Adopters guidance

# Understanding types of health and care data

Downloaded on November 29th, 2026

## This is required guidance

It is legally required and it is an essential activity.

## This Guide covers:

- England

## From:

- Health Research Authority (HRA)

Last reviewed: 29 August 2025

Last updated: 29 August 2025



**Reviewed by:** Health and Care IG Panel

Two types of health and care data can be distinguished to help you determine when the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks apply:

1. Data that relates to identified or identifiable individuals. **Confidential patient and service-user information** is information, both clinical and demographic (such as name and address), relating to, or in connection with, an identified or identifiable individual's past or present use of services (NHS or adult social care). This broad definition recognises the importance of maintaining trust in health and care services, so that all individuals can be reassured in fully engaging with these service that their confidential information will only be used in ways that they reasonably expect
2. Data that does not or no longer relates to identified or identifiable individuals (**anonymous data**), such that the process of rendering the data anonymous means that the laws that apply to the original data no longer apply to those receiving it in modified form

Get more information about ICO guidance on anonymisation

 Downloaded on 29/11/2026, for the latest information, check the website as printed documents may be outdated.