

# ACCESS TO MEDICAL RECORDS POLICY

(Care Standard 2)



1. *BAPAM* regards patients' medical records as a crucial component of the service it provides. It is committed to ensuring its medical records are accurate and are written in a way that gives full dignity and respect to patients.
2. *BAPAM* is further committed to ensuring that record storage is secure and maintains confidentiality. All hard copy medical records – front-sheet forms, correspondence, notes etc - are locked away in the storage room at the end of the working day. All computerised records are stored on computers that are password protected.
3. *BAPAM* undertakes to comply fully in granting patients sight of records as is required by the *Data Protection Act*. Notices at *BAPAM* clinics advise patients of their legal entitlements in this respect.
4. Where patients wish to be given a copy of a referral letter which has been sent as a result of their assessment, this will be supplied by the *BAPAM* Office.
5. Where a patient requests access to their medical records, whether in person or in writing, staff will check initially with the clinician involved. A photocopy of the relevant record will be supplied to the patient free of charge, along with a covering letter inviting them to contact *BAPAM* if they find that there is language or medical terminology used in their records which they do not understand. As far as practicable, copies of medical records are sent out no more than five working days after a patient's request. (Note: where a written request is received, staff will only supply medical record copies by post if the address in the requesting letter matches that on the *BAPAM* database. Where there is no match, *BAPAM* will invite the patient to visit the office to collect the copies)
6. Copies of medical records are also supplied where a written request is made by another party e.g. a solicitor, provided the request is accompanied by appropriate signed and dated authorisation from the patient.
7. Special arrangements apply in respect of patients under 18 requesting access to their own medical records and parents who request access to the records of their under-18 year old children. For these, see *BAPAM Policy – Safeguarding of Children & Young People Policy & Practice*.
8. An Access to Medical Records Register will be maintained recording all patients' requests for sight of records, the date the records were inspected and whether copies were made.