



# Copying Letters to Patients

## What are clinical letters?

In order to maintain excellent communication with our patients, we offer all patients the option of receiving clinical letters written about them. These are letters usually written by a Doctor, Nurse or Physiotherapist following an outpatient appointment or hospital stay. Receiving copies of letters written about you may be helpful and remind you what was said in clinic and give details of your treatment plan. There may be occasions where a letter is not forwarded to you. This may happen if the letter contains private information about another person, for example a family member or if the letter contains information that has not yet been discussed with you.

## What if I don't understand some of the information in the letter?

Since these are letters written from one healthcare professional to another, they may contain medical terms that you do not understand. Each letter you receive will tell you who to contact if you do not understand the letter or want further information.

## What if I notice a mistake in the letter?

Occasionally mistakes are spotted by patients and we are always keen to correct any inaccuracies. If you feel the letter is inaccurate please contact us so we may amend our records.

## What if I do not want a copy?

Unless you let us know that you don't want to receive a copy we will send one to you. It is important to tell the member of staff looking after you that you do not want to be sent any letters.

## Can I use the letter for external organisations?

We are happy for you to use the correspondence for external organisations,

for example insurance companies or the DSS. However, the letter will be a factual objective medical or surgical opinion on which to inform your treatment and not a medical report.

## Children & young people

Parents will receive copies of clinical letters. It is expected that young people, aged 16 and 17 will be offered copies of their letters.

## General Data Protection Regulation/ Data Protection Bill (2018)

Offering patients copies of clinical letters does not impact on your rights of access to information under the data protection act.

## Copying letters

It is important that that we send the letters to a location where you want to receive it. Please confirm the address where you want the letter to be sent if this is not your normal home address. It is also important to let us know immediately when you move address.

## Confidentiality

Procedures will be in place to minimise the likelihood of information being accessed by unauthorised people.

Details can be obtained regarding your rights to see information held about you under the General Data Protection Act 2018 by contacting the Information Governance Manager on 0121 685 4000 ext 55808.