

Sharing your information

When information is shared between agencies in Surrey



A leaflet for service users, their families and carers

This leaflet explains:

- what information we hold about you
- why sharing information between agencies (e.g. the NHS, housing services, schools) has benefits
- principles about sharing information
- sharing information with your permission
- sharing information without your permission
- who will see the information.

What information is held about you and/or your family

If you and/or your family have had contact with a service in Surrey e.g. doctors' surgery or a school, it is likely that information will be held about you by that service.

The information held may include:

- basic personal information, such as address, date of birth, ethnicity
- date and details of referral
- relevant background information
- assessments, reports and care plans
- notes regarding any contact between you and the service
- records of decisions made about the support and services you need
- relevant information from anyone who cares for or knows you, for example a health professional or a relative.

Benefits of sharing information between agencies

There are many benefits to you and/or your family when information is shared between different agencies.

These include:

- enabling referral to the most appropriate agencies who can meet your needs
- providing professionals from different agencies with the most up to date information so that they can work with you most effectively
- allowing agencies to tailor services and support specifically to meet your needs
- removing the need for you to repeat your story and needs to multiple agencies
- preventing unnecessary repetition of the work that is done with you
- helping agencies to plan services
- enabling agencies to respond more effectively to your changing needs
- helping to provide you with the most appropriate service
- enhancing our knowledge and understanding of your needs.

Principles on sharing information between agencies

Your and/or your family's information will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the common law duty of confidentiality. 'Processing' refers to the collection, storage, use and destruction of information. Professionals working in social services and the NHS will also process your information in accordance with Caldicott principles.

This means that we are legally and professionally obliged to share and hold personal information safely and securely. Personal information should only ever be shared with people who have a genuine need to access it, and only the minimum necessary information should be shared.

In Surrey, different agencies have agreements in place to make sure that information is always shared in an appropriate way.

Sharing information between agencies with permission

In most situations, the agency or service involved will normally ask for your permission for your information to be shared. You may be asked to give your permission verbally, in a letter, or by filling in a form.

You are entitled to refuse to give your permission for information to be shared. However, this may mean that decisions are made based on incomplete information, which could affect the service provided.

You are also entitled to withdraw your permission to share if you have previously given it, or to decide to give your permission if you have previously withheld it.

Sharing information between agencies without permission

There are some situations when the law says we can share your information without your permission. **For example:**

- to protect people who are or are likely to be at risk of suffering harm
- for the prevention or detection of crime
- to protect people who are at risk of being excluded from school or society
- to identify those who have further needs.

Anonymised information may also be shared between agencies without permission, so long as it is impossible to identify who the information refers to. For example, statistics may be shared so that we can identify trends and plan services.

Agencies that information might be shared with

The agencies that information is shared with will depend on your individual needs. You are entitled to know who this information is shared with, so please ask the professional or team with whom you have contact. They will let you know unless there is a legal reason why we cannot tell you, for example if it has been shared for the purposes of preventing or detecting crime.

Examples of the agencies that information may be shared with are as follows:

- the Police, the National Health Service, Borough or District Councils
- housing services, care homes, voluntary and community groups or organisations
- Youth Offending Team, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Schools, Educational Support Services, Connexions.



Any questions or complaints?

If you have any questions regarding the sharing of your personal data, please contact the Data Protection Officer at Surrey County Council, Legal Services, County Hall, Penrhyn Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 2DN. If you would like to complain about the way your information has been processed, please contact the professional or team involved in supporting you.

Independent advice about Data Protection

If you would like independent advice about Data Protection, please contact the Information Commissioner at:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Phone: 01625 545745
Fax: 01625 524510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.ico.gov.uk



If you would like this document in large print, on tape or in another language please contact us on:

Tel: 08456 009 009

Fax: 020 8541 9004, Minicom: 020 8541 8914

email: contactcentre@surreycc.gov.uk

Your Information Leaflets

If you would like to see any information held about you and/or your family or to be given information on how your information is shared, please speak or write to the professional or team with whom you have had contact.

Further information can be found in the Protecting Your Information and Accessing Your Information leaflets. Copies of these can be obtained from the team you have contact with or from the **Contact Centre on 08456 009 009**.

Please note that these leaflets are for general information only and are not a full explanation of the law.

Accessing Your Information

Explains what information Surrey County Council holds on you and why; how you can see the information we hold and where we got it from; how you can deal with information that is inaccurate; and how to prevent processing that may cause damage and distress.

Protecting Your Information

Explains access by staff to your personal information; the duty of confidentiality; electronic and paper records; and Surrey County Council's data handling guarantee.

This approach has been supported and approved by the Surrey Children and Young People's Partnership which includes the Health Service.



Surrey
Safeguarding Adults Board