

## **Consultation paper on the use and sharing of personal information in the public and private sector**

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998 experience amongst local authorities has shown that it is important for agencies and boroughs to be able to share some data, whilst providing safeguards, so that different services and agencies can work together more effectively. This is particularly important for London where the level of service delivery and population mobility across borough boundaries is high.

This report highlights matters in which London Councils is involved, and which involve sharing of personal information. London Councils feels that the principal issues for London Boroughs and London Councils are:

- The need for more express legal gateways/powers in legislation to enable data sharing between authorities to avoid reliance upon implied powers, and to avoid unnecessary debate and delay in putting in place the information sharing arrangements - particularly an issue for London Councils in developing pan-London projects and also in delivering Transport and Environment Committee, and other services on behalf of the London boroughs.
- Less emphasis on detailed information sharing agreements/protocols to support sharing of information between partners which are often far too detailed and therefore inflexible and time consuming to develop and implement, and instead ongoing education of private and public sector

partners that information sharing agreements/protocols should support the existing legal framework in practical way to assist in delivery of services.

Other issues highlighted by London Councils are:

- The Pan London Information Sharing Protocol is being supported by London Councils in partnership with London Challenge, Government Office London, NHS London & Connecting for Health (London Cluster), London Connects and the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (although this is equally relevant to adult services and work is to be developed with practitioners in this area). The protocol has been piloted in North East London and enables health, local authorities and other partner agencies to share information. It is hoped that the protocol will be extended across London and London Councils would welcome a discussion with government about how this could be delivered nationwide.
- The value of maintaining contact with people and delivery of services e.g. NOTIFY, which is a web-based notification and information system, designed to improve homeless households' access to services.
- The cross agency work to ensure access to services - immigration, policing, child protection, and older people - each involves the sharing of data with another agency and volumes are high.
- The introduction of registers for a large number of social care staff.
- Data sharing between Jobcentre Plus and boroughs on claimants is also a key issue. This could make service delivery more effective and less duplicative – whilst ensuring proper safeguards, legislation could ease this process.
- London Councils is the repository for a number of major data intense services and it thereby manages substantial information on over 1million people.  
Among the services TEP manage are:

Mobility:

- Concessionary fares (a statutory benefit: - older and disabled people)
- Taxicard scheme which allows people with mobility problems to travel in licensed taxis and Private Hire Vehicles at a reduced cost .

Transport:

- TRACE (Towed vehicle tracing service): removed vehicle registration marks
- Transport Environment Committee: debt registration
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) : vehicle data
- Lorry Control: Haulier data, enforcement data and routing data
- Health Emergency Badge scheme for doctors and other medical professionals attending emergencies : medical practitioner information

Blue badge fraud:

- Lost and stolen badges & names of original owners Persistent evaders: a list of persons with numerous outstanding Penalty Charge Notices for traffic/parking contraventions.

The unauthorised access to private data and illegal use of private data through breaches of the Data Protection Act is always a risk. As more data is shared and aggregated these risks increase enormously. The resources required to maintain agreed processes, systems and staff training to manage shared data effectively whilst protecting individual's rights should not be underestimated.