DARE TO SHARE: INFORMATION SHARING IN PRACTICE

Foreword by Huw Jakeway

Citizens and communities expect the organisations providing their services to work together. Acting as ‘One Public Service’ is particularly important when providing services effectively and efficiently to our most vulnerable groups. Sharing of personal information for service delivery purposes is one of the key enabling mechanisms for improving collaboration, integration and ensuring effective decision-making.

Leaders of public services in Wales have signed up to a collective commitment to sharing information, where it is proportionate and justified, to deliver improved public services and protect vulnerable people.

In 2013, the then Minister for Local Government and Communities asked me to build on this commitment with my public service partners, to ensure translation of this commitment into action. During this period, I have been impressed by the innovative practice that is emerging, and all too aware of the perceived barriers that can hinder information sharing across organisations.

It has become very clear to me that whilst sharing information is a mechanism for better service delivery, it is only through cultural change that we can ensure that it happens in practice. Organisations report that developing the approach to sharing information can be challenging, but the opportunities to make a difference to the outcomes experienced by the people of Wales are clear.

As leaders, I am convinced we must encourage those within our organisations to ‘dare to share’, in a legal, justified and proportionate way. While a decision to share can be difficult to make, the consequences of not sharing can be profound.

In this report, prepared on behalf of the Effective Services for Vulnerable Groups (ESVG) Board¹, we provide just a snapshot of the innovative practice in information sharing already happening in Wales. The case studies clearly demonstrate both the challenges faced (and

¹ ESVG is focused on developing new ways of delivering public services, which have the potential to make a difference to peoples’ lives at the same time as making better use of public money. It has an explicit focus on services which support the most vulnerable people in our society, and aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public services for these groups by identifying, promoting and supporting the development of successful collaborative approaches. The ESVG Board is made up of a cross-section of public service leaders, and going forward its work will align with the recently established Public Services Leadership Panel which advises the Minister for Public Services on the public service transformation agenda. More information about ESVG can be found at: http://gov.wales/topics/improvingservices/public-services-leadership-panel/nwp/effectservices/?lang=en
how they have been overcome) and the benefits realised in terms of more efficient, effective and safer delivery of services. There is so much more to come, with work such as the Multi Agency Information Transfer (MAIT) and the Community Care Information Solution, there are ever developing possibilities.

I am sure you will have many more examples of how information sharing has improved the service you deliver with your partners. The ESVG Board would be interested to hear of these and will be pleased to continue to share local experiences and learning at a national level. The ESVG Board may be contacted via LGPartnerships@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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Effective Services for Vulnerable Groups

Information Sharing –
Briefing on current practice
January 2016

Purpose

This briefing illustrates some current activity in information sharing, specifically the sharing of personal information to deliver services to the citizens of Wales, and highlights common challenges, opportunities and practical benefits presented by the sharing of information.

Background

In May 2012, the Public Service Leadership Group (PSLG) identified information sharing (specifically the sharing of personal information) as a shared leadership challenge. In recognition of the importance of actively encouraging and supporting information sharing in organisations, each of the PSLG Regional Collaboration Leads held a workshop in their region in spring/summer 2013 to identify and address practical obstacles to sharing.

In 2014, building on this earlier work, Local Service Boards (LSBs) were asked to contribute to establishing a national picture of current practice and assess where efforts would be best directed. Current provision of Information Sharing Protocols (ISPs) was mapped against the key areas where information sharing is needed to enable effective joint working. The encouraging news was that over 30 protocols (as at Spring 2014), covering a wide range of purposes, had already been developed, published and made available for wider use.

The Effective Services for Vulnerable Groups (ESVG) Board have a cross-cutting project aimed at driving forward leadership action on information sharing, recognising the practical difference getting this right can have on delivering integrated services to vulnerable people and groups.

In the process of its work around various aspects of vulnerability and collaborative working, ESVG has noted a great deal of activity underway and promising practice in information sharing. ESVG is committed to disseminating this good work so it can be recognised and learnt from.

Context

Public services have a duty to protect the personal information they hold, share it safely and securely, and to tell those whose information they share what they are doing with it. They also have a duty to deliver effective, joined up, services. The Well-being of Future Generations Act has identified collaboration and prevention as two key ways public services should be working. Information sharing will be at the heart of this.

Benefits of sharing information as appropriate and justified are clear. It is important for mature partnership working and delivering effective services to citizens and communities. Service users do not want to have to repeat their story to multiple agencies. If service delivery organisations work in isolation, they might not be aware of the wider vulnerabilities and opportunities for early intervention and preventative action might be missed.
How public service organisations can share

The Information Commissioner has stated ‘People want their personal data to work for them. They expect organisations to share their personal data where it’s necessary to provide them with the services they want. They expect society to use its information resources to stop crime and fraud and to keep citizens safe and secure. However, people also want to know how their information is being used, who has access to it, and what that means for them. People also expect an appropriate level of choice and control, especially over their sensitive data.’

