

This Data Sharing Agreement should be used if you are processing personal data for the law enforcement purposes<sup>1</sup>, as described under Part 3 of the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.

**Multi-agency Information Sharing Agreement**  
*between*  
**Cheshire East Safeguarding Adults Board**  
*And*  
**other relevant partners**

for the purpose of Safeguarding Adults at Risk within the  
Borough of Cheshire East



Date agreed: August 2023  
Review date: August 2025

<sup>1</sup> "the law enforcement purposes" are the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, including the safeguarding against and the prevention of threats to public security.

**Government Security Classification**

Official

**Title**

A purpose specific data sharing agreement between partners of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Adults Board and other relevant partners.

**Version**

Version 1

**Summary**

An agreement to formalise information sharing arrangements between the partners of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Adults Board for the purpose of safeguarding Adults at Risk in the borough of Cheshire East

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## FOREWORD

The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance advises that the first priority should always be to ensure the safety and well-being of the adult at risk.

The guidance also states that all organisations must have arrangements in place which set out clearly the processes and the principles for sharing information between each other, with other professionals and the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

The Act puts adult safeguarding on a statutory footing and requires each Local Authority to set up a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) with core membership from the Local Authority, the Police, and the NHS (specifically the local Clinical Commissioning Group/s). The SAB has the power to include other relevant bodies. One of the key functions of the SAB is to ensure that the policies and procedures governing adult safeguarding are fit for purpose and can be translated into effective adult safeguarding practice.

The statutory guidance under the Act states that six key principles underpin all adult safeguarding work. These apply across all agencies involved in the process. These principles can be found in Appendix A.

Safeguarding adults at risk is a complex area of work that involves a number of professional organisations working together with the common purpose of preventing or reducing the risk of significant harm to adults at risk from abuse or other types of exploitation, whilst supporting individuals to maintain control over their lives. This includes being able to make choices without coercion. To achieve this, the sharing of information amongst professional organisations who work with adults at risk is essential. Early sharing of information is the key to providing an effective response where there are emerging concerns. Sometimes it is only once information from a range of sources is co-ordinated that an adult is identified as being at risk. It is better that information is shared rather than withheld if this may prevent an adult at risk from suffering harm.

By signing up to this agreement the relevant Signatory Organisations are recognising that working together and sharing information effectively is imperative to safeguard those that are at risk or pose a risk to themselves or another, and to prevent, detect and prosecute offences against adults at risk. This agreement formalises the processes and principles for sharing information between each other, with other professionals and the SAB and any other relevant parties.

## Section 1 - The Purpose of the Agreement

### 1.1 This Agreement –

describes the basis for the lawful exchange of information between signatory organisations involved in adult safeguarding; puts in place arrangements which set out clearly the processes and the principles for sharing information.

Sets out the basis upon which requests for information will be made by the signatory organisations involved in adult safeguarding, and how they will deal with those requests;

provides a framework for the secure and confidential sharing of information between signatories;

describes the roles and structures that will support the exchange of information between the signatory organisations, and security procedures necessary to ensure compliance with responsibilities under the Data Protection Act, Caldicott Principles and organisation specific security requirements;

will ensure that the Cheshire Police Service will in addition adhere to requirements of the Guidance on the Management of Police Information (MoPI) and the Authorised Professional Practice (APP);

describes how this arrangement will be monitored and reviewed, with the recommendation being bi-annually.

summarises the signatories' legal obligations in relation to information sharing;

does not create an absolute obligation to share information: in particular it will not be a breach of the agreement for a signatory organisation to refuse to share information where disclosure of such would constitute a breach of legal or professional obligations owed by that Signatory Organisation in respect of that information.

### 1.2 Scope of this Data Sharing Agreement

The signatories to this agreement are the following agencies/bodies:

1. Cheshire East Safeguarding Adult Board
2. Cheshire East Council
3. Cheshire Police Service
4. East Cheshire NHS Trust
5. Mid Cheshire Hospital NHS Trust
6. Cheshire and Wirral NHS Partnership
7. Cheshire and Merseyside ICB [East Cheshire Place]

8. Any other relevant partners required to attend the SAB to discuss a case will be required to sign the data sharing agreement

Together the “Signatory Organisations”

## **1.3 Information Sharing in the Context of a Safeguarding Adults Enquiry**

### **1.3.1 Safeguarding Adults Enquiry**

The Care Act 2014 says that the duty to undertake a safeguarding adults enquiry arises where a Local Authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs); is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

An adult that any Signatory Organisation suspects may fall into the above categories will be referred to in this agreement as an “Adult at Risk”.

The Care Act 2014 guidance states that early sharing of information is the key to providing an effective response where there are emerging concerns for an Adult at Risk, and no professional should assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to the safety and wellbeing of the adult. If concerns are raised about the adult's welfare, whether this be the belief that they are suffering or likely to suffer abuse or neglect, and/or are a risk to themselves or another, information should be shared with the local authority and/or the police if the professional/Signatory Organisation believes or suspects that a crime has been committed or that the individual is immediately at risk. Explanations of the type of abuse and criminal offences of which Adults at Risk may become victims, are listed in Appendix B. This is not an exhaustive list.

