

Connect Care – Frequently asked questions

What is Connect Care?

In the past health and social care workers from the different local organisations involved in your care have not had a system in place to share important information about your care automatically. This means that GPs, hospital staff, district nurses, occupational therapists and social workers have not always had immediate access to all the information they need to provide the most timely and efficient care.

To address this we have developed 'Connect Care'. Connect Care is a local electronic record which allows important information from separate record systems to be viewed quickly and safely, by staff directly involved in your care on a need to know basis.

Connect Care does not gather new information; it makes existing information more readily available anywhere that you receive care.

This means those involved in your care, such as GPs, hospital staff, district nurses, and social workers, will have faster access to information about you, which will help them provide you with the most timely and efficient treatment.

Which organisations are involved in Connect Care?

The organisations currently involved in electronic information sharing via Connect Care are:

- ▶ GP practices in south east London – Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark
- ▶ Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust
- ▶ Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
- ▶ Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
- ▶ King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- ▶ South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust
- ▶ Bromley Healthcare
- ▶ Local authorities (social care) in south east London

In future, additional care providers may be included in electronic information sharing. The list of care providers will be maintained on the Connect Care website:

www.lewishamandgreenwich.nhs.uk/connectcare.

How is Connect Care going to benefit me?

Often when you see a care professional important information about you is not available at that time which can end up causing repeat appointments, repeat blood tests, or you being constantly asked to repeat information that should be readily available. For example, if you are treated in the emergency department at hospital, the staff who treat you may have to spend time contacting other organisations to obtain relevant information – such as the results of any tests you have had through your GP surgery.

With Connect Care the professionals treating you will be able to see this information at a glance. It means that front-line professionals can focus on providing you with the right treatment, rather than wasting time trying to get all the information they need. This will speed up treatment and may help avoid you getting admitted into hospital unnecessarily, or may help you return to your home more quickly after treatment.

What will my Connect Care record include?

Connect Care will contain important information about you. This includes:

- ▶ Your name, address and NHS number to help identify you correctly
- ▶ Information about your appointments and hospital attendances
- ▶ Medicines you are taking plus details of medication reactions and allergies
- ▶ Test results

Who can view my information in Connect Care?

Only authorised staff will have access to Connect Care on a need to know basis.

The information each person will be able to view will depend on their job role e.g. a social worker will not be able to see the same level of information as a GP.

We will ask your permission at the point of care before viewing your Connect Care record. If you are unable to give

permission, e.g. in an emergency, your care providers will only view your record if they believe it is in your best interest. If this is the case, this will be documented.

Access to your Connect Care record is fully audited, i.e. who has looked at your record, what they looked at, and when.

What if I don't want my information to be available through Connect Care?

You can choose to have a Connect Care record. If you would like one, you won't need to do anything. It will happen automatically.

You have the right to choose not to have your information available through Connect Care. If you don't want your information to be available through Connect Care and want to find out how to opt-out, or want to find out how this might impact your care, visit the Connect Care website at www.lewishamandgreenwich.nhs.uk/connectcare. If you do not have access to the website, you can call **020 8836 4592** and leave your name and number for someone to contact you.

What will it mean if I do not have a Connect Care record?

Without a Connect Care record your records will stay as they are now with information being shared by letter, email, fax or phone. This means that health and social care staff caring for you may not have all the information they need to allow them to deliver fast, effective and safe care for you.

Is my information secure?

Yes, your information is secure as Connect Care can only be accessed over a secure network by those authorised to view it.

Can I get access to my own Connect Care record on-line?

Not yet. However, this is something we are keen to introduce at a later stage.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, you can request a copy of your record. To do this you can download the View Your Record form from the Connect Care website at www.lewishamandgreenwich.nhs.uk/connectcare and return the completed form to the address provided. If you do not have access to the website, you can call 020 8836 4592 and leave your name and number for someone to contact you.

Will you be selling my information to insurance or research companies?

No, we will never sell your information to any third party.

Will social services use information in Connect Care when assessing my benefits claims?

No, information will only ever be used in the delivery of care.

Is this the same as Summary Care Record (SCR)?

No, the national Summary Care Record is not the same as your local Connect Care record. Your Connect Care record will provide a more detailed view of your health and care, and will only be available locally.

If I have already opted out of SCR will this automatically apply to Connect Care?

No, you will need to let us know if you want to opt out of Connect Care.

If you don't want your information to be available through Connect Care and want to find out how to opt-out, or want to find out how this might impact your care, visit the Connect Care website at www.lewishamandgreenwich.nhs.uk/connectcare. If you do not have access to the website, you can call **020 8836 4592** and leave your name and number for someone to contact you.

Is this related to Care.data?

No, Care.data is a national NHS service which collects non-identifiable patient information from GP practices to help in planning and research. Connect Care is not linked to Care.data in any way.

I'm new to the area – do I have a Connect Care record?

If you are registered with a participating GP practice, or have received care from any of the other participating organisations, then you will have a Connect Care record.

Who can I contact for more information?

Further information can be found on our website www.lewishamandgreenwich.nhs.uk/connectcare. If you do not have access to the website, you can call **020 8836 4592** and leave your name and number for someone to contact you.