

## Appendix 5

### Information sharing – Safeguarding policy

A local information-sharing agreement needs to be agreed with all partner agencies. However we recognise that information sharing between organisations is essential to safeguard adults at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Personal and sensitive Information will be shared within and between organisations in line with the principles set out below:

- Adults have a right to independence, choice and self-determination. This right extends to them being able to have control over information about themselves and to determine what information is shared. Even in situations where there is no legal requirement to obtain written consent before sharing information, it is good practice to do so.
- The person's wishes should always be considered, however, protecting adults at risk establishes a general principle that an incident of suspected or actual abuse can be reported more widely and that in so doing, some information may need to be shared among those involved.
- Information given to an individual member of staff belongs to the organisation and not to the individual employee. An individual employee cannot give a personal assurance of confidentiality to an adult at risk.
- An organisation should obtain the adult at risk's written consent to share information and should routinely explain what information may be shared with other people or organisations. However where this is not possible and an adult or others are at risk of harm, it may be necessary to override this requirement.
- Difficulties in working within the principles of maintaining the confidentiality of an adult should not lead to a failure to take action to protect the adult from abuse or harm.
- Confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy, that is, the need to protect the management interests of an organisation should not override the need to protect the adult.
- Person identifiable data is held by the agencies listed in both manual and electronic formats. This information is collected in order that services users receive proper care and treatment from the partner agencies.
- All staff have an obligation to safeguard the confidentiality of personal information. This is governed by legislation, Caldicott requirements, duty of confidentiality, contracts of employment and also by professional codes of conduct.
- All staff must be aware that any breach of confidentiality could be a matter for disciplinary action or could provide grounds for complaint against them.

- Staff reporting concerns at work ('whistleblowing') are entitled to protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Decisions about what information is shared and with whom will be taken on a case by-case basis. Whether information is shared with or without the adult at risk's consent, the information shared should be:

- necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared
- shared only with those who have a need for it
- be accurate and up to date
- be shared in a timely fashion
- be shared accurately
- be shared securely between partner agencies –via secure encrypted email such as GCSx, or NHS.mail

### **Key principles of information sharing**

- Identify how much information to share.
- Distinguish fact from opinion.
- Ensure that you are giving the right information to the right person.
- Ensure you are sharing the information securely.
- Inform the person that the information has been shared if they were not aware of this and it would not create or increase risk of harm.
- Record the information sharing decision and your reasons, in line with your agency's or local procedures.
- If there are concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm or an adult may be at risk of serious harm, then follow the relevant procedures without delay.
- Seek advice if you are not sure what to do at any stage and ensure that the outcome of the discussion is recorded.

**See next page for the Flowchart of key questions for information sharing**

### Key questions for information sharing