In the majority of cases, the response to a safeguarding enquiry will involve other agencies, for example, a safeguarding enquiry may result in referrals to the police, a change of accommodation, or action by Care Quality Commission (CQC). Where a number of professional organisations are involved in a combined plan, it is recommended that the Local Authority should seek to establish a 'lead' agency for the monitoring and assurance of the plan. Information sharing should be rapid and seek to minimise bureaucracy.

### **1.3.2 The National Standards**

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) has published a National Standards document in conjunction with key partners including the National Police Chiefs

Council (NPCC). This framework is intended to consolidate the experience to date and to further the development of 'Safeguarding Adults at Risk' work throughout England. The implementation of the eleven good practices (Standards) in every local area will lead to the development of consistent, high quality adult protection work across the country. (See Appendix C for a headline copy of the National Standard Framework).

This agreement has been produced in compliance with the National Standard Framework, and the signing of this agreement will help the signatories comply with the Framework in particular Standards 1, 4 and 8. It has been recognised that a number of agencies may be involved in different aspects of the care and support of an adult at risk and this agreement will contribute to achieving the aims of building strong multi-agency partnerships at a local level with agreed working practices in response to instances of abuse and neglect. By effective information sharing among the Signatory Organisations and drawing upon partner organisations' specialist skill sets, all Signatory Organisations can offer the best possible service to safeguard adults at risk and make a positive impact on public protection.

### **1.3.3 Assessments and Investigation Strategies**

It is key that the adult at risk is involved from the outset in any investigation strategies (unless doing so would put them at greater risk of harm). Family, friends and other relevant people who are not implicated in any suspected abuse or neglect have an important part to play, especially if the adult at risk lacks capacity. In such cases, the friends or family should be consulted, where practicable, in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

The role of Signatory Organisation representatives, their duties and powers will be governed by the relationship of the person that has caused the harm to the adult at risk. Staff and volunteers should be aware of the North West Multi Agency Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and be aware of issues regarding abuse, neglect or exploitation. The document recognises variation in terminology between Signatory Organisations regarding adults at risk who may be considered as vulnerable, and that the terms vulnerable adult and adult at risk are used interchangeably. Managers of Signatory Organisations have a key role in the management and coordination of information in response to a Safeguarding Adult Concern.

## **1.4 Types of Information to be Shared through this Agreement**

The disclosure of any particular information should be proportionate and necessary for the purposes of safeguarding. The types of information likely to be required to be shared include the following. Due to the complexity and uniqueness of each situation, it is difficult to provide an exhaustive list of what information will be shared but as a minimum the following information should be considered.

### **1.4.1 Personal Information about Individuals Considered to be a Risk to an Adult at Risk**

Personal information ("Personal Data" and "Special Category data and Conviction Data" in the language of the Data Protection Act 2018) needs to be shared to allow relevant Signatory Organisations to identify these individuals and explain why they are a risk to vulnerable adults (the "Adult at Risk").

Examples of the kind of personal & special category and conviction data that may be shared include:  
Personal identifiers (names, addresses, dates of birth).  
Current photograph of the suspected offender (if appropriate)  
Descriptive information (photographs, marks, scars)

Relevant warning markers (e.g. Violence, Drugs, Mental Health, Weapons)  
Reason why they are considered to be a risk  
Details of relevant criminal convictions and non-conviction information  
Relationship with the adult at risk

#### **1.4.2 Personal Information about Adults at Risk**

Name of subject (Adult at Risk) and other family members, their carers and other persons whose presence and/or relationship with the subject, is relevant to identifying and assessing the risks to that vulnerable adult

Age/date of birth of subject and other family members, carers, other details including addresses and telephone numbers

Ethnic origin

Description of incident and organisational action;

The nature and circumstances of the ongoing risk to the Adult at Risk.

#### **1.4.3 Personal information Disclosed about Third Parties may include:**

Adult at Risk relevant family members or other personal contacts

GP who is the primary record holder for all individuals registered with them - where relevant and known

Employer - where necessary and known

**Relevant** results from police checks on **relevant** family members mentioned within police databases, or persons such as a general practitioner or an employer again where relevant. This information will only be considered on a case by case basis and is not a blanket for sharing on everybody associated with an Adult at Risk. Information shared on these individuals must be necessary to assist in the assessment of safeguarding needs and delivery of safeguarding services and only the minimum required for these purposes.

Information considered for sharing in regards to associated individuals can include but is not limited to personal identifiers, relationship to the Adult at Risk and information and or intelligence held by Signatory Organisations that is **relevant** to assisting partners in services or duties towards the adult at risk concerned.

This information may need to be shared to enable Signatory Organisations to fully understand the risks posed to/by the individual and stop them from being a victim, repeat victim, suspect or risk to themselves, and to ensure that all relevant avenues for assistance are considered.

## Section 2 - Description of Arrangements including Security Matters

### 2.1 Security Classification

The information shared through this agreement will be marked in accordance with the Government Security Classification (GSC) and information to be shared will not exceed the level of Official Sensitive.

