

This Privacy Notice provides a broad description of the way the Public Health Agency processes your personal information. To understand how your own personal information is processed, you may need to refer to any personal communications you have received or contact us directly.

Why are you processing my personal information?

Primarily, we collect data for administration purposes and for the commissioning, delivery and improvement of HSC services in line with legislation, research and governance requirements.

Reasons we process your information may include:

- surveillance - to identify trends in illness/disease outbreak and to prevent/control spread;
- for quality assurance and screening processes
- analysis – for health research, health protection and health promotion and for the production of reports and official statistics;
- to inform planning and commissioning of services and to inform DOH policy
- to allow analysis of trends in service usage by specific groups;
- to involve service users and carers in the planning of services;
- for official communication and publicity purposes;
- to provide advice to patients, clinicians and other HSC professionals;
- to contribute to service specifications;
- for contract monitoring and the administration, selection and evaluation of research projects and funding/grant applications.

Processing requirements:

To be able to process your personal information we must have a lawful basis for doing so and at least one of the following must apply:

- 1) **Consent** – an individual must give clear consent for us to process their personal data and then only for a specific purpose.
- 2) **Contract** – the processing is necessary for a contract we have with an individual, or because we have asked the individual to take specific steps before entering into a

contract.

3) **Legal obligation** – processing is necessary to comply with the law.

4) **Vital interests** – processing is necessary to protect someone's life.

5) **Public task** – processing is necessary for us to perform a task in the public interest or for our official functions and the task or function has a clear basis in law.

Processing within the Public Health Agency is likely to fall under 2, 3 or 5 above.

Do I need to give my consent?

Whilst the majority of our data is obtained under one or more of the lawful bases outlined above, we may, occasionally, request your consent in writing when collecting data for your direct care, for media purposes or for research purposes.

You may contact us at any time to withdraw your consent or to ask that your personal data be deleted.

Please see contact details below. Information may be shared without your consent when required by law, to protect the public from serious harm or for the monitoring of certain health conditions.

What information is collected?

We only collect the information we need to for each specific purpose. This may include your name, address, date of birth, contact details, demographics and some equality data, as well as images/photos and voice recordings.

We may also collect health related/medical data including diagnostic information as well as financial and contractual information as part of our grant/funding awards service.

Where do you get my personal data from?

Much of the personal data we use will be obtained directly from you. This may be in person, on an official form (online or paper), or by telephone.

We also receive data from parents, carers, healthcare professionals and other health service organisations, such as Health and Social Care Trusts, GPs, and pharmacies. For example, we use data from routine health and social care administrative data systems to monitor the impact of infections like flu and to evaluate how interventions control the impact of infections. Where we can, we work with de-identified data to perform our functions. We also gather some personal information from surveys, consultations, funding/grant/tender applications and performance monitoring reports.

Do you share my personal data with anyone else?

Yes. To help us provide the best care or service for you, we may need to share your information with other healthcare bodies and professionals, including GPs and Hospitals, for the purposes of health protection.

Personal information may also be shared with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) for the purposes of national disease surveillance or with other UK National Screening Programmes. Sometimes, we may share some information with external organisations such as universities, auditors and survey/research organisations etc. As far as possible, information collected for research or to help identify trends in disease will be used in a way that does not identify you personally.

Extracts of information may also appear on our Website or in Press documents, with your consent.

Do you transfer my personal data to other countries?

Only in exceptional circumstances, for example:

- where information needs to be shared with Public Health agencies outside the UK for the purposes of disease surveillance and to protect the health of individuals and others potentially affected by an outbreak.
- where Registries share data with other Registries outside the UK, under contractual arrangements, for quality assurance and expert analysis.

Any transfers will be made in full compliance with UK GDPR and only when we have a legitimate basis for doing so.

How long do you keep my personal data?

We will only retain your data for as long as necessary, in line with our Retention and Disposal Schedule and specific guidance issued by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland ([Good Management, Good Records – available here](#)).

What rights do I have?

- You have the right to obtain confirmation that your data is being processed, and access to your personal data.
- You are entitled to have personal data rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete.
- You have a right to have personal data erased and to prevent processing, in specific circumstances.
- You have the right to ‘block’ or suppress processing of personal data, in specific circumstances.
- You have the right to data portability, in specific circumstances.
- You have the right to object to the processing, in specific circumstances.
- You have rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling.

How do I complain if I am not happy?

If you are unhappy with any aspect of this privacy notice, or with how your personal information is being processed, please contact the Data Protection Officer at the following address:-

Data Protection Officer:

Ms Helen O’Hare
Public Health Agency,
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS
Tel: 028 9536 8023
Email: dpo.pha@hscni.net

If you are still not happy, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO):

Information Commissioner’s Office:

Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF
Tel: 0303 123 1113

Email: casework@ico.org.uk
<https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

Changes to our Privacy Notice:

This Privacy Notice will be kept under regular review and any updates will be placed on our website.

April 2025

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