

National Data Guardian launches public consultation about the Caldicott Principles and Caldicott Guardians

Dame Fiona