

Patient confidentiality

Ellern Mede's specialist eating disorder services are confidential. Staff will not disclose either that a person is a patient, or disclose any personal information about a patient to anyone outside of the service without the patient's consent except in the event of the following:

- Where the member of staff has the patient's consent to disclose the information or data to an approved third party and the clinical team is in agreement with this.
- Where the member of staff would be liable to civil or criminal court proceedings if the information was not disclosed. In such circumstances we would make every effort to obtain the patient's consent if possible.
- If the member of staff has sufficient concern to determine that the patient is at risk, either from their own actions or if there is sufficient concern for the wellbeing of the patient.
- Where others may be at risk.

Children and Adolescents - information sharing and the law

Under English law, parents are responsible for their children until they are 18 years old. If young people are ill and do not accept treatment, parents can consent to treatment on their behalf.

Parental Responsibility is only lost when:

- The child reaches 18 years of age (England and Wales) (16 in Scotland)
- If it is brought to an end on application to a Court by the person with Parental Responsibility.

In the case of people under the age of 18 patients and clinicians can agree what they consider to be sensitive personal health information, differentiating this from what is general information about the illness and its treatment that needs to be shared with the family. General information about treatment and progress is routinely shared among the patient's care team and with the family unless it is considered by the Consultant to be inappropriate to do so.

Where appropriate information may be shared with practitioners in other health organisations involved in the patient's treatment, provided this meets ethical and legal obligations for patient confidentiality and the Data Protection Act.

A child (anyone under 16 years old) can consent to treatment as long as they have enough understanding and intelligence to fully appreciate what is involved in their treatment. This is known as being "Gillick competent", in which case additional consent by a person with parental responsibility is not required.