



Brookside

GROUP PRACTICE

Partners in Healthcare

Requests to Amend Medical Records

Thank you for your request to make a change to your medical records. We encourage our patients to report factual inaccuracies or question the content of their records.

It is important to understand the purpose of your medical records. They are there support clinical decision-making and continuity of care. For example, if you see a different clinician in the future the records help them to understand what has gone before, so that you do not have to repeat everything. Often in medicine, there are a variety of possible diagnoses when you first tell the clinician about your problem, and further investigations plus how your symptoms develop over time will narrow this down. Therefore, records may contain possible diagnoses which later turn out to be incorrect as part of the process of narrowing things down. Records are not simply a list of every medical problem you have had. They are also not primarily a means of your clinician communicating with you.

When discussing accuracy of data, the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) "Guide to the GDPR" notes that the right of rectification does not mean that doctors are required to remove their clinical opinions or differential diagnoses that are later found to be incorrect. It says: 'A misdiagnosis of a medical condition continues to be held as part of a patient's medical records even after the diagnosis is corrected, because it is relevant for the purpose of explaining treatment given to the patient, or for other health problems.'

The ICO also notes that: "An initial diagnosis (which is an informed opinion) may prove to be incorrect after more extensive examination or further tests. However, if the patient's records reflect the doctor's diagnosis at the time, the records are not inaccurate, because they accurately reflect that doctor's opinion at a particular time. Moreover, the record of the doctor's initial diagnosis may help those treating the patient later".

You do not have the right to alter the contents of your records because they are upsetting, or you disagree with them. It is however possible for us to hide certain items from online view (ie hide from you but not clinicians) if you find them upsetting or are concerned a family member could see something you would prefer them not to. Please let us know via the BGP website if you would like this done (with the date of the entries).

If the record is an accurate representation of the situation at the time the note was written, and we are therefore unable to alter the record, we can make an additional note to record that you disagree with the opinion. This will then be visible to future clinicians (and yourself) accessing your record.

If you are not happy with the resolution of your request for a change you have a right to complain to the practice, and if not satisfied with the response to this, to complain to the ICO.