### 2.2 Accuracy of Information

If information held is found to be inaccurate, the Signatory Organisation producing the information will be notified. The producing Signatory Organisation will be responsible for correcting this information, and notifying other recipients of this information of the inaccuracy and the correction. The other recipients will then be responsible for relevant information in their possession being corrected.

### 2.3 How the Information will be processed

**2.3.1** The sharing of information between Signatory Organisations may be proactive or as a result of a request for information. Signatory Organisations will inform the police about Adults at Risk where a crime may have been committed and equally, police will notify Safeguarding Adults Services and the relevant NHS bodies about adults at risk of abuse or neglect, and/or experiencing abuse or neglect, and individuals who pose a risk to Adults at Risk.

Requests will include an explanation as to why the information is necessary and they will be considered on a case by case basis by the recipient Signatory Organisations.

#### ***Information handling and requests by Cheshire Police Service***

**2.3.2** Where it has come to Cheshire Police's attention that an Adult at Risk is in circumstances that are adversely impacting upon their welfare or safety and/or they are a risk to themselves or others, as well as a crime or intelligence report being created, the reporting officer will create an VPA (Vulnerable Person's Account). This report will be shared via email to Adult Social Care, Cheshire East Council.

#### ***Information handling and requests by the Local Authority***

**2.3.3** Any requests under a Section 42 Care Act enquiry must be dealt with expeditiously. Any requests from the Local Authority to partner Signatory Organisations must be in a written format and for police information. Requests to any partner Signatory Organisation asking for information will include reasons why they require any relevant information held. In the case of requests to police. For criminal investigations, partner Signatory Organisations should initially liaise with the police officer in charge of the enquiry.

**2.3.4** The designated policing unit will search the appropriate databases and also national police systems for relevant information. The designated unit will consider the information gathered and decide whether it is adequate, relevant and not excessive for disclosure, for the specified, explicit and lawful purpose requested.

**2.3.5** Any Signatory Organisation refusal to share information under Section 42 Care Act 2014 must be in writing and will be returned to the authorising manager. The reply will include an explanation as to why the request did not fall within the defined categories.



**2.3.6** In the case of a request to the police, if it is decided that it is proportionate and necessary to disclose information, then the results of the search of the police systems will be fed back relating to that request. After removing, where necessary, any information that is not appropriate to be shared from each report, the police unit will send the finalised answer back to the requesting agency via secure email or other agreed secure email address.

***Information sharing by NHS bodies***

**2.3.7** Where information is held or sought by a NHS body, local information governance policies are in place and are to be followed.

***Information sharing by North West Ambulance Service***

**2.3.8** North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) will share information about safeguarding concerns and staff identify with the local authority and police as appropriate and in line with multi agency policy and procedures. NWAS will share its involvement and attendance at patients identified by Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) & Safeguarding children's Partnership to support investigations including Serious Adult Reviews (SARs) and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs). Information shared pursuant to this agreement will be disclosed in accordance with the NWAS flowcharts for raising a safeguarding concern and/or welfare concerns.

***Information sharing at safeguarding meetings including Complex Safeguarding Meetings***

**2.3.9** Should a meeting be called to discuss a case, a Confidentiality Statement shall be read at the start of the meeting. If meeting in person, partners will sign this statement, if meeting online, all attending parties will be asked for their agreement to this statement before the meeting commences and it will be recorded in the minutes that all parties agreed.

***Onward disclosure of shared information***

**2.3.10** Permission must be sought by the Signatory Organisations from the relevant partner organisation for the sharing of information outside of their respective domain. Such permission will only be granted where proposed sharing of relevant and proportionate information is within the agreed principles: i.e. for the purposes of safeguarding an Adult at Risk. This may include policing purposes, and/or the provision of care and support. All requests made should be done so by either secure e-mail or in writing so that an audit trail exists.

**2.4 Critical Request for Information**

A case will be considered 'Critical' if there is immediate risk of harm to the subject or others and information needs to be provided immediately to protect Adults at Risk, e.g. hostage situations, acts of terrorism, serious attempt by the individual to take their own life etc. The process in these circumstances will vary as stated below.

**2.4.1** Initial contact for Critical enquiries will be made to the relevant organisation listed in the Contacts List found in Appendix G. In the event that the relevant organisation cannot be contacted a locally agreed escalation policy should be followed.

**2.4.2** Upon initiating a Critical enquiry the following detail will be requested:

Requestor's full name, job title, phone number.

Verification that the case is genuinely 'critical' (i.e. there is immediate risk of harm to the subject or others and information needs to be provided immediately to protect individuals)

A check that the telephone number provided is the number provided on the Contacts List. If not, the enquiry may be escalated to the 'on-call' Director to make the decision on disclosure.

For Critical enquiries, ONLY the following information will be disclosed:

Whether they are known to any Cheshire East safeguarding partner organisations

Whether they are currently engaged with services.

Known risk factors - to self or others.

Diagnosis or nature of any potentially relevant health problem or condition, including mental health diagnosis.

Recent significant life changes that can be established from patient records that may impact on behaviour.

**2.4.3** A record of the personal information disclosed to other Signatory Organisations must be created. This should include what was shared and the reason for sharing. Any decision not to share information should similarly be recorded along with the reasons for the decision.