Through the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) there is a well established framework for sharing personal information, which allows organisations to comply with their legal obligations and to share information in a structured and safe manner. All major public service providers in Wales have signed the Accord, together with many other organisations from the public and third sectors. The common principles set out in the Accord are supported by the development of Information Sharing Protocols (ISPs) setting out ‘what, when and how’ information is shared and providing a documented reference point to support local working practices.

A core principle of ‘do once and share’ underpins the WASPI approach – once one organisation has worked through the process of sharing for a particular purpose and agreed an ISP others can, and should, use this as a starting point for their own purposes.

The Welsh Government has funded central support for the application of WASPI and to facilitate the embedding of the framework within public services. From April 2016 the Welsh Government will be providing annual funding to NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS) on a reduced basis to provide a WASPI central co-ordinating function as part of their core programme of work. However, it is vital that sustainable practice in information sharing is embedded and ongoing leadership provided at a local and regional level for information sharing.

Why public service organisations should share

A common theme emerging from discussions with a range of public services on this issue has been that leaders would ‘rather stand before the Information Commissioner than the coroner’ or that it would be ‘better to account to the ICO for sharing than a Serious Case Review for not sharing’.

The consequences of not sharing information can be extreme. The lessons from a number of high profile Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews have identified weaknesses in information sharing that resulted in missed opportunities for intervention and provide sombre learning for organisations. The case of Child Sexual Exploitation in Oxford over a period of eight years, for example, demonstrated that during the time of their abuse all six victims came in contact with Thames Valley Police and Oxfordshire County Council’s

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2 Clear practical advice is available – www.ico.org.uk and www.waspi.org
3 Information Commissioner’s Office (2011) Data Sharing Code of Practice. Available online ICO.org.uk
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Children’s Services. The Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police has said ‘we were responding to each case individually. Nobody sat down and put the picture together’ and ‘It was only when we sat down and pooled our information with the social workers that we began to piece together the picture that explained what was happening in terms of this criminal network in Oxford’.

Similar messages emerged from a Serious Case Review of the circumstances concerning the deaths in a fire in South East Wales in September 2012 of three generations of the same family. This recorded that if the information concerning the history of the man convicted of the murders of the family members had been ‘properly researched and considered, and appropriate interagency processes and planning had taken place, the risks would have been better understood and it is likely that action would have been taken that was more likely to protect [the individuals] from the extreme act which caused their deaths’.

The messages from just these two examples are stark and provide a compelling case for sharing information in a proportionate, justified and legal way. As we know, there have been many more tragic events from across the UK that illustrates the need for appropriate information sharing.

Sharing the work already underway across Wales

This section outlines some of the information sharing practice we have become aware of, along with some of the prevailing lessons and experience emerging as practice evolves.

Leading by example

In 2014, leaders of public, private and third sector organisations across Wales signed up to a collective commitment to sharing information. This stated:

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Our commitment to sharing information...

As public service leaders we are committed to serve and protect the people of Wales, particularly the most vulnerable in our society who depend on our services.

We recognise that we cannot achieve this in isolation – we need to work closely and effectively together and this can only happen if we actively and safely share the information we hold.

It is important that we protect people’s personal information, but vital that we do not let this prevent us from providing the joined up services that people expect, or stand in the way of protecting people from harm.

We are committed to creating an environment in our organisations where staff feel encouraged and supported to share information proactively and appropriately with partners to improve public services and protect vulnerable people across Wales.

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4 Sara Thornton, Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police, speaking on BBC Radio 4’s Today Programme, 15 May 2013
At the same time, we are committed to respecting citizen's rights under the Data Protection Act through the secure and fair processing of our clients' data by our staff.

Accordingly, we will ensure that personal information is shared by our staff, and shared legally, safely and with confidence, as a matter of course.

We are committed to using the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information as the framework for doing this.

This is our collective commitment, as leaders of public services in Wales.

This is a powerful message, but leadership must be ongoing, with a consistent message conveyed and embedded through the various levels in the organisation.

The challenge of translating this strategic commitment into practical action remains. It is clear that some individuals will not share information if they do not feel supported to do so by their leaders. Cultural change can happen at all levels, but there is no doubt that a strong message from leaders can make a difference. This must, of course, be backed up by tools, training and expertise to put the commitment into practice.

Leaders are encouraged to reflect on how they have conveyed this commitment to sharing information within their organisations.

**Case Study: Demonstrating Leadership in Conwy and Denbighshire**

Recognising that organisations are complex, and that it is culture that will ultimately support information sharing, Iwan Davies, Chief Executive of Conwy County Borough Council and ESVG Board Member, met with around 100 of his managers during the Summer of 2014 and expressed his commitment to sharing information and presumption in favour of safe sharing. Iwan pledged to continue to relay a clear message of a presumption in favour of sharing.

An Information Sharing Conference was subsequently held by Conwy and Denbighshire Local Service Board (LSB) in December 2014, with the aim of raising awareness and promoting information sharing among LSB partner organisations, focused on both ad-hoc and systematic sharing. At the Conference, Iwan relayed a message on behalf of the LSB partners of their commitment to encouraging a culture of information sharing. The Assistant Information Commissioner for Wales also attended to give the regulator's perspective. The LSB launched their own Information Sharing Toolkit at the conference, comprising information sharing guidance for partner organisations, and forming a training pack for partners to deliver training within their own organisations.

