

ELSENHAM SURGERY

PPG CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY AND AGREEMENT

Introduction

The aims of the policy are to ensure:

- all information held at the Practice about patients is confidential, whether held electronically or in hard copy
- other information about the Practice (for example its financial matters, staff records) is confidential
- all PPG members are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding confidentiality and preserving information security
- all PPG members understand their responsibilities when sharing information with both NHS and non-NHS organisations

Applicability

The policy applies to all members of the PPG and remains in force once a member leaves the PPG. Members remain bound by the terms of this agreement. Should any confidentiality breaches arise Elsenham Surgery would take action to protect itself.

Policy

- All information about patients is confidential: from the most sensitive diagnosis, to the fact of having visited the surgery or being registered at the practice. This includes information about patients' families or others associated with them.
- Confidential information may not be health-related. It can include anything that is private and not public knowledge.
- PPG members should limit any discussion about confidential information to only those who need to know within the practice.
- Only the minimum amount of necessary information should be disclosed
- The duty of confidentiality owed to a person under 16 is as great as the duty owed to any other person.
- PPG members must not under any circumstances disclose patient information to anyone outside the practice, except to other health professionals on a need-to-know basis, or where the patient has provided written consent.
- PPG members must not under any circumstances disclose confidential information about patient data or the practice to anyone outside the practice unless with the express consent of the Practice Manager.

- All patients can expect that their personal information will not be disclosed without their permission (except in the most exceptional circumstances when disclosure is required when a person is at grave risk of serious harm).
- Where disclosure of information is required which is non-routine in nature the patient will, where possible, be fully informed of the nature of the disclosure prior to this being released.
- Where the decision is made to disclose information, the decision to do so must be justified and documented.
- Person-identifiable information must not be used unless absolutely necessary – anonymised data should be used wherever possible.
- PPG members must be aware of and conform to the requirements of the Caldicott recommendations.
- Electronic transfer of any confidential information, once approved by the Practice Manager, must be transmitted via the NHSnet. PPG members must take particular care that confidential information is not transmitted in error by email or over the Internet. This includes personal data about other members of the group.
- PPG members must not take data from the practice's computer systems (e.g. on a memory stick or removable drive).
- PPG members who suspect a breach of confidentiality must inform the Practice Manager immediately.
- Any breach of confidentiality could be considered a serious offence and will be investigated thoroughly.
- PPG members remain bound by a requirement to keep information confidential even if they are no longer a member of the PPG. Any breach, or suspected breach, of confidentiality after the member has left the group will be passed to the practice's lawyers for action

Responsibilities of Elsenham Surgery:

- are responsible for ensuring that every PPG member understands the need for, and maintains, confidentiality.
- have overall responsibility for ensuring that systems and mechanisms are in place to protect confidentiality.
- have vicarious liability for the actions of PPG members

Standards of confidentiality apply to all health professionals, administrative and ancillary staff - including receptionists, secretaries, practice manager, cleaners, maintenance staff and PPG members - who are bound by this agreement to maintain confidentiality.

They must not reveal personal information they learn in the course of their work, or due to their presence in the surgery, to anybody outside the practice without the patient's consent. Nor will they discuss with colleagues or peers any aspect of a patient's attendance at the surgery in a way that might allow identification of the patient, unless to do so is necessary for the patient's care.

PPG Confidentiality Agreement

Declaration

I understand that all information about patients held by Elsenham Surgery is strictly confidential, including the fact of a particular patient having visited the surgery.

I will abide by the confidentiality guidelines set out below.

I have read this confidentiality agreement and fully understand my obligations and the consequences of any breach of confidentiality. I understand that a breach of these obligations may result in legal action.

I understand that any breach, or suspected breach, of confidentiality by me after I have left the PPG will be passed to the Practice's lawyers for action.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Confidentiality guidelines:

- Be aware that careless talk can lead to a breach of confidentiality – discuss your work only with authorised personnel, preferably in private.
- Always keep confidential documents away from prying eyes.
- Verbal reporting should be carried out in private. If this is not possible, it should be delivered in a volume such that it can only be heard by those for whom it is intended.
- When asking for confidential information in circumstances where the conversation can be overheard by others, conduct the interview in as quiet and discreet a manner as possible and

preferably find somewhere private for the discussion.

- Precautions should be taken to prevent telephone conversations being overheard.
- The duty of confidentiality owed to a person under 16 is as great as the duty owed to any other person.
- When using computers, unauthorised access should be prevented by password protection and physical security such as locking the doors when offices are left unattended. Where possible, VDU screens should be positioned so they are visible only to the user. Unwanted paper records should be disposed of safely by shredding on site.
- If unsure about authorisation to disclose, or a person's authorisation to receive confidential information, always seek authorisation from a Partner or the Practice Manager before disclosing any personal health information.