

Cherry Tree Dental care

Records management policy

This dental practice holds and maintains information about the business and its patients that is necessary for the efficient running of the practice and the effective provision of dental care. This policy describes the information that must be kept, how it must be stored, archived and disposed of to ensure that the practice complies with the requirements of data protection legislation.

The practice **Confidentiality policy** describes the need for all members of the dental team to keep patient information confidential and practice procedures for handling information about patients; it must be followed always. The arrangements for keeping information safe are described in the practice **Data security policy**, which includes the measures for physical and electronic security.

The practice Privacy Notice for patients helps them understand how the practice uses and protects their personal information.

Retaining information

Information about the business and its patients is kept for no longer than required.

- **Patient records** are maintained and kept up to date while the individual remains a practice patient. When they cease to be a patient of the practice, their records are retained for ten years following their last visit to the practice or until age of 25, whichever is the longer.
- **Personnel and associate records** are maintained and kept up to date whilst the individual works at the practice as an employee or self-employed contractor. Following their departure from the practice their records are retained for six years from the date of leaving the practice. Records relating to workplace accidents or injuries are retained indefinitely. Records for associates are kept for up to eight years.
- **Financial records** are retained for at least six years.
- **Business records**, including contracts with suppliers, are retained for at least six years.

Secure storage

All members of the team must protect information held by the practice and store it securely. Information is only accessed on a need-to-know basis: where it is necessary to carry out required tasks; in the delivery of care to patients; or upon the direct instruction of a senior person within the practice.

For records held electronically, access is password protected and restricted to those who, as part of their work duties, require the information. Electronic records are regularly backed-up by our Dental IT and the backups are stored off-site in a physically secure location.

Non-electronic (paper) records are stored in a location that is not accessible to patients, visitors to the practice or other members of the public. To ensure that patient record cards, financial information and personnel records are stored securely they must be kept in lockable cabinets at the end of each working day and the keys retained by S.Dadabhai & I.Patel as well as our practice manager.

Patient record cards are stored securely in locked filing cabinets and can only be accessed by the dental team within working hours.

Financial information and personnel records are stored securely in the practice manager's office.

Archiving records

Where records need to be retained but are no longer required on a day-to-day basis, they are archived and stored securely. Records will be stored in a way that ensures easy identification and retrieval. The final decision on archiving information is taken by S.Dadabhai & I.Patel. Electronic records that need to be retained but are not required on a day-to-day basis are, in the first instance, archived within the IT system. Where electronic storage space is at or near capacity, archived electronic data will be copied onto a suitable electronic format with copies stored securely at the practice premises and off-site.

The practice has systems for reviewing archived information that is no longer needed. All patient files that are no longer required on a day to day basis but need to be retained by law are filed in a separate area of the practice not accessible to patients in locked filing drawers and this is reviewed every 12 months by two senior members of staff, a reminder is set on the practice managers outlook calendar to alert this is due.

Secure disposal of old records

Records that are no longer required are disposed of securely by shredding, pulping or incineration. The services of a professional contractor will be used where necessary; a certificate of confidential destruction is obtained and retained by the practice as evidence of DPA compliance.

Patient study models are disposed of as soon as they are no longer required, and at the latest at the same time as the records associated with the patient are disposed of. All study models are destroyed through a contractor and all relevant paper work would be shredded at the same time.

Records held electronically and backups of electronic information are disposed of using the secure deletion option on the practice computer system.

The final decision on disposing of records will be taken by S.Dadabhai or I.Patel

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