**Practical benefit:** The Conwy and Denbighshire LSB Information Sharing Toolkit is available for others to use and can be found at [http://conwyandenbighshirelsb.org.uk/lsb-information-sharing-toolkit-2/](http://conwyandenbighshirelsb.org.uk/lsb-information-sharing-toolkit-2/)

**Contact for further information:** Lisa Jones, Deputy Monitoring Officer/Solicitor, Denbighshire County Council jones.lisa@denbighshire.gov.uk

**Embedding information sharing practice within organisations**

Planning for information sharing is not a one-off event. Understanding capability and capacity at an organisation or regional level will be key to ensuring the sustainability of the WASPI approach. This can be done by individual organisations, or with others in their area to consider overall capacity around information management practice.
Case Study: Cwm Taf Information Governance Baseline Review

Cwm Taf Regional Collaboration Board recognised there was likely to be disparity in terms of how far organisations in the region have developed and implemented Information Governance, including information sharing. The Board agreed to undertake a strategic, regional approach to understanding partner organisations’ information governance capacity and capabilities.

**Approach:** A task and finish group, with representatives from all partners in the region, was established to undertake a base-lining exercise to enable better understanding of each individual organisation’s progress in information governance, and available resources, to identify opportunities to collaborate on shared priorities.

The group utilised an adapted form of the Wales Audit Office’s Information Governance regulatory audit checklist and Information Commissioner’s Office best practice guidelines.

A regional Cwm Taf ISP quality assurance peer review has also been piloted across the region, with partners quality assuring two ISPs – Common Housing Register and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This has enabled partners to understand how the process could be devolved to a regional level, and development of draft standards for local quality assurance to ensure a consistent approach.

A data sharing mapping exercise is also underway to identify existing/gap ISPs, to facilitate prioritisation across the region for the development of cross-cutting ISPs.

**Practical benefit:** Shared understanding of the Cwm Taf Information Governance capacity and capabilities, including strengths and weaknesses. The task and finish group have identified a number of opportunities to better utilise capacity and capability across the region, including developing a collaborative regional approach to policies/procedures and staff awareness/training.

**Partners involved:** Cwm Taf University Health Board, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, South Wales Police.

**Key lessons learnt:** WASPI ISP quality assurance process was proven at a devolved, regional level. Practical and pragmatic recommendations were made for collaborative working around information management at a regional level.

**Contact for further information:** Leigh Gripton, Director of Customer Care and ICT, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Leigh.F.Gripton@rctcbc.gov.uk

Sharing information as a key element of working in partnership

There are promising indications that sharing across partners is making a positive difference to how services can be delivered. We are also hearing messages that drafting and collaborating on preparing an Information Sharing Protocol in itself can assist with multi-agency working. For example, one Flying Start Team has commented that ‘the process [was] equally important as the end product’ in ensuring ownership and developing the partnership.

The Team around the Family (TAF) approach is one example where information sharing is key to providing an effective, integrated service to individuals and families. It appears to be universally accepted that information sharing allows for initial assessment to be shared and agencies involved to work collaboratively with a full understanding of a family’s circumstances. For example, the Information Officer for the Connecting Families project in Bridgend is able,
with the family’s permission, to collate relevant information to help the key worker build up a richer picture of the family to inform their approach to providing support. The benefit of the multi-agency nature of this particular team is emphasised:

‘I think it is really beneficial that people are able to share knowledge in the team as opposed to having to contact other agencies and the red tape that goes with that’.⁶

Other examples demonstrate how working through partners and sharing information can increase the reach of services delivered, and deliver effective preventative services.

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**Case Study: Make Every Contact Count Project**

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service is implementing an innovative pilot project within Neath Port Talbot designed to make every contact count for those most vulnerable members of our communities. The Fire and Rescue Service recognise there is opportunity to reduce demand by proactive intervention through the shared delivery of services and the sharing of information.

**Approach:** By working with their partner agencies Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service can identify those most at risk within the community of Glynneath, and direct Firefighters to deliver interventions on behalf of partners. The pilot commenced in October 2015 and is set to run throughout the winter and spring. Firefighters have been trained to deliver interventions to address issues such as: winter warmth, carbon monoxide, flooding, crime prevention, anti-scaming, slips trips and falls etc.

Over the last ten years the Fire and Rescue Service has experienced a significant long term reduction in accidental dwelling fires and this demonstrates that providing advice, education and equipment can make a positive difference to the people the Fire Service engage with.

**Practical benefit:** Partners are able to direct the Fire and Rescue Service straight to the most vulnerable members of the community. For example, Neath Port Talbot Homes has identified 600 properties that the Service should target within the Glynneath area and National Resources Wales has identified 60 properties that sit within the local flood plain. The Fire and Rescue Service view this as an excellent opportunity to deliver a more holistic approach to community safety for the benefit of the most vulnerable members of the community.

