This leaflet explains what Public Health England (PHE) National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS) is and does and why we need information about people’s drug and alcohol treatment. It also explains who we sometimes share information with, how we protect the information we use, and what your options are with any information we may hold about you.

What PHE NDTMS is and does

Whenever someone receives treatment from an alcohol or drug misuse service in England the health worker seeing them will record a range of information to ensure the best possible care is provided.

Some of this information is shared with Public Health England (PHE) and collected by the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS). Information is only ever shared with PHE with the direct consent of the person using an alcohol or drug treatment service. NDTMS helps PHE look at the numbers using treatment services, and how effective these services are in helping people with substance misuse issues.

Who manages NDTMS?

As of 1st April 2013, NDTMS moved from the National Treatment Agency (NTA) to PHE, an executive agency of the Department of Health. PHE exists to protect and improve the nation’s health and wellbeing, and to reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. We are not part of the NHS but work very closely alongside it.
Information on what PHE is and does can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england

Further details on the information we use and why can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/about/personal-information-charter

What information NDTMS uses and why

PHE is responsible for monitoring alcohol and drug treatment services across England.

The information collected on NDTMS includes some personal information, including the initials, date of birth, gender, local authority of residence and the first part of the postcode of the people using treatment services. Some local services also provide us with full postcodes but this only ever happens with the permission of the service users themselves. Full names and full addresses are never collected on NDTMS.

NDTMS never contacts local treatment service users and does not pass on any personal information to the Police.

The information collected on the numbers of service users, the types of substances they use, the treatment they receive and how long they spend in treatment is used to:

- Monitor how effective alcohol and drug treatment services are
- Plan and develop services that best meet local needs
- Produce statistics and support research about alcohol and drug use and treatment

We never publish any information that could be used to directly identify individual service users.

How NDTMS protects the information it uses

The information collected by NDTMS is held with the permission of service users. PHE staff take their legal and professional obligations to protect the confidentiality of service user information very seriously. As well as limiting the amount of personal information we hold, we make sure that our staff can only see information that is essential to their job.
Who NDTMS shares information with and why

For PHE to fulfil its responsibilities, information is sometimes shared with others who carry out work on our behalf. PHE shares information with the National Drug Evidence Centre (NDEC), which is based at the University of Manchester. NDEC publishes regular statistics on substance misuse treatment from NDTMS on behalf of PHE.

More information is available at: www.population-health.manchester.ac.uk/epidemiology/NDEC

PHE also occasionally shares information with academic institutions and with the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) for the purpose of health outcomes research, but we take clear steps to protect the identity of people to whom those records belong and ensure the information provided cannot be used to identify an individual.

How to find out if NDTMS holds any information about you

If you would like to find out if we hold any personal information about you, then you can write to us at the following address:

Public Information Access Office
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8UG
foi@phe.gov.uk

Your personal information and your rights

If you are or have been a user of alcohol and drug treatment services, those treatment services cannot pass on your information to NDTMS without your permission.

The law provides you with the right to object to PHE holding personal information about you. We hope that in explaining the important reasons why personal information is used, and the careful steps taken to protect confidentiality, you will not wish to have your personal information removed from PHE records.
If you are currently receiving treatment for a substance misuse issue and you do not want your information to be passed on to NDTMS, this will not have any effect on the treatment you receive.

Please speak to your key worker if you want to have any information we hold about you removed from NDTMS. You can also contact us directly at the following address:

Public Information Access Office
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8UG
foi@phe.gov.uk