If sharing needs to occur in fast time and a Critical enquiry is made via telephone, a record must be similarly created on an appropriate corporate system as soon as possible thereafter by the requestor.

## **2.5 Storage, Retention and Destruction of Information**

Signatories to this agreement confirm that the appropriate storage and protection measures are in place for the information that is shared through this agreement.

**2.5.1** If information is backed up and stored electronically via disc, hard drive, USB stick, or any mobile device, then adequate security measures must be in place on electronic systems. This specifically means that areas where shared information is stored can only be accessed via username and password, and appropriate encryption measures are in place. Permission to access the information shared by Signatory Organisations will be granted on a strict 'need to know' basis once it is contained within the electronic system, and an audit trail will capture events which evidence successful and unsuccessful access to the system and individual records. The media being used should then be stored in a physical location that has a level of security appropriate to the level that the information held is graded to.

***Where removable media is used, MPS personnel must only use an encrypted MPS approved Datashur USB. CDs are no longer acceptable.***

**2.5.2** If information shared under this agreement is printed it must be kept in a locked container within a secure premise with a managed access control. If printed information must be moved from its usual secure location, which is in accordance with the level of security required by this agreement, then any move temporary or permanent, must provide the same level of security in storage as per the original location. When documents are not being used they will be stored securely.

**2.5.3** Access to the information in both electronic and paper formats will be limited to relevant staff on a need to know basis. The security and maintenance of security measures and passwords will be the responsibility of the Data Protection Officer/Caldicott Guardian or relevant role within each Signatory Organisation. There will be a clear auditable access control system, detailing successful and unsuccessful attempts. The general public will have no access to either type of record.

**2.5.4** All Signatory Organisations will have appropriate policies and procedures governing the retention and destruction of records containing personal information retained within their systems. These policies and procedures must be followed. Once the minimum retention

period has expired, a risk assessment should be undertaken of whether the records should be kept for longer, if necessary. If not the records should be promptly and securely destroyed.

**2.5.5** Electronic information will be disposed of by being weeded according to each agency's standard operating procedure in relation to their IT systems, being overwritten using an approved software utility or through the physical destruction of computer media.

**2.5.6** Any paper records will be disposed of through an OFFICIAL SENSITIVE waste disposal system, using a cross shredder, or returned to the relevant Signatory Organisation for secure disposal.

## **2.6 Confidentiality and Vetting**

At a minimum, all the information to be shared under this agreement will be classified and managed in accordance with GSC handling requirements.

Vetting is not mandatory to view this level of information; however the staff within Cheshire East Safeguarding Adults Service/relevant partner who will have access to police information are cleared to access this information within their own organisations. The information must only be processed (viewed) on a strict 'need-to-know' basis.

## **2.7 Transfer of Information - all agencies**

Information will be transferred using secure email and preferably to and from a joint team mailbox to which appropriate staff have access, so should the responsible individual be away, work can continue as normal. The mailbox will be checked regularly throughout the day.

The email addresses to be used are;

[lsab@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:lsab@cheshireeast.gov.uk), [complexsafeguarding@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:complexsafeguarding@cheshireeast.gov.uk),

[Cheshire.eastsafeguardingadmin@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:Cheshire.eastsafeguardingadmin@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

[Serious.Case.Review@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Serious.Case.Review@cheshire.pnn.police.uk)

[eastern.ppu@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:eastern.ppu@cheshire.pnn.police.uk)

**2.7.1** In cases of immediate risk, proactive and reactive sharing may occur using existing safeguarding referral processes following a telephone call to the department to make them aware of the report and to highlight any immediate action that has been completed / further actions required either by the relevant partner agency. Any sharing via telephone will be backed up in writing for audit purposes.

## **2.8 Security Incidents and Breaches of the Agreement**

**2.8.1** Security breaches, including misuse of information, must be reported to the relevant Single Point of Contact (SPOC), Caldicott Guardian or Data Protection Officer (DPO) without undue delay of occurring/or no later than 24 hours after becoming aware of it. This is to allow a risk assessment of the security incident or breach of the Agreement

**It is still the responsibility of All Signatory Organisations to comply with the obligations laid out under Section 67 and 68 of the DPA 2018.**

**2.8.2** Where a security incident involves health or social care information, the NHS Digital *Checklist Guidance for Reporting, Managing and Investigating Information Governance and Cyber Security Serious Incidents Requiring Investigation* will be followed.

**2.8.3** The SPOC must immediately inform the Information Assurance Unit (IAU) of any security incident or breach of information, including unauthorised disclosure or loss of information

**2.8.4** Signatory Organisations confirm that security breaches are covered within their internal disciplinary procedures. If misuse is found, consideration will be given to facilitating an investigation into initiating criminal proceedings. All Signatory Organisations are aware that in extreme circumstances, non-compliance with the terms of this agreement may result in the agreement being suspended or terminated.

## **2.9 Compliance**

All Signatory Organisations are responsible for ensuring the security controls are implemented and staff are aware of (and where appropriate, trained in) their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018. Signatory Organisations agree where necessary to allow peer-to-peer reviews to ensure compliance with the security section of this agreement. Compliance with these security controls will be catered for in the periodic reviews of the agreement.

