

## Effective Record Keeping

Throughout all work with adults at risk, factual records must be kept. The need for effective record keeping has been highlighted in a number of Safeguarding Adult Reviews undertaken by Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB). These reviews have found limited information included in records which do not provide sufficient evidence of care and support in place or actions taken to support individuals. Good record keeping includes a record of all work that has been undertaken; actions, and reasons for those actions; decisions, and reasons for those decisions; progress individuals make towards their desired outcomes; the views of the individual and their carers; the individual's life history; and professional assessment and analysis of risk. Records should be written at the time of or as close to the event described in the record as possible (contemporaneously). This includes a record of the time, date and the circumstances in which conversations and interviews are held. Records should use jargon-free, plain English and clearly differentiate between facts and professional judgements. Practitioner opinions should be supported by detailing the facts and observations upon which they are based.

## More Information

Supporting guidelines on record keeping from an NHS perspective are available [online](#). OSAB provides some key templates designed to support effective record keeping including [Strategy Meeting Agenda Template](#), [Body Maps](#), [Risk Assessment and Management Tool](#), [Risk Action Plan](#), further templates can be found in the [Team Around the Adult Guidance and Template Pack](#). Oldham partner agencies have entered a [Data Sharing Agreement](#) in recognition of the need to share information in certain circumstances; the agreement contains detailed information about why the agreement is needed and the relevant legislation that supports it.

## Information Sharing Considerations

The [Social Care Institute of Excellence](#) detail seven key factors to consider when sharing information:

- The UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) are not a barrier to sharing information but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
- Be open and honest with the individual from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be, shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
- If you are in any doubt, seek advice, without disclosing the identity of the individual if possible.
- Share information with consent where appropriate and, where possible, and respect the wishes of those who do not consent (you may still share information without consent, see section 5).
- Base decisions about information sharing on considerations of the safety and wellbeing of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
- Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that information shared is necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared and is shared only with those agencies and practitioners who need to access it.
- Effective record keeping: Record all decisions and the reasons for them, whether this is to share information or not.

## The Purpose of Record Keeping

Records must provide a consistent account of agency involvement with the individuals agencies support to assist in the early identification of causes for concern. Often, it is only when a number of seemingly minor matters or incidents are considered together that the need to make an adult safeguarding referral is evident. Good record keeping enhances practice and the support that can be offered to individuals. Clear records benefit the individual as safeguarding information can be shared between practitioners, reducing the number of times an individual needs to tell their story. Good record keeping is key to accountability, to the individual, to managers, to inspections and audits. Accuracy is essential as case files are legal documents providing an evidence trail of work. Records can be used as evidence as part of Coroners' inquests or criminal proceedings; local authority investigations and statutory safeguarding reviews; disciplinary investigations; Serious Incident and Root Cause Analysis investigations; and Professional Fitness to Practice Committee hearings. Access to records can be requested by regulators or service commissioners.

## Record Storage & Handling

It is important to remember that if agencies use an electronic record system, any handwritten notes or records must be uploaded as soon as possible. Practitioners should refer to their agency's policies for additional guidance on the storage of records. All practitioners must comply with their agency's Data Protection and Information Governance policies to ensure that personal information is dealt with legally, securely, and effectively. Information governance helps individuals understand what their data is used for, why it is used, and how it is used.

## Information Sharing

If safeguarding concerns are only considered from the view of a single agency then key aspects of the situation can be missed and the situation can be poorly understood or even misunderstood, resulting in decisions being made on little substance, and ineffective responses. Partner agencies in Oldham work together to safeguard individuals through the sharing of relevant information. This includes sharing accurate notes or minutes of discussions in multi-agency meetings including but not limited to those held in relation to the adult safeguarding procedures, risk management processes and Child in Need or Child Protection planning. To ensure effective protection, care and support these must include all agreed actions and be shared as soon as possible with all attendees and other relevant parties inclusive of those based out of area. When sharing salient information in multi-agency meetings or in other relevant situations practitioners are required to apply the principle of sharing the right information, at the right time and with the right people to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making where there are safeguarding concerns.

## Record Keeping & Information Sharing

## When to Share Information

Information can be shared where it is necessary in the public interest and it outweighs the public interest served by protecting confidentiality (for example where serious harm may be prevented) or for the undertaking of an official safeguarding function and as such, consent from the individual is not required. Relevant circumstances include where there is reason to believe that an individual is at risk of death or serious injury as a result of actions/inaction by the individual and/or the actions of others; where others including children are at risk; where a serious crime has been committed; where risks are considered to be escalating and a Team Around the Adult (TAA) approach is required in line with the [Tiered Risk Assessment and Management \(TRAM\) Protocol](#); or where the individual lacks the mental capacity to make the decision – this must be properly explored and recorded in line with the Mental Capacity Act (MCA), for more information see the [MCA Policy and Procedure](#).

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