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| Cookies policy and template  |
| May 2022 |



About this guidance

This guidance covers:

* What cookies are.
* What the law requires you to tell users of your website about cookies.
* A template cookies policy for those Healthwatch that use the template website provided by Healthwatch England.

The guidance

What is a cookie

A cookie is a small text file that is downloaded onto a computer or smartphone when the user accesses a website. It allows the website to recognise that user’s device and store some information about the user’s preferences or past actions.

## The law

The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR) sit alongside the Data Protection Act and the UK GDPR. They give people specific privacy rights in relation to electronic communications. The only part of PECR that is relevant to Healthwatch work is about cookies.

The basic rule is that you must:

* Tell people the cookies are there.
* Explain what the cookies are doing and why.
* Get the person’s consent to store a cookie on their device.

As long as you do this the first time you set cookies, you do not have to repeat it every time the same person visits your website.

You must therefore have a cookies policy on your website. This must provide “clear and comprehensive” information about your purposes. You must explain the way the cookies (or other similar technologies) work and what you use them for, and the explanation must be clear and easily available. Users must be able to understand the potential consequences of allowing the cookies. You may need to make sure the language and level of detail are appropriate for your audience.

The requirements for getting people’s consent to store cookies on their device is the same as for GDPR – it must be freely given, specific and informed.

Cookies template

About this template

This template cookies policy is only relevant if your Healthwatch uses the Healthwatch England template website. It contains details about the standard cookies that this website uses.

If your website is provided by another website provider, you’ll need to ask them what cookies they use to write your own cookie policy.

Template cookies policy text

What are cookies?

Cookies are small text files which are transferred to your computer or mobile when you visit a website or app. We use them to help us understand how people are using our services, so we can make them better.

Please be aware that some systems on our website require the use of cookies, however where non-essential cookies are in use, we will only collect the information with your permission.

They improve your experience by:

* Remembering settings and information (like the names of health or social care services you've searched for) so you don't have to keep re-entering them.
* Helping us understand how people are using our website, so we can make your experience is better.
* Telling us if our emails have been read and if you find them useful.

Types of cookies and how we use them

First party cookies

First party cookies are our own. We control them and use them to provide information about the way you use our website.

**Has\_js**

Some parts of our website use Javascript - a web language - to display content. If your web browser has Javascript disabled, it helps us to know so that we can display the page to you in another way. This cookie allows our website to know if you have Javascript enabled or not.

healthwatch\_cookiecontrol

This maintains the open/closed state of the "Cookie Control" dialog.

Third party cookies

Third party cookies are set by other websites. We use their online tools to make our website work better for you.

Functional, performance and advertising cookies

We also use functional, performance and advertising cookies to make your experience more enjoyable. If you don’t want to enable these cookies you can select ‘decline’ in the cookies banner.

We will only use this cookie type if you have agreed. See below for examples of these cookies and how we use them at Healthwatch XXX.

**Facebook Pixel [delete if not used]**

This Cookie is placed by Facebook.  It enables us to measure and build audiences for advertising campaigns displayed on Facebook.

In particular, it helps us to see how our users move between devices when accessing our website and Facebook. This is to ensure that our Facebook advertising is seen by people who most likely to be interested in such advertising by analysing which content a user has viewed and interacted with on our web site.

For further information about the Facebook Pixel please see: [About Facebook pixel | Facebook Business Help Centre](https://www.facebook.com/business/help/742478679120153?id=1205376682832142)

Measuring website usage through Google analytics

We use Google Analytics to view statistics on the way you use our website. We can check:

* How many people have visited our website and what content they look at.
* How many times documents have been downloaded.
* What people are looking for on our website.

We use the following third-party cookies set by Google Analytics.For more information, please read [Google's Privacy Policy](http://www.google.com/policies/privacy/).

How long do cookies last?

Some are erased when you close your website browser.

Others stay longer and are saved onto your device when you come back. Some can be deleted by deleting your browser history.

Managing the cookies on your computer

You can restrict or block cookies set by our website and others by changing the settings in your browser. Doing this however may impact the way our website works for you in the future.

Visit the [About Cookies website](http://www.aboutcookies.org.uk/) to find out more about restricting or blocking cookies in different browsers.

You can also learn more about cookies at the [DirectGov website](https://www.gov.uk/support/cookies%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

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