## **2.10 Review**

This agreement will be reviewed six months after implementation and bi-annually thereafter. In the event of a security incident or other issue which requires urgent attention, the Signatory Organisations may review the agreement more frequently.

## **2.11 Freedom of Information Act and Subject Access Requests / Right of Access Requests**

**2.11.1** It is recognised that Signatory Organisations to this agreement may receive a request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 that relates to the operation of this Agreement. Where applicable, they will observe the Code of Practice made under S.45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in responding to the request.

**2.11.2** Normal practice will be to make all information/data sharing agreements available on relevant publication schemes.

**2.11.3** The Freedom of Information Act Code of Practice contains provisions relating to consultation with others who are likely to be affected by the disclosure (or non-disclosure) of the information requested. The Code also relates to the process by which one authority may transfer all or part of a request to another authority if it relates to information held only by the other authority.

**2.11.4** Individuals can request a copy of all the information an organisation holds on them, by making a Subject Access Request (SAR). The MPS refer to these requests as Right of Access Requests (ROAR) under the DPA 2018. This may include information that was disclosed to a Signatory Organisation under this agreement. Where this is the case, as a matter of good practice the Signatory Organisation in receipt of the SAR/ROAR will liaise with the originating Signatory Organisation to the information to ensure that the release of the information to the individual will not prejudice any ongoing investigation/prosecution, or engage other exemptions within the Data Protection Act 2018.

## Section 3 - Legal Basis for information sharing and what can lawfully be shared

### 3.1 General Principles

All information exchanges between the Signatory Organisations must be:  
In accordance with the law (see section 3.2 below);  
Relevant to actions undertaken to safeguard adults;  
Sufficiently detailed for the specified purpose and reasonably accurate;  
Shared in a secure manner; and  
Information exchanged must be used only for the purposes for which it was shared.

Signatories to this Agreement must have regard to the Caldicott Principles (described in section 3.11 below).

### 3.2 Data Protection Act 2018 (the “DPA”)

It is the responsibility of all signatories to this Agreement to ensure that information exchanges are justified by, and in accordance with the DPA. The DPA acts as a framework for how to handle and process (including sharing, obtaining, recording and storing) personal and special category personal information. It contains two Schedules that list various Conditions which, when fulfilled, allow for the processing of personal data (Schedule 1) and special category data (Schedule 8). Schedule 8 provides conditions for processing under Part 3 of the DPA which is for law enforcement processing. Cheshire Police process data for law enforcement purposes and will rely on a Schedule 8 condition, but local authorities and health colleagues will need to rely on a Schedule 1 condition. Personal data is that which can identify a living individual. Some personal data is classified as special category personal data when it relates to a person's racial or ethnic origins, physical or mental health or conditions, sexual life, criminal offences, religious beliefs and trade union membership. The 6 Data Protection Principles also need to be complied with to allow sharing to be lawful.

#### 3.2.1 Lawful and Fair Processing (Principle 1)

Signatory Organisations are exempt from complying with their ‘obligations’ and the ‘rights of the individual’ as described in the DPA, if it would be likely to prejudice the prevention or the detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Fair Processing Notices, inform individuals of what we do with their personal data, however even though the processing is lawful and fair, it is the level of transparency to which we are exempt, if it would prejudice any of the law enforcement purposes. Therefore Principle 1 can not always be fully complied with.

Any disclosure must still comply with the Data Protection Principles and legal obligations owed outside of the DPA 2018, such as confidentiality, as well as any professional responsibilities and obligations. If there is not valid consent, consideration should be given as to whether it is in the public interest to share the information.

#### 3.2.2 Schedule 1 (Part 2 and Part 3) Data Protection Act 2018

To comply with Schedule 1, each case must be assessed on its own merit. Appropriate sharing of personal information through this agreement is likely to satisfy one of the following conditions in Schedule 1:

**This condition is met if the data subject has given consent to the processing [29]**

This is applicable when an individual consents to their information being shared. However, it may not always be appropriate to seek consent, especially if investigation could be prejudiced. Also, consent can be withdrawn at any time and data subject must have genuine choice. It is therefore, best to avoid relying on consent for safeguarding purposes and make sure data subjects are informed if appropriate instead.

*[Schedule 1, Part 3 condition 29 DPA]*

Or alternatively, **The processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of an individual, and: the data subject is physically or legally incapable of giving consent [30]**

This is applicable when sharing a victim's information without consent, for their own benefit and where if information was not shared, their life would be in immediate danger.

*[Schedule 1, Part 3 condition 30 DPA]*

**The data processing is necessary for the purpose of the exercise of a function conferred on a person by an enactment or rule of law [6(1)]**

This is applicable when sharing information for the purposes of a safeguarding enquiry under section 42 Care Act 2014, complying with a section 45 request for information from a SAB or when sharing through section 115 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 regarding offenders or suspected offenders.