**Partners involved:** Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Age Cymru, Age Connect, National Resources Wales, Care & Repair, Public Health Wales, South Wales Police, NPT Homes, NPT Council for Voluntary Services.

**Contact for further information:** Doniker Churches, MECC Project Coordinator SHQ, Lime Grove Avenue, Carmarthen, SA31 1SP  d.churches@mawfire.gov.uk

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Mapping and understanding vulnerability

Information sharing offers the opportunity to deliver better services to individuals. By mapping and sharing intelligence across three Local Service Board (LSB) areas, one project led by Blaenau Gwent LSB found that combining data already held on separate organisation’s systems has the potential to assist with better targeting of resources and preventative action across a geographical area. An approach such as this offers opportunities, as organisations deal with ever tighter budgets, to ensure their resources are best matched to need.

Case Study: Vulnerable Intelligence

Public service partners in Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen have recently completed a ‘proof of concept’ project focused on developing the way public services use ‘intelligence’ about vulnerability in individuals and groups. The focus has been developing collective intelligence to inform multi-agency delivery of services, enabling more strategic needs assessment and targeted planning of resources.

Approach: Information which is already contained in isolation on key partners’ data systems was used to create an information sharing hub on vulnerability. Data on approximately 230,000 individuals was shared, including both demographic data and vulnerability indicators. Innovative data matching, cleansing and predictive analytics was used to establish improved identification of individuals and groups most at risk in the area.

Practical benefit: Evaluation of the project has found there is ‘tremendous scope’ to use data sharing across agencies to identify vulnerability and target individuals appropriately.

Pooling information resulted in the development of a richer picture about individuals and groups, and enabled strategic analysis of vulnerability across the region to inform targeted allocation of resources. The predictive modelling approach has the potential to enable earlier intervention and prevention by identifying individuals who are likely to become vulnerable. Partners are also finding that the shared picture has potential to improve multi-agency collaboration through increased understanding across agencies about vulnerability.

Evaluation found that there is scope to expand on the work undertaken as part of this project, for example by including other systems that would improve intelligence on people living alone, and also by expanding the health data set.

Key learning: Although the hub developed was only a temporary measure as ‘proof of concept’, evaluation of the pilot project concluded it had been successful in demonstrating that:

- Data-sharing is possible
- Data-sharing has significant benefits
- A data analytic model can be used to identify vulnerable individuals with some precision

The evaluation report commented ‘Sharing of data was possible because of buy-in at a senior level by all parties, and the common understanding that sharing data correctly is as important as data confidentiality’

Key partners: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Torfaen County Borough Council, Gwent Police and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

Contact for further information: Jonathan Pinkney, Project Manager, Jonathan.Pinkney@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

A more recent project has worked on a smaller scale to identify vulnerable individuals who are ‘low risk’, but place high demand on services. This is emerging practice, demonstrating one area’s developing approach to understanding this vulnerability and meeting need.

**Case Study: Denbighshire 20**

Denbighshire’s Well Being Plan sets out the intention to ‘identify people with the poorest outcomes and collaborate on assertive co-ordinated interventions to maximise their independence and resilience and reduce unplanned access to services’.

LSB partners believed that an innovative partnership approach could be established to improve collaborative working and target lower risk individuals who place high demand on all of their services. For example, individuals making frequent calls to emergency services due to loneliness or social isolation. In a number of cases, the individuals would not usually be supported by a multi-agency approach as they do not meet the relevant thresholds, but through collaboration it is proposed there is potential to improve well-being and resilience.

**Approach:** Partner agencies compiled a list of individuals who placed the greatest demand on their services with the fewest positive and sustainable outcomes. All partners agreed to consider potential solutions as a ‘whole system’, placing the individual at the heart of service delivery, rather than taking a single agency perspective. Project team members take the lead on behalf of the project to propose alternative approaches to service users and the agencies involved.

**Emerging learning:** an informal evaluation of the first six months of the Denbighshire 20 project has found that the project is considered ‘worthwhile’ with ‘some positive outcomes emerging’. Partners are seeing improved understanding of other agencies perspectives leading to increased multi-agency collaboration, and an appetite for trying out new approaches to responding to long-standing issues. There have been some examples of cases where the innovative multi-agency approach has resulted in a co-ordinated package of support.

That said, the project is learning through practice, with some early recommendations for moving forward already established. These include: partners formalising their approach through a WASPI Information Sharing Protocol, reaffirming the rationale and scope of work on the project, and commitment from all partners to innovate rather than ‘stick with traditional practice’.

Looking forward, the information sharing achieved through this project would appear to have the potential to provide wider lessons about service delivery, partnership working, some emerging themes about vulnerability and unmet need, and opportunities for preventative working.

**Partners involved:** Denbighshire County Council, Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board, North Wales Police, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Probation Services, Ambulance Service.

**Contact for further information:** Liz Grieve, Strategic Planning Team Manager, Denbighshire County Council liz.grieve@denbighshire.gov.uk

**Taking a collaborative approach to assessing risk**

Information sharing offers opportunities to improve understanding between partners - ‘is my person at risk, your person at risk?’ - and act accordingly.

