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Dear Patient

I am writing to you to inform you of a change we will be making from 29th March 2020, which will affect how we share patient data with the Practices in the Barnstaple Alliance Primary Care Network.

As part of our Business Continuity Plan we plan to change the way we share data so that records will automatically be “shared out” with the other 3 practices within the network – **Fremington Medical Centre, Brannam Medical Centre and Queens Medical Centre**. This will enable us to continue to provide services to our patients during episodes of significant disruption, particularly during the current Coronavirus Pandemic. The practices will be able to support each other and prioritise care where needed. In order to do this, the GPs and other Health Professionals at the Barnstaple Alliance require access to your GP record so that they can treat safely.

The Barnstaple Alliance practices currently employ a social prescriber, clinical pharmacist and 1st contact physiotherapist who see patients from all four practices. We also provide Improved Access, whereby patients are able to pre-book routine appointments with a GP, Nurse or Healthcare Assistant at any of the practices in the Barnstaple Alliance, along with a GP Visiting Services and Care Home Monitoring Service. This all requires access to your GP record so that the Health Professionals can treat safely.

Medical record access is audited, and staff working for the NHS Organisations listed above are bound by the strict confidentiality and data protection laws that apply to all NHS Organisations.

Record sharing in this way is an extremely useful tool, as it enables NHS Organisations to view your GP record, and add to it. This means that your GP or Health Care Professional will be able to view the notes from your own practice, as well as any notes from our Care Home and GP Visiting service, all in one place. It also means that your GP record will be available for to these teams should you be referred / require care from them in the future. In addition to this, communication between these NHS Organisations is streamlined as there is a common record available to the Health Professionals involved in your care. This sharing mechanism also means that you should only have to tell your story once, instead of having to repeat your medical history several times over when a new team is involved in your care.

The lawful basis for this type of data sharing is defined under Articles 6.1 (e) and 9.2 (h) of the General Data Protection Regulations:

Article 6(1)(e) ‘...necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority...’.

Article 9(2)(h) ‘necessary for the purposes of preventative or occupational medicine for the assessment of the working capacity of the employee, medical diagnosis, the provision of health or social care or treatment or the management of health or social care systems and services...’

Please note that if you have previously dissented (opted-out) to sharing your records, this decision will be upheld, and your record will only be accessed by your GP Practice. Should you wish to opt-out of the Enhanced Data Sharing Model (EDSM), please speak to a Receptionist who will be able to update your personal preferences. **Please note that by opting out of the EDSM, other health professionals may not be able to see important medical information, which may impact on the care you receive.**

We are including the Practice’s fair processing notice which has been revised for this new way of working. If you have any feedback or questions about this new way of working, please use the details below. We would be grateful if any comments/responses are sent in by 28/3/2020:

Email:

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I am sorry for the short time frame but with the ever increasing risk of Coronavirus in our area and the impact it will have on the healthcare system we need to try and ensure that we are able to cope with the demands that this will put upon all the Barnstaple Alliance practices.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for considering the points raised.

Yours sincerely,



Sharon Bates
Management Partner
Litchdon Medical Centre