*[Schedule 1, Part 2 condition 6(1) DPA]*

**The processing is necessary for the exercise of any functions of a public nature exercised in the public interest by any person [36].**

Even where the sharing of information is not designed to meet a precise statutory function, if the processing is being done to discharge public function and the public interest favours disclosure, the Data Protection Act permits it. *[Schedule 1, Part 3 sec 36 DPA]*

**The processing is necessary for the purpose of legitimate interests pursued by the data controller or by the third party or parties to whom the data are disclosed, except where the processing is unwarranted in any particular case by reason of prejudice to the rights and freedoms of legitimate interests of the data subject[10(1)(2)(3)]**

This is applicable where the sharing is necessary to fulfil common law duties and responsibilities of partner agencies, and where the sharing is done in such a way as to not disadvantage the rights of individual whose data is being shared.

*[Schedule 1, Part 2 section 10(1)(2)(3) DPA]*

### **3.2.3 Schedule 8 of the Data Protection Act 2018**

In the vast majority of cases, the information potentially to be shared will be special category personal data and so will need to additionally satisfy one of the conditions in Schedule 8.

Appropriate sharing of information will likely satisfy one of the following conditions:

**The processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of the data subject or of another individual [3]**

*[Schedule 8 condition 3 DPA]*

**The processing is necessary for: the exercise of a function conferred on a person by an enactment or rule of laws, and: is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest [1]**

*[Schedule 8 condition 1 DPA]*

**The processing is necessary for the purposes of: protecting an individual from neglect or physical, mental or emotional harm, or: protecting the physical, mental or emotional well-being of an individual [4]**

*[Schedule 8 condition 4 DPA]*

### **3.2.4 The 6 Data Protection Act Principles**

All data that is to be shared is obtained for lawful purposes, connected with protecting and safeguarding vulnerable members of society and preventing criminal activities. Information will only be used and shared for the reason that the information was collected, and will be considered on a case by case basis. Only relevant information will be shared, which will be enough to fulfil the reason for disclosure but will not necessarily be all the information held by a partner agency about the Adult at Risk. The data will come from corporate information systems and will be subject to validation procedures so as to ensure data quality. Inaccuracies will be notified to originating agencies. Information will be historic in nature and therefore will not require updating. The length of time that information is required to be retained will vary depending on the case. However, once the information has been reviewed and it has been decided that it is no longer needed, it will be securely destroyed in accordance with the holding agency destruction policy. No information is to be transferred outside the UK. Therefore, compliance with this agreement should ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act Principles.

Signatory agencies will respond to any notices from the Information Commissioner that imposes requirements to cease or change the way in which data is processed.

Signatories will comply with subject access/right of access requests in compliance with the relevant legislation.

## **3.3 Statutory Functions**

### **3.3.1 Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

A public authority must have some legal power entitling it to share the information. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 recognises that key authorities, such as councils and the police, have a responsibility for the delivery of a wide range of services within the community. Section 17 places a duty on them to have due regard to the need to prevent crime and disorder in their area. Section 115 provides any person with the power, but not an obligation, to disclose information to relevant authorities (e.g. the police, health or local authorities) and their cooperating bodies where this is necessary or expedient for the purposes of any provision of the Act. Information sharing through this agreement is lawful under the Act as the objectives of this agreement contribute to these purposes.

### **3.3.2 Section 82 of the National Health Service Act 2006**

This places a duty on the NHS and local authorities to cooperate with one another in order to secure and advance the health and welfare of people. NHS bodies will properly cooperate with and consider requests to share information, where appropriate and lawful to do so, will share that information.

### **3.3.3 Sections 13Z3 and 14Z23 NHS Act 2006 Restrictions**

These sections place a general restriction on NHS England and Integrated Care Boards/Partnerships in sharing information with others. However, disclosures for the purposes of safeguarding are permitted by these requirements.

### **3.3.4 s. 251B Health and Social Care Act 2012**

This section imposes a duty on the commissioners and providers of healthcare and adult social care to share information with where it is likely to facilitate the provision to the individual of health services or adult social care, and in the individual's best interests.

### **3.3.5 The Care Act 2014**

Sections 6 and 7 of the Care Act 2014 impose a general duty of co-operation between the local authority and other organisations (including NHS bodies) providing care and support. This includes a duty on the local authority itself to ensure co-operation between its adult care and support, housing, public health and children's services.

Section 42 confers a legal power on the local authority to make enquiries in relation to Adults at Risk. As explained at section 1.3 above, this is an important area in which information sharing is provided for by this agreement.

Section 44 relates to the safeguarding adults review process and imposes an obligation on all members of the SAB to co-operate in and contribute to the carrying out of the review.

Section 45 of the Care Act 2014 imposes an obligation on organisations to comply with a request for information from a SAB for the purpose of enabling or assisting the SAB to perform its functions.

## **3.4 Human Rights Act 1998**

### **3.4.1 Article 3: No torture, inhuman or degrading treatment**

All statutory agencies have a pro-active responsibility to ensure that no person should be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment. This includes Adults at Risk.

### **3.4.2 Article 8: The Right to Respect for Private and Family Life, Home and Correspondence**

There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Disclosing private information engages the right to respect for private life under article 8. However, effective sharing of information for the purposes set out in this agreement is to the direct benefit of the citizen and so in the public interest.

This agreement is in pursuit of a legitimate aim as it helps to protect Adults at Risk, contributes to the purposes of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and is in accordance with the Care Act 2014 and other similar legislation.

