

How your data is used by the NMPA: information for women and birthing people who are planning or gave birth in Wales (Fair Processing Notice)

NHS maternity units are taking part in a national clinical audit called the National Maternity and Perinatal Audit (NMPA).

What is an audit?

An audit uses data to independently examine, review and analyse the performance of a service.

A clinical audit allows those providing, and the individuals using, a health service to know how their service is performing against available national standards, and in comparison to other similar services. The ultimate aim of a clinical audit is to identify changes that will drive improvements in quality of care and improve outcomes for those using the health service.

What is the purpose of this audit?

The aim of the NMPA is to study how mothers, birthing people, and their babies are cared for across England, Scotland and Wales. The NMPA makes it easier for maternity care providers to monitor and improve the care they provide. The audit includes information about all mothers, birthing people and babies for births that took place after 1st April 2014.

Who will benefit from this audit?

This clinical audit will help expectant parents and their babies by giving them access to data about services in their area, helping them to make informed decisions about their care. It will also help improve the quality of care they receive. Maternity units receive reports which can be used to compare the quality of the care they provide with other units. This enables them to care for women, birthing people and their babies more effectively. All NMPA reports are publically available via the NMPA website (<https://maternityaudit.org.uk>).

What information is used?

As part of routine maternity care, electronic information is already collected about all women and birthing people who use NHS maternity services. This information is used by maternity unit staff every day in the same way that paper medical records are used.

For births from 1st April 2014 onwards the NMPA receives information from Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) (formerly NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)) with identifiers removed. The received data are

'pseudonymised' which means we do not receive personal information such as your name, date of birth, address, postcode, or NHS number.

The data are kept for the length of the data sharing agreement in place with the data providers (DHCW). This is also in line with the length of our NMPA contract (currently until December 2025). This gives us time to respond to queries relating to the data. For example, maternity units may contact us to find out more information about their results.

What happens then?

The data providers combine information from a number of different national sources. This allows the NMPA to see, for example, if you were re-admitted to hospital following childbirth. We use these (pseudonymised) data to write reports assessing maternity care at local and national levels. Combining all these data allows us to obtain a bigger picture of maternity care services and outcomes. Nothing in the reports, or the way they are used, will show any information which could lead to you or your baby being identified.

How do I know the information will be kept securely?

All information held by the NMPA is stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA 2018) and other relevant legislation. As part of our data sharing agreement, we cannot onwardly share the data we receive with other individuals or organisations. Furthermore, all of the NMPA team undergo annual training in data security and data handling.

What if I have questions about the use of my data, and what are my rights?

If you have any queries about the use of your data, please contact the data providers (Digital health and Care Wales) who collect the data and remove identifiers before sending to the NMPA.

What are my rights when you use my data?

You have the right to complain about the way the NMPA are handling your information. If you think there is a problem please contact us in the first instance, and if you are unhappy with our response you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office ***

*** More information about contacting the Information Commissioner's Office can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/handling/>

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