Seven golden rules

for safeguarding information sharing

1. **GDPR is not a barrier** - remember that data protection and regulation law is not intended as a barrier to info sharing – it helps us to share the right information, in the right way, for the right reasons. **Never put management or organisation interests before the safety of others**. The principle of confidentiality is not absolute, especially when it is to safeguard adults or children.

2. **Be open and honest** - right from the start, be clear with the people we support (and/or their families where needed) what we hold, why we might share it, who might need to know. Try and get informed consent from the beginning where possible.

3. **Seek advice** – if in doubt, ask! Have confidence in checking with others. Talk to your safeguarding lead, or line manager. You do not have to disclose personal or identifying information to get someone else's view, even if you talk to the police or the local authority.

4. **Share with consent wherever possible** – but respect the wish of those who do not consent. It is their right as an adult, where they have the mental capacity to make that decision. However, you may still decide to share the information without consent, where you can evidence that the need is:
   - in the public interest (e.g. other adults at risk, staff are implicated)
   - the adult, a child, or someone else, is at very serious risk of harm
   - a serious crime has been committed
   - you suspect coercion or duress is involved in their decision
   - the person lacks the mental capacity to make the decision

5. **Always consider safety and well-being** – what is the risk of not sharing the information? What will be the impact of sharing / not sharing – on the person, on anyone else involved.

6. **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure** – check these key words. Is it the right information for the purpose? Is it being shared in the right format, with the right people? Is it accurate and up to date? Are you sharing promptly enough for the purpose intended? Think "need-to-know".

7. **Keep a record** – be clear what you have shared or chosen not to share. Why have you shared the information? Evidence how you came to that decision, and who you shared what with.

Adapted from SCIE Safeguarding adults: sharing information | SCIE

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Flowchart of key questions for information sharing

You are asked to or wish to share information

Is there a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing information?

No → Do not share

Yes

Does the information enable a person to be identified?

No → You can share

Yes

Is the information confidential?

Not sure → Seek advice

No → You can share

Yes

Do you have consent?

Yes → You can share

No

Is there sufficient public interest to share?

Yes → You can share

No → Do not share

Share information:

- 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.

Local contacts

To report suspected harm or abuse of an adult or child, please call Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020 or, call the police if it is an emergency

Extract from HM Government Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers. Copies can be obtained from

Information sharing: advice for practitioners (publishing.service.gov.uk)

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