It is also proportionate as the amount and type of information shared will be compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018, and the minimum necessary to achieve the aims of this agreement, namely, to provide a better service and protection to Adults at Risk.

### **3.5 Consent**

Information can be shared with the consent of the individuals concerned, or without consent in pursuance of public functions, where this is justified in the public interest (or further to statutory obligations). Information sharing for adult safeguarding purposes does not need to rely on consent because there is another lawful basis that can be relied upon. However, individuals should be informed wherever possible and appropriate to ensure they are aware of what is happening to their personal data. Individuals need to be given an opportunity to object to their information being shared and agencies need to take their views into account, but also be clear about whether the information will be shared without their consent.

**3.5.1** If consent is given by the data subject then it is clear to all concerned that there is no legal obstacle to sharing information. Where reasonably practicable and appropriate, informed consent should be sought. Whilst consent will provide a clear basis on which agencies can share personal data, this is not always achievable or desirable. For example, you should not ask for consent from the individual or their family in circumstances where you think this will be contrary to the Adult at Risk's welfare (for example, if the information is needed urgently then the delay in obtaining consent



may not be justified), or where seeking consent may prejudice a police investigation or may increase the risk of harm to the Adult at Risk.

**3.5.2** Consent can be expressed orally or in writing, or can be inferred from the circumstances in which the information is given (implied consent). For example, a person who refers an allegation of abuse to a social worker would reasonably expect that information to be shared on a “need to know” basis with those responsible for investigating and following up the allegation. Implied consent is appropriate for the sharing of personal information however, explicit consent is required for the sharing of sensitive personal data. If there is valid consent, then it will last as long as the purposes for which that consent was given continue to exist, unless consent is withdrawn. Signatories should be aware that individuals have the right to withdraw consent at any time (therefore, with regard to Schedules 1 and 8, it is preferable to not rely on consent alone wherever possible).

**3.5.3** Practitioners should encourage clients to see information sharing (and giving their consent to share their personal information) in a positive light, as something which makes it easier for them to receive the services that they need. When seeking consent, signatories should be very clear about what they are asking for consent to do, and to explain the potential ways and parties with whom information will be shared.

**3.5.4** In order to ensure consent to the sharing of personal information is informed, any professional must give victims appropriate information about ‘Sharing Information’ at the first point of contact. It is clearly an issue of great importance as to whether an individual has provided valid consent.

**3.5.5.** Professionals should avoid giving absolute guarantees as to confidentiality. In such cases it should be made clear from the outset that what is said will be treated in confidence but such information may need to be passed on to other professionals who may need to know.

**3.5.6** Where the data subject does not have capacity to give consent to share information, consent may be sought from someone who may appropriately act on their behalf, for example, if the adult (data subject) has previously granted an applicable power of attorney, then it is this appointed person who is able to give consent on the adult’s (data subject’s) behalf.

## **3.6 Public Interest**

**3.6.1** If consent to share information has not been given, a professional must consider whether there is a pressing need to disclose the information. The rule of proportionality should be applied to ensure a fair balance is achieved between the public interests in safeguarding the Adult at Risk, the provision of confidential services, and the private rights and interests of the individual affected. The same overall test is applied whether the data subject is the Adult at Risk, the suspected perpetrator of abuse or a third party.

**3.6.2** Signatories understand that when considering whether disclosing the information would be in the public interest, the following criteria will be of particular relevance:

Is there credible evidence giving reasonable cause to believe that an adult is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, serious harm?

Is the disclosure needed to protect the vulnerable adult’s vital interests?

Is the disclosure needed to detect or prevent crime?

Does the body seeking the information have a legitimate interest in receiving it?

Is the extent of the information disclosed and the number of people to whom it is disclosed no greater than is required to achieve the relevant aims?

How great is the risk if disclosure is not made?

**3.6.3** When considering whether disclosure is in the public interest, the rights and interests of the individual affected by disclosure must be taken into account. Signatories should consider:

Is the intended disclosure relevant and proportionate to the intended aim?

What is the impact of disclosure likely to be on the individual?

Is there another equally effective means of achieving the same aim?

**3.6.4** The more sensitive the information, the greater the need to justify disclosure and the greater the need to ensure that only those professionals who have to be informed receive the information.

**3.6.5** NHS bodies will also have to consider the Department of Health Code of Practice on Confidentiality, as well as the General Medical Council Guidance, in respect of patient data they hold.

**3.6.6** If information is disclosed without consent, it is essential that there is a clear record of the reasons and justification for disclosure so as to demonstrate that the decision is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable.

**3.6.7** **The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance advises that the first priority should always be to ensure the safety and well-being of the adult.**

### **3.7 Duty of Confidence**

**3.7.1** Personal information held by public authorities is subject to a common law duty of confidence, and is owed to the person who has provided information on the understanding it is to be kept confidential and, in cases of medical or other private records, the person to whom the information relates. Accordingly, much information about Adults at Risk held by Signatory Organisations will be subject to a duty of confidence.