Innovative practice is happening. Some approaches provide for immediate and frequent contact and sharing between partners, such as daily domestic abuse conference calls. These calls are providing for effective and timely information sharing, identification of risk and early
intervention. Another example of collaborative risk assessment involves co-location, with partners working together in one place, a ‘hub’, to assess risk.

Case Study: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH)

To our knowledge, a MASH approach is currently operating in three areas of Wales to support information sharing in safeguarding of children and vulnerable people – the Gwent Missing Children’s Team, Cwm Taf MASH and North Wales MASH.

The common purpose of the MASH projects in Wales is to improve intelligence and facilitate an effective, timely safeguarding response. It is an integrated approach where a number of agencies (including Social Services, Police, Health, Education, Probation and Housing) work together in one place, pool information, assess vulnerability and risk and make collaborative safeguarding decisions.

**Approach:** The approach to sharing varies slightly with each hub, but all involve collating relevant information from all partners to enable risk assessment, decision-making and allocation to the most suitable agency for action.

At the Gwent Missing Children’s Team, which is focused specifically on providing a co-ordinated response to children and young people who repeatedly go missing, practitioners have full remote access to Social Services, Health, Police and Education databases. Each agency collects all available information on every child and young person reported missing or absent to Gwent Police, collating relevant information on one form - MIRAF (Missing Individual Risk Assessment Form). The MIRAF includes a risk matrix setting out the risk of the child going missing again, the likely outcome, and the agreed actions for future episodes. This professional joint assessment is readily available to all interested parties at the point a child is reported missing, and enables decisions to be made about what harm that child may come to if he/she is not located as soon as possible. Evidence is emerging through evaluation that the information contained on the MIRAF is speeding up decision making and assisting in multi-agency working around the young person. One social worker commented on the benefit of the MIRAF:

‘It has helped and informed the assessment and it is a compact document used to explain the whole period of missing instead of having to trawl through case notes and entries on the system’

**Practical benefit:** All three MASH projects ESVG have been involved with are positive about the outcomes of the approach they are testing, both for their service delivery and for service users.

Some early outcomes emerging from the projects include:

- **Decision making is streamlined through enhanced intelligence** - The multi-agency approach is enabling relevant information to be assembled quickly, a more complete picture developed to identify risk and inform safeguarding decisions, so action may be taken quickly to prevent escalation of need.

- The model works to **address risk collectively** – projects report better targeted, but minimal intervention, is showing results.

- **Opportunity for early intervention and prevention** of repeat referrals – information sharing and collaborative working across agencies can highlight opportunities for earlier intervention, as well as a holistic view of a family’s needs rather than solely an individual focus.

- Working collaboratively is leading to **better understanding of drivers** at an early stage, making services

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better equipped to prevent high risk, critical intervention and consequent higher costs.

A girl of 13 was reported missing to Gwent Police - this was her first episode of going missing. Practitioners within the Gwent Missing Children’s Team shared relevant information from each of their services to inform a risk profile. Collating the information about the child showed that:

- she had previously been subject to physical abuse from her birth father (who had since left the home);
- her mother and stepfather had been struggling to cope with her behaviour, and the mother informed the Team’s social worker that she had for some time wanted her daughter taken into care;
- her mother had previously been advised to contact preventative support services (but had not done so);
- she had missed appointments with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, had self-harmed and was presenting as depressed; and
- she had poor attendance at school, and had experienced significant bullying.

**Action taken:** A risk assessment was prepared and the young girl’s resilience was assessed by the Team as poor. The third sector debrief service aligned to the hub was engaged to meet with the girl, and through this the debrief worker learnt that she had run away following an argument with her mother. Mediation was arranged to support improved relationships between the girl and her mother, and early intervention services were engaged with the aim of preventing further incidents and avoiding future crisis.

**Partners involved:** The partners involved vary slightly between the MASH projects, but include staff from Local Authorities, Police, Health, Probation, Education and Housing.

**Contact for further information:** Kerry Wade, Service Manager, Gwent Missing Children’s Team, Kerry.wade@gwent.pnn.police.uk
Francine Salem, Head of Service – Safeguarding, Wrexham County Borough Council, francine.salem@wrexham.gov.uk
Caroline Richards, Cwm Taf MASH Co-ordinator- Caroline.Richards2@south-wales.pnn.police.uk

An alternative approach to sharing information for collaborative risk assessment is co-working, drawing partners together regularly to share information to inform and plan a multi-agency response.

**Case Study: Integrated Offender Management Women’s Pathfinder**

The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Women’s Pathfinder is a partnership initiative aimed at developing a whole system approach working with all women who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System in Wales. This extends to early intervention and prevention work via a police custody diversion scheme, through to enabling successful resettlement on release for women who serve prison sentences. The End-to-End Model (Whole System Approach) was first implemented as a pilot in Cardiff from July 2014. The Pathfinder is currently in the process of rolling out to four new pilot sites across Wales in each of the Police Force areas as follows: Cwm Taf, Conwy/Denbighshire, Newport and Pembrokeshire.

