or respond directly to messages from our team.

Will I always receive everything I have asked for?

Not always. In certain circumstances, the Trust is legally required or permitted to withhold some or all the information requested. This occurs when:

- Your identity or parameters cannot be satisfactorily verified by our team.
- Valid legal consent from the individual has not been provided by a representative.
- A clinical professional judge that releasing the information is highly likely to cause serious harm to the physical or mental health of the patient or another person.
- Providing access would disclose personal information relating to a third party who has not consented to the disclosure. This exemption does not usually apply if the third party is an NHS healthcare professional involved in your healthcare.
- A deceased individual explicitly indicated that they did not wish their information to be disclosed, or the file contains records that the deceased person expected to remain confidential.
- The requested information is no longer retained in accordance with the NHS Records Management Code of Practice which sets out the data retention periods for health and care records.

Our Information Access Team will always provide a clear written explanation if a legal exemption is applied to your request.

Will I need to provide identification?

Yes. Secure identity checks are mandatory to protect your privacy and shield your personal data from unauthorised access. The precise verification documents required are outlined within our Acceptable Forms of ID page and are listed clearly on each application form before you click submit.

Can I apply for access to my child's records?

Children aged twelve or older are generally considered to have the legal capacity to control their own data protection rights under UK law. This means a parent or person with parental responsibility can only make an application on behalf of a child aged twelve or over if the child gives their explicit consent, or if it is demonstrated that the child lacks the capacity to understand the request.

A person with verified parental responsibility is usually entitled to access the records of a child who is aged eleven or younger without explicit consent, provided it is not contrary to the best interests of the child.

Is there a fee for making a request for personal information about me?

No. Access to your personal data or medical files is **completely free of charge**. However, under the law, the Trust reserves the right to charge a reasonable administrative fee or refuse to act if a request is deemed clearly unfounded, excessive, or repetitive.

Can I request all internal email correspondence sent about me?

Under data protection laws, you are entitled to your personal data, not complete corporate documents or email threads. The Trust is only required to conduct a **reasonable and proportionate** search. To help us find relevant information without causing massive delays, you must provide specific search parameters such as precise date ranges, keyword subjects, and the names of the staff members involved.

Why has some information been blacked out or redacted in my files?

Your right of access only applies to your own personal data. When preparing your files, we must balance your rights with the privacy rights of other people. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, we will redact any information that identifies third parties or breaches our data protection obligations to them.

I am the Next of Kin. Can I automatically access a deceased patient's records?

No. Next of Kin status does not grant automatic legal access to the health records of someone who has passed away. Under the Access to Health Records Act 1990, records can only be released to the legally appointed **Personal Representative** holding a Grant of Probate or Letters of Administration, or to an individual who can prove they have a formal legal claim arising from the death.

How will I receive my records?

Once our team completes your request, you will receive an automated email notification containing secure instructions on how to access your files. After logging onto your portal dashboard, you will be able to download your records directly. Once downloaded, you become entirely responsible for the confidential, secure storage and ultimate safe disposal of those files.

What should I do if I am unhappy with how my request was handled?

If you are dissatisfied with our response, or if you believe there has been an infringement of data protection laws, you have the right to lodge a formal complaint. Please use our electronic **Data Protection Complaints Form** available directly on this portal. We will acknowledge your complaint within thirty days and conduct a thorough internal review.