

▶ Culture and information sharing in mental health crisis care

**Sharing information to identify and support people with complex needs**



# Summary

The Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing has supported Surrey to explore the cultural factors impacting on information sharing for the various stakeholders working in mental health crisis care.

Through this work seven key themes have been identified around culture and information sharing:

1. Scaling up successful information sharing
2. Working in a complex partnership setting
3. Supporting assessment of risk for people in crisis and for organisations
4. Supporting out of hours working and people in crisis
5. Working together to identify and support people with complex needs
6. Monitoring and tracking outcomes for service user and supporting commissioning
7. Building the mind-set, capacity and willingness to share information

**The report has been split in to the seven themes which are available from [www.informationsharing.org.uk/hsc](http://www.informationsharing.org.uk/hsc)**



## 5. Working together and sharing information to identify and support people with complex needs

### Issues covered:

Operating a single system, hearts and minds, changing mindset, frequent and high demand users, commissioning

#### CCG Mental Health Collaborative Commissioner Quote:

**“I didn’t realise the huge volume of Police time and work spent on mental health crisis until we came together to work on this.”**

Local places have a clear sense that information sharing will enable partners to identify and develop a clearer view of those people who have complex and multiple needs and place a cumulatively high demand on the mental health crisis system and the services provided by its partners.

Places also recognise that information sharing is the key to revealing those ‘hidden’ individuals who, when viewed at the individual agency level, are considered as being less complex and below the threshold for high demand but when viewed at the mental health crisis care system level are in actuality both highly complex and high demand. The risk is that if partners are not sharing information effectively and are not unable to pull together a whole system view those ‘hidden’ complex and high demand service users will remain undetected leaving individuals with significant vulnerabilities at risk.

Local places that are sharing information to support a better understanding of the need of complex and high demand users are looking to prevent people being caught in the ‘revolving door’ of service access as well as revealing system gaps, duplication and quality issues.

### Learning and challenges

Local places highlight that a significant barrier to information sharing relates to the variation in understanding and appreciation by different stakeholders of the impacts on and benefits to individual end users, by each organisation and to the whole mental health crisis care system that come as a direct result of the identification and improved understanding of the situation and needs of complex and high demand users.

This variation in understanding and commitment by partners to information sharing can play out in a variety of ways in a local place and can be most apparent when viewing the level of resources which organisations are prepared to commit to support priorities around enabling access and extraction of information for sharing.

Successful information sharing to support the identification and understanding of need of complex and high demand service users relies on a local place achieving a high level of transparency around the information sharing approaches it develops and operates. This high level of transparency and the associated stakeholder support of information sharing that comes from it is in part realised where there is strong stakeholder and citizen engagement in the design and development of service change and it supporting information sharing.

There is a considerable challenge to successfully align the commitment and actions of the broad range of partners within a local place’s mental health crisis care system to enable effective information sharing. To this end there is a significant benefit from having an organisation that is prepared to take a lead role in relation to explicitly developing information sharing in a local place. This maybe an organisation who already has an oversight of or holds responsibility for developing specific elements of the change to the mental health crisis care system. If this doesn’t happen the risk is that the ability to provide a truly multi-agency ‘single system’ response to mental health crisis is restricted to pockets of good practice, reliant on pioneering individuals rather than system wide change.