**3.7.2** The Courts have found a duty of confidentiality to exist in a number of circumstances

where the information is confidential in nature, is more than trivial, and is not publicly known. It has been imparted in circumstances importing an obligation of confidence and its disclosure (or use outside the expected parameters of use) would cause detriment to any person

- a contract provides for information to be kept confidential
- there is a special relationship between parties, such as patient and doctor, solicitor and client, teacher and pupil, which implies confidentiality obligations
- an agency or a Government department, such as Inland Revenue, collects and holds personal information for the specific purposes of its functions.

**3.8.3** However, an obligation of confidence, including where there is a confidential relationship, is not absolute and can be overridden without breaching common law duty if:

- the information is not confidential in nature;
- the person to whom the duty is owed has given consent;
- there is an overriding public interest in disclosure (see above, **Public Interest**); or
- disclosure is required or permitted by a court order, legislation or other legal obligation.

**3.8.4** Some information may not be confidential, particularly if it is trivial or readily available from other sources or if the person to whom it relates would not have an interest in keeping it secret. For example, a Social Worker who was concerned about the whereabouts of their client, might telephone a family member or employer to establish where the adult was that day.

### **3.9 Maintaining Confidentiality**

As a general rule Signatory Organisations should treat all personal information they acquire or hold in the course of working with Adults at Risk as confidential and take particular care that sensitive information is held securely (in accordance with the protective marking afforded to it by the originating organisation). Anyone who receives information, knowing it is confidential, is also subject to the duty of confidence. Whenever Signatory Organisations give or receive information in confidence they should ensure that there is a clear understanding as to how it may be used if shared. Where information is shared under this agreement, the terms of this agreement provide for this.

#### **3.10 Fair Processing**

Practitioners will normally be open and honest with vulnerable adults, carers, and others about why, what, how and with whom information will or could be shared with other agencies, unless to provide this information would be inappropriate – for instance because it would increase risk unmanageably to the individuals.

**3.10.1** When data is obtained from data subjects, they must, so far as practicable, be provided with, or have made readily available to them, the following information so as to ensure processing is fair to the data subject:

- a) The identity of the data controller
- b) If the data controller has nominated a representative for the purposes of the Act, the identity of that representative
- c) The purpose or purposes for which the data are intended to be processed
- d) Any further information which is necessary, taking into account the specific circumstances in which the data is or will be processed

**3.10.2** Where information about a data subject has been obtained from a third party, organisations must ensure that the data subject has ready access to the fair processing information, so far as practicable, either before the data is first processed or as soon as practicable after that time. Where possible, steps should be taken to provide data subjects with the information listed above.

**3.10.3** In order to comply with the above obligations, and as required by the Information Commissioners Office Registration, Signatory Organisations will have a Fair Processing Notice in place which addresses information sharing for safeguarding purposes and readily accessible for inspection by the public, and this Agreement should routinely be published.

### 3.11 The Caldicott Principles

The Caldicott principles are a set of eight principles that govern the use of confidential patient information in the UK. The principles are for sharing information, recognising that confidential patient information may need to be disclosed in the best interests of the patient. It also discusses in what circumstances this may be appropriate and what safeguards need to be observed. Providers and commissioners of healthcare and adult social care are expected to comply with the Caldicott Principles when sharing information.

The principles are that the use of information should be:

- 1) Justified
- 2) Necessary
- 3) Minimal
- 4) On a need-to-know basis

and that users of information should:

- 5) Understand their responsibilities
- 6) Comply with the law

and additionally, that

- 7) The duty to share information can be as important as protecting patient confidentiality
- 8) Inform patients about how their information is used

### 3.12 Summary

Providing appropriate care is taken, there are no legal barriers that prevent the appropriate and necessary sharing of information between agencies in fulfilment of their statutory duties to safeguard vulnerable adults, provided that proper agreed procedures are followed.

## Section 4 - Agreement to abide by this arrangement

The signatories to this agreement accept that the procedures laid down in this document provide a secure framework for the sharing of information between their organisations in a manner compliant with their statutory and professional responsibilities.

As such they undertake to:

- Implement and adhere to the terms of this agreement.
- Ensure that the procedures set out in this agreement are complied with.
- Ensure that all information will be shared where this is lawful and permitted by this agreement.
- Engage in a review of this agreement with the other signatories six months after its implementation and annually thereafter.

We the undersigned agree on behalf of each agency/organisation to the terms of this Data Sharing agreement:

Agency	Post Held	Name	Date	Signature
Cheshire East Council				
Cheshire Police				
Cheshire and Merseyside ICB [East Cheshire Place]				
Mid Cheshire NHS Trust				
East Cheshire NHS Trust				

## Partners Contacts List for Critical Enquiries, Escalations and Incidents of Security Breaches

### Data Protection Officer

[Enter Partner name] – [Enter Role/Title/Rank]

Tel: Email:

[Enter Partner name] – [Enter Role/Title/Rank]

Tel: Email:

[Enter Partner name] – [Enter Role/Title/Rank]

Tel: Email:

### Caldicott Guardian

[Enter Partner name] – [Enter Role/Title/Rank]

Tel: Email:

[Enter Partner name] – [Enter Role/Title/Rank]

Tel: Email:

[Enter Partner name] – [Enter Role/Title/Rank]

Tel: Email:

### Critical Enquiries

### Escalations