**Approach:** The IOM Cymru Women’s Pathfinder brings together third sector, statutory and criminal justice agencies at a weekly case conference to share information and appropriately assess the needs of female offenders, accurately manage risk and allocate to the most appropriate organisation for support. This approach draws in relevant public service partners including National Probation Service in Wales, Health and Housing.
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Practical benefit: For the service delivery organisations, all agencies are clear on their role and the approach avoids duplication of work and assessments. By working together professionals can piece together a full picture of the individual they are working with and arrange a suitable intervention. For the service user, sharing the information enables a clear plan to be developed and implemented to ensure a seamless transition from custody back into the community.

A woman had been in the Criminal Justice System for the last 15 years and was referred to the IOM Women’s Pathfinder whilst in custody following a conviction for shoplifting. She was due to be released from prison, had no fixed abode, and drug misuse, street working, mental and physical health were all identified as support needs.

Action taken: Case was referred to the Women’s Pathfinder whilst she was in HMP Eastwood Park and was discussed at the weekly case conference. The case was allocated to the Pathfinder Community Support Officers, who liaised with prison staff and Direct Access Hostel to secure her housing prior to release. On the day of release, she was met at the gate and accompanied back to Cardiff. She was assisted to attend her induction with her Offender Manager, her meeting with IOIS (Integrated Offender Intervention Service) for her treatment plan and her housing priority was met. Within the first week following her release, she was supported with DWP claims and with accessing GP and Mental Health Services. The service user has continually engaged with all support agencies and attends her appointments with Probation.

Partners involved: The Women’s Pathfinder, third sector partners (such as Hafal, Safer Wales, Gwalia), Health, Police.

Contact for further information: Jade Theaker, IOM Cymru Project Support Officer, 02920 840171 jade.theaker@probation.gsi.gov.uk

Sharing information at the right time with the right partners

Information sharing alone does not reduce risk. Sharing has to be undertaken in a meaningful, targeted way to ensure that the right information is available to the right partners to enable the best possible service for the people of Wales. If information is incorrectly targeted it has the potential to have a detrimental impact, either as services take time to sift through the information (leading to reduced capacity to deal with cases where they can make a difference), or vital opportunities to intervene earlier may be missed.

Case Study: Ensuring appropriate and targeted information sharing in Bridgend

Recognising that sharing too much information, or with the wrong partners, can be as detrimental as not sharing information at all, Bridgend County Borough Council and South Wales Police are planning to replace a culture based on ‘share the data and then I have discharged my responsibility’ to one of ‘act on the data appropriately as soon as possible’.

The safeguarding team in Bridgend County Borough Council receive contacts from other practitioners who have concerns about children. Over time, and with a greater emphasis on sharing intelligence, this has increased the number of contacts considerably, many of which do not lead to a safeguarding intervention. The time taken to sift through these contacts is diminishing capacity to deal with higher risk cases. It also means that situations where
some early help is required are being missed. Following screening, it is understood that many of the children referred to the team do have some sort of need. However, this is typically early intervention rather than requiring a safeguarding response.

**Approach:** Bridgend County Borough Council are planning to conduct a systems mapping exercise and ‘deep dive’ into the current system for identification of vulnerability and risk (Public Protection Notifications). Building on the relationships already established with partners for sharing violence data, it is proposed that data from Social Services, Education, Police and Health will be examined to better understand what is currently happening when Police Officers and other professionals see the early indicators of harm and adversity.

In partnership with South Wales Police, Bridgend County Borough Council plan to build on the violence data collection system, developing and testing an early indicator data set and a system for collection and analysis to inform targeted early intervention.

The development of a training package for neighbourhood police and PCSOs is also planned in collaboration with Public Health Wales, the NSPCC and Early Intervention Foundation. This will be focused on how to identify early indicators of harm, and communication skills to understand the issue and apply brief interventions. The training will be developed and tested alongside Housing, Health and Education partners to ensure a collective approach to identification and response to early indicators for harm and adversity.

**Practical benefit:** This project is currently at planning stage, and the aim is that it will assist in better targeting information sharing to ensure that the safeguarding team can focus attention on higher risk cases, whilst opportunities for earlier intervention are acted upon to potentially avoid high cost, critical intervention.

**Partners involved:** Bridgend County Borough Council, South Wales Police, South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, Public Health Wales, NSPCC, Early Intervention Foundation.

**Contact for further information:** Deborah McMillan, Director of Education and Transformation, Bridgend County Borough Council Deborah.McMillan@bridgend.gov.uk

**Beyond the public sector: sharing across sectors**

In future, there will be increasing need to share beyond public sector organisations to deliver services. Public sector bodies working with partners – particularly third sector organisations – has huge potential to make a difference to service delivery, facilitated by clearly defined information sharing. Third sector organisations are also well placed to seek explicit consent for personal information to be shared with other statutory and non-statutory services, and support clients in understanding how and why their information will be shared.

