DATA PROTECTION CODE OF PRACTICE
FOR PATIENT INFORMATION

KEEPING YOUR RECORDS

Ashby and Atkinson Dental Practice complies with the 1998 Data Protection Act and this policy describes our procedures for ensuring that personal information about patients is processed fairly and lawfully.

WHAT PERSONAL DATA DO WE HOLD?

In order to provide you with a high standard of dental care and attention, we need to hold personal information about you. This personal data comprises:

- your past and current medical and dental condition; personal details such as your age, address, telephone number and your general medical practitioner
- radiographs, clinical photographs and study models
- information about the treatment that we have provided or propose to provide and its cost
- notes of conversations/incidents that might occur for which a record needs to be kept
- records of consent to treatment
- any correspondence relating to you with other health care professionals, for example in the hospital or community services.

WHY DO WE HOLD INFORMATION ABOUT YOU?

We need to keep comprehensive and accurate personal data about our patients in order to provide them with safe and appropriate dental care. We also need to process personal data about you in order to provide care under NHS arrangements and to ensure the proper management and administration of the NHS.

HOW WE PROCESS THE DATA

We will process personal data that we hold about you in the following way:

Retaining information

We will retain your dental records while you are a practice patient and after you cease to be a patient, for at least eleven years or for children until age 25, whichever is the longer.

Security of information

Personal data about you is held in the practice's computer system and in a manual filing system. The information is not accessible to the public and only authorised members of staff have access to it. Our computer system has secure audit trails and we back up information routinely.

Disclosure of information

In order to provide proper and safe dental care, we may need to disclose personal information about you to:

- your general medical practitioner
- the hospital or community dental services
- other health professionals caring for you
- NHS payment authorities
- the Inland Revenue
- the Benefits Agency, where you are claiming exemption or remission from NHS charges
- private dental schemes of which you are a member.

Disclosure will take place on a 'need-to-know' basis, so that only those individuals/organisations who need to know in order to provide care to you and for the proper administration of Government (whose personnel are covered by strict confidentiality rules) will be given the information. Only that information that the recipient needs to know will be disclosed.

In very limited circumstances or when required by law or a court order, personal data may have to be disclosed to a third party not connected with your health care. In all other situations, disclosure that is not covered by this Code of Practice will only occur when we have your specific consent.

Where possible you will be informed of these requests for disclosure.

Access

You have the right of access to the data that we hold about you and to receive a copy. Access may be obtained by making a request in writing and the payment of a fee for access of up to £10.00. We will provide a copy of the record within 40 days of receipt of the request and fee and an explanation of your record should you require it.

If you do not agree

If you do not wish personal data that we hold about you to be disclosed or used in the way that is described in this Code of Practice, please discuss the matter with your dentist. You have the right to object, but this may affect our ability to provide you with dental care.