

# ► Mental health and policing

**Information sharing and culture in the Mental  
Health Crisis Care System: National Workshop  
Summary Report**



## What is the 'Information Sharing and Culture in the Mental Health Crisis Care System' workshop?

Since late 2014, The Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing has been working to explore the impact of culture and behaviour of people on information sharing within the mental health crisis care system in Surrey. As part of this work, Surrey requested the opportunity to connect with other local places and Central Government to share learning and experiences. In light of this, a national level workshop was arranged.

This work builds upon our previous publications such as the case study on 'Safe Havens in Surrey', and our forthcoming report on 'Information Sharing within Mental Health Crisis'.

The preparation for the workshop consisted of interviews with a representative from each local place and national organisations attending the event. These conversations helped to shape the workshop the centre facilitated on 18th May 2016 at Surrey County Hall. The delegates who attended on the day were drawn from a range of organisations operating across the mental health crisis care system in local places and central government departments.

### The objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Provide an opportunity to discuss and identify solutions to the cultural, people and behavioural information sharing challenges experienced in local places.
2. Bring together local Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat partners with Central Government policy makers to inform the development of future national policy and guidance.

Please note that the summary report is a reflection of the views expressed by the delegates that attended the workshop.

## What were the main cultural challenges that delegates said they faced in supporting and responding to people in or at risk of mental health crisis?

- ▶ Losing focus or forgetting **service users** needs and requirements when developing approaches to information sharing
- ▶ Misconceptions and a lack of **understanding of the roles** and responsibilities of different organisations in the mental health crisis care system
- ▶ A lack of **ownership and accountability** for developing information sharing across local partnerships
- ▶ **Complex context** of information sharing across multiple organisational and geographical boundaries
- ▶ A lack of **consistency** across different partner information sharing systems and processes (e.g risk thresholds)
- ▶ Difficulty in **evaluating the impact** of information sharing on the outcomes for service users and organisations, and providing the evidence to ensure sustainability of information sharing
- ▶ Inconsistent **interpretation of guidance** on information sharing (e.g Caldicott Principles)
- ▶ Poor information sharing **pre and post point of crisis** (e.g lack of feedback to partners on the outcome of health or police interventions)
- ▶ **Training** is mostly focused on when not to share information, creating a risk averse workforce
- ▶ Lack of awareness and understanding of the role of the **Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)** and the importance of information sharing with VCS organisations

## What delegates said were the best ways of overcoming these challenges at a local level?

- ▶ Focusing on the **needs of service users** through involvement in developing approaches to information sharing
- ▶ Improving information sharing approaches using **evidence-based** learning (e.g. learning from serious incidents and lived experiences of service users)
- ▶ **Reinforcing messages** around information sharing (e.g. the duty to share information) and mental health awareness within induction and professional development programmes
- ▶ Having **common goals and agendas** that support information sharing across partnerships (e.g. as enabled through the Crisis Care Concordat)
- ▶ Approaching the development of information sharing approaches with **creativity and flexibility**
- ▶ Recognising the significant role that the **Voluntary and Community Sector** play within Mental Health Crisis Care
- ▶ The importance of **operational arrangements**, such as co-location, secondments and identified single points of contact (SPOC), that enable and support close regular working between front line practitioners from different partner services and so support better information sharing

## What delegates said were the best ways of overcoming these challenges at a national level?

- ▶ The development of **case studies** that describe and illustrate successful local approaches to information sharing
- ▶ **Communication and simple guidance** with a focus on both the duty to share, in order to develop confidence around what to share, when and with who, and the involvement of VCS in information sharing approaches
- ▶ Support for the **development of tools** that help and guide practitioners through a common process for the decision making and recording of information sharing
- ▶ Providing **professional standards** on information sharing within induction and learning programmes to help develop consistency of knowledge and understanding at all levels in organisations
- ▶ Ensuring **strategy and policy** decisions support and encourage partnership working e.g. joined-up funding, building on the National Crisis Care Concordat
- ▶ It is worth noting that the non-cultural factor of ensuring **interoperability** of IT systems was raised as a significant common issue at this point

## Next Steps?

In response to the challenges and solutions raised, representatives from Central Government and national bodies attending the workshop invited delegates to be involved in consultation on current information sharing policy developments.

Delegates also requested that their contact details be circulated between each other in order to continue conversations from the day and promote further networking.

**‘Great Opportunity for networking, appreciating challenges and considering new ways of working’**

**‘Useful to learn about the experiences of others’**

**‘Great to learn of both best practice as well as and the difficulties and solutions’**

Feedback from Workshop Delegates

## How can you be involved in the continuing conversation?

If you would like to learn more about this work or share any information sharing success stories around supporting people at risk of or in mental health crisis, please do not hesitate to get in contact with the Centre:

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