Information Sharing Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Sharing information across organisational and professional boundaries can bring many advantages, not least to ensure effective co-ordination, integration of services and multi-agency working

1.2 Information sharing does of course present risks and these need to be managed correctly. It is important to have a clear framework in place which adopts good practice. We are committed to sharing information where it is appropriate to do so, whilst ensuring that this is done in a fair and transparent way which is in line with rights and expectations of service users.

1.3 **Sharing can take the form of:**
- a reciprocal exchange of data;
- one or more organisations providing data to a third party or parties;
- several organisations pooling information and making it available to each other;
- several organisations pooling information and making it available to a third party or parties;
- different parts of an organisation making data available to each other; or
- exceptional, one-off disclosures of data in unexpected or emergency situations.

1.4 **Why do we share information within the Council**?
- Key information is shared within a defined structure to: Improve knowledge of and access to information and data;
- Eliminate duplication in the process; Enhance value for money;
- Improve service provision as services can be better aligned to needs;
- Improve joint service provision;
- Improve targeting and ability to divert resources where they are needed.

1.6 **Why do we share information with other organisations?**

Key information is shared with other organisations to:
- Assess need, service delivery and treatment;
- Assure and improve the quality of care and treatment;
- Protection of Children and Adults at risk Monitor, report and protect public health;
- Manage and plan future services;
- Facilitate commissioning of services; Manage risks;
- Comply with court orders;
- Prevent of crime or disorder; Investigate complaints or potential legal claims;
- Comply with medical reports / insurance requests;
- Audit agencies' accounts and performance;
- Comply with statutory notification of births, deaths and infectious diseases;
- Provide data for medical, health or social care research (subject to ethical approval);
- Support the evacuation and care of vulnerable residents during emergency incidents
- For statutory returns and requests.
- Council Framework
- The council has an overarching Partnership Information Sharing Protocol [LINK] which outlines our commitment to ensuring the security, privacy and lawful sharing of personal data.
- Signatories to this document are required to meet the best practice standards outlined in the document. We actively promote and encourage our key partners who we routinely share information with, to sign up to our protocol to facilitate better collaborative working and information sharing.

2. Important To Know?

2.1 Understand when information should be shared.

2.2 Use the two checklists as a handy step by step guide through the process of deciding whether to share personal data. One checklist is for systematic data sharing, the other is for one off requests to share personal data

https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1067/data_sharing_checklists.pdf

3. Want To Know More?

- **Information Management Policy** sets out the information management framework and all the key documents

- **Information Lifecycle Policy** sets out practical guidance on managing the information lifecycle from creation, maintenance and disposal of information

- **Public Access to Information Policy** sets out how the public may request access to information held by the Council

- **Data Protection & Privacy Policy** examines how we should protect an individual's privacy against the need to fulfil and maintain public functions

- **Information Security Policy** looks at measures we can all take to protect information held and **Information Systems Access policy** which defines how user access to networks and systems are administered

- **Working flexibly in or out of the office** Working out of the office or at home, think about what extra measures you need to take when handling information.

- **Information Sharing Policy** examines secure ways in sharing information with other organisations and individuals.

- **Surveillance & CCTV Policy** examines the use of privacy invasive technology such as CCTV

4. Who Does This Policy Apply To?

4.1 Remember, ALL officers working for the Council or partners/ agency staff, contractual third party suppliers and agents and partners working on behalf of the council must abide by all our Information Management Framework policies or an IMT approved equivalent standard when dealing with any council information. Failure to comply with the Data Protection Act or this policy could result in disciplinary action.

5. Who Does What?

See **Roles and Responsibilities Information Management Team**

See Roles and Responsibilities, specific functions to this policy include:

- Collation and oversight of the corporate Information Sharing Register
- Review and approval of all Information Sharing Agreements and Protocols

Information Asset Owners

See Roles and Responsibilities, specific functions to this policy include:

- Identify staff who have justified purpose to access Service User Identifiable Data and obtain authorisation from the Caldicott Guardian
- Organise the removal of staff rights to SUID where access is no longer justified

Information Management Governance Groups

See Roles and Responsibilities, specific functions to this policy include:

- The IMGG is responsible for ensuring that ISAs are put in place where required within their service areas.
- They are responsible for ensuring they are appropriately reviewed in a timely manner and the corporate Information Sharing Register is kept up to date.

Caldicott Guardian

See Roles and Responsibilities, specific functions to this policy include:

- The **Adults and Communities Caldicott Guardian** and **Family Services Caldicott Guardian** are responsible for review and authorisation of ISAs that relate to service user identifiable information

Managers

See Roles and Responsibilities, specific functions to this policy include:

- Ensuring team members are aware of Information Sharing responsibilities
- Ensure all Information Sharing arrangements are formalised through the creation of Information Sharing Agreements.

6. How is this policy reviewed?

This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if required eg by changes in legislation.

Performance measures for this policy will include:

- Routine checks of ISA's will be undertaken to ensure they remain up to date and fit for purpose

Document Control

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Version Control

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