**Case Study: Parabl Talking Therapies Partnership**

Parabl provides short-term therapeutic interventions for individuals facing common mental health difficulties or challenging life events which may be impacting on their emotional well-being. The service is provided across all 6 local authority areas in North Wales, and is available to meet the needs of adults aged 18 and over.

Services are provided by a consortium of charities which complement other treatments that are available from Primary Mental Health Support.

**Approach:** Parabl developed an Integrated Care Pathway which allows information to be shared from the NHS Mental Health Teams directly into Parabl. An ISP has been prepared between the partners and assured by
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WASPI. All individuals wishing to access a Parabl service are given a copy of the ISP leaflet which sets out how their information is used, how and why it is shared, and seeks their explicit consent.

This approach provides for sharing of information to enable access to appropriate services, such as Self Help Online Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Therapeutic Groups, Mindfulness and Counselling. Referrals are made directly from the mental health teams (with their own completed paperwork), and following a review of the paperwork by a Parabl assessor, an individual can then receive a Parabl service without the need for a separate assessment.

**Practical benefit:** The approach provides access to individually tailored relevant services, and provides a framework for managing risk between individuals and partner organisations.

The project reports that the speed for processing referrals is improved, minimising any wait between assessment and receiving a service. The ISP developed enables the individual’s assessment paperwork to follow them, removing the need for them to be assessed multiple times. This has benefit for both service user and those delivering service, as paperwork is reduced, there is no duplication, and a client can be fast tracked into a Parabl service without having to repeat their story.

**Key lessons learnt:** The development of the information sharing is working well and efficiently in terms of providing the service to individuals. There is room to extend this to ensure that where a client is not suitable for a Parabl service, their information is shared appropriately with their GP or subsequent mental health support provider.

**Partners involved:** Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board, Wrexham County Council, Flintshire County Council, Denbighshire County Council, Conwy County Council, Gwynedd County Council, Ynys Mon County Council, CAIS, Cruse, Aberconwy MIND, Flintshire MIND, Ynys Mon and Gwynedd MIND, Vale of Clwyd MIND, Advance Brighter Futures, Tan y Maen, Relate.

**Contact for further information:** Claire Williams, Assistant Director, CAIS claire.williams@cais.org.uk

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Case Study: Home Fire Safety Checks

The Home Fire Safety check is a free service offered by the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services and is available to everybody in Wales. Anyone can request this service, but many people are either unaware it is available or don’t know what to expect. To reduce the incidence of accidental dwelling fires by increasing the number of free home fire safety checks delivered to individuals from vulnerable groups, all three Welsh Fire and Rescue Service actively work in partnership with other organisations to facilitate delivery of this service to high risk/vulnerable people.

**Approach:** The Welsh Fire and Rescue Services primarily work in partnership with third sector, voluntary and charitable organisations but also with some commercial partners, all of whom deliver an existing service to the most vulnerable individuals in society. Services engaged range from handy person schemes to care and support services. Full training is provided to the staff or volunteers at each partner agency to enable them to deliver a Home Fire Safety Check at the same time as delivering their own existing services. In this way, the Fire and Rescue Services have developed the capacity to reach vulnerable individuals and households they may otherwise not be aware of.

**Practical benefit:** To date, the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services have over 120 formal registered partnerships, with over 50,000 checks undertaken since 2010, and around 4,000 referrals received from partners who are unable to deliver the check themselves.

**Contact for further information:** Paul Mason, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service p-mason@southwales-fire.gov.uk
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Sharing in a secure way

Information technology is often cited as a barrier to information sharing. However, projects are demonstrating that information can be shared securely. Depending on the circumstances, sometimes only minimal information needs to be shared to enable public services to deliver an effective and efficient service. For example, the MIRAF used by the Gwent Missing Children Team, described on page 11, is available to frontline workers to access relevant information about the risk profile of a child at the point of need. Other examples emerging show how systems can be developed so non-personalised information can be shared securely to proactively provide services to keep people safe.

Case Study: JIGSO Project

The JIGSO project is managed by the Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG) Wales and challenges traditional methods of information sharing. The project aspires to deliver the secure sharing of non-personalised property-based information to improve citizen outcomes. In the first instance, vulnerable property information provided by Adult Social Services Systems to initiate Home Fire Safety Checks was identified, however it is recognised that the approach may act as a catalyst for wider information exchange.

The project is delivering a secure, efficient and citizen focussed electronic information exchange between Adult Social Services and Emergency Services in the pilot areas of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire County Councils within the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Dyfed Powys Police areas.

**Approach:** Existing methods of transferring information between Social Services and Emergency Services, particularly the Fire and Rescue Service in relation to Home Fire Safety Checks, were found to be inconsistent, unreliable and often insecure. This resulted in some of the most vulnerable citizens not receiving the levels of support available and in some documented cases resulted in serious, sometimes fatal incidents.

Existing methods of information exchange have been automated using new technologies without any re-procurement of systems and enables the secure, electronic exchange of information directly between the systems of the public service organisations in the pilot area.

