

CONSULTANT/REFERRER REFERENCES FOR NHP MDTs

No sensitive/personal data, please.

This is a gentle reminder that the NHP advise you to please not send in referrals, slides, screenshots etc. with sensitive and patient identifiable data, such as their names (in full or in part), and NHS numbers, as noted on the referral forms.

-The NHS Number is [considered personal data](#) and [protected by safeguards](#) because patients can be identified easily by those who have access to other NHS data, nationally. Because of the link to clinical, psychosocial and other data included in the MDT forms and discussions, patient anonymity becomes particularly necessary.

-The NHP do not store these types of patient identifiers. When they are sent in with the forms, the references are altered (usually deleting middle digits) or said data removed.

-The reason NHP do not use and save this information is in order to protect/preserve patients' data and dignity, in alignment with [Information Governance](#) (IG) guidance principles, and with the backdrop of treating '[other people's information as though it were your own](#)' and asking ourselves: '[if this was my information how would I feel about it being shared in this way?](#)' This is particularly true when you consider that we live a global society but also that these patients are part of a local geographic community that includes the hospital staff.

Yes, please use relevant, searchable references.

-In the same vein, referrers are strongly encouraged to use relevant references that are searchable according to their hospital data systems. This facilitates audits and various data requests (both ways) between the referrer, disease groups, NHS England/CRG and the NHP office.

-A good number of consultants use hospital (MRN) numbers (also noted on the forms), initials, and other recognisable references, and this causes no issues on either side and ensures data is searchable years after the event.

-The NHP will always include your noted reference, as well as ours, in all documentation (e.g. agenda, minutes, feedback requests etc.) that pertains to your case.

Information Governance (IG)

Two key aspects of the NHS England guideline on Information Governance, which impact the above practices encouraged are noted below.

1) Minimisation of Data- *You should only collect, use and share the information you need. For example when sharing information with a colleague, you should share only the information they need to provide care.*

- As well as the Core Panel Members and Observers from around England, the NHP MDT comprises trainees and visitors from various national and international spheres, due to the clinical, corporate, operational and collaborative nature of learning the meetings

offer. This third party element increases the margin of error if referral forms are sent out with various types of personal data or naming patients during meetings.

- Not all NHS attendees are involved in the direct provision of care for the patient and hence do not need to know the personal information.
- NHS staff who have undergone the same training have varying levels of IG understanding and adherence, hence anonymity reduces the margin of error for a data breach.

2) Integrity and confidentiality (security)- *You should ensure that information is used and shared securely. This includes ensuring that information is not lost, destroyed or damaged.*

- Particularly with the increase of cybercrime affecting NHS organisations, the NHP cannot guarantee a high level of security or take responsibility for so much sensitive information on our very rudimentary databases (even with passwords), which are housed on a shared drive.
- As noted in point 1, the NHP cannot guarantee that referral forms going out to a large number of individuals (circa 170) will be treated with optimal data security during transfer, endpoint use and storage, or that myriad devices will be sufficiently secure during the video calls where patient information is being discussed.
- As the meetings are recorded, this makes IG adherence during meetings important.

The NHP thanks you for your role in making the process run smoothly and in protecting our patients.