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Statement on the National Data Opt-Out Policy and RCEM QIPs

23 March 2022

The Royal College of Emergency Medicine's National Quality Improvement Program (QIP) supports Emergency Departments (ED) with quality assurance and quality improvement of key topics. As part of the QIP, registered EDs submit anonymised data about a sample of eligible patients who have attended their ED within the study period.

The National Data Opt-Out Policy, which applies from 31 March 2022, allows a patient receiving care in England to state they do not want their confidential patient information to be used for purposes beyond their individual care and treatment, e.g. for research and planning. [Read more about which health and care settings and types of care are included.](#)

When a patient sets an opt-out choice, it is recorded against their NHS number on the Spine. It will remain unless the patient changes their mind, even after they have died. (<https://digital.nhs.uk/services/national-data-opt-out/compliance-with-the-national-data-opt-out>).

RCEM fully respects a patient's right to privacy and choice to opt-out of data sharing.

As data submitted to RCEM's QIPs are anonymous, the opt-out policy does not apply (<https://digital.nhs.uk/services/national-data-opt-out/understanding-the-national-data-opt-out/confidential-patient-information>). RCEM would like to remind all participants that identifiable data is not to be submitted for the QIPs, it is your responsibility to ensure no NHS numbers or other identifiable information is submitted as the patient reference. Please refer to the ICO's [Anonymisation: managing data protection risk code of practice](#) for further information about anonymisation.

To respect the wishes of your patient's, we recommend your organisation uses MESH to remove any patients who have opted out from your sample of eligible patients, before anonymising and submitting. Please see NHS Digital for further information <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/national-data-opt-out/compliance-with-the-national-data-opt-out#the-check-for-national-data-opt-outs-service-technical-solution>.

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Excellence in Emergency Care

Incorporated by Royal Charter, 2008
Registered Charity Number: 1122689

VAT Reg. No: 173205823
Scottish Charity Number: SC044373