The information exchange is based upon a common identifier, the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRPN) allocated to all households by Local Authorities as standard. All the systems involved were updated to include the UPRN as a common reference number which meant that no personal information is exchanged. Using the UPRN, the Adult Social Services System communicates securely at the end of each working day with the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue System to generate a Home Fire Safety Check. Any addresses added or deleted on the Adult Social Services System are included in the automated message to ensure the information held by the Fire and Rescue System is as accurate as possible.

**Practical benefit:** The approach has challenged and overcome cultural barriers concerning information exchange for vulnerable citizens. A time saving of over 45 minutes per property has been achieved by automating the information exchange. The project has also had a positive effect on citizens through the proactive identification of those properties which are deemed to have individuals who may require a higher level of assistance or fire risk awareness. In addition, it is also expected that there will be a positive impact on the health and safety of emergency service personnel through greater awareness and information reporting.

The project has financed the data cleansing of partner records to make them suitable for transfer, and the adaptation of the Fire and Rescue Service Management Information System (CFRMIS) to enable the receipt of the information. In addition, a new messaging technique has been developed to allow all partners to securely and easily update the CFRMIS to make referrals and complete Home Fire Safety Checks.
Having staff with the right skills

Key to appropriate, secure and legal sharing, as well as ‘busting the myth’ that personal information can’t be shared, is ensuring practitioners have sufficient training to be confident in the decisions they make. There is some innovative practice emerging in this area and below we outline one project which has had a clear focus on training, with potential benefits available across the public services in Wales.

Case Study: Caerphilly Local Service Board: Sharing Personal Information ESF Funded Project

Caerphilly County Borough Council successfully bid for ESF funding on behalf of Caerphilly Local Service Board (LSB) to transform the way personal information is shared across public, private and third sector organisations in the Caerphilly LSB region. A key aspect of this project was the development of an innovative training framework to equip staff with knowledge to handle ad hoc and regular sharing of personal information.

Approach: A training sub-group was formed consisting of data protection practitioners and training officers from all sectors represented on the Caerphilly LSB. Although there is a variety of data protection training already available, it was felt that a more detailed course specifically focusing on information sharing would benefit all partners in making decisions and ensure consistent levels of understanding across the region.

ELearning, supplemented with Apps, and other printed material was felt to be the most appropriate mechanism for delivering this training. This could then be accessed by staff who work remotely as well as office based, and would enable staff to return to key aspects of the training as needed during their work.

The project team consulted the Information Commissioner, WASPI Team and the Welsh Government Sharing Personal Information project in developing this aspect to ensure the content was fit for purpose and future-proofed.

Practical benefit: The training is designed to support staff across all sectors when involved in regular information sharing activity, as well as ad hoc decision-making, and to clarify any inconsistencies in perception about data protection. The basic eLearning module includes definitions and considerations when making decisions to share data, including a flowchart to walk practitioners through the process. Key ‘nuggets’ of information are reinforced in Apps that can be accessed when staff are out and about, including a replication of the flowchart. There is also the option to complete an advanced assessment by accessing additional information throughout the eLearning module. Each organisation made its own decision about whether to make the training mandatory, and how best to promote it, but the project also developed posters, leaflets and a calendar to assist in getting the message out.

Evaluation of the pilot delivery noted: ‘The training framework showed significant promise to impact positively on personal information sharing across the organisations making up Caerphilly LSB’.

The training is copyright free, so any organisation may use it. Over the life of the project, eLearning and apps were made available to all staff across Caerphilly LSB partners, and since August 2015 has been made available to all Local Authorities across Wales through the All-Wales Academy. It is intended to roll this out to other public sector organisations in due course.

The framework provides a mixed approach to delivering training and has been described as ‘highly innovative’.

**Key lessons learnt:** There is a wealth of good practice available through the WASPI framework so it was important to build on that good practice to benefit the project and to contribute back into the national WASPI initiative.

Similarly, each organisation had significant expertise in data protection and in staff training, so the project benefitted hugely from multi-agency working and sharing of knowledge. The partners involved still work closely together even after the project has closed.

**Partners involved:** Caerphilly County Borough Council, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Gwent Police and Gwent Association of Voluntary organisations.

**Contact for further information:** Joanne Jones, Corporate Information Governance Manager, Caerphilly County Borough Council, jonesjk@caerphilly.gov.uk
Next steps

Leaders and practitioners are asked to consider their practice individually and collectively in sharing information.

- How effectively are you embedding good practice and making use of information sharing?
- Are you taking opportunities to come together to share learning, experience and practice?
- Has your organisation/area experienced successes/examples of effective practice which could be shared with other parts of Wales?
- What challenges has your area experienced in implementing effective information sharing? How have these been/will these be overcome? At what level and through what mechanism?

We would be interested in further examples of innovative practice in sharing information, and would be happy to facilitate the further dissemination of learning, experience and practice in this area.

Contact

If you would like more information on the issues raised this paper; to discuss how you can become involved in this work; or to provide new information on activity underway in your organisation, please contact LGPartnerships@wales.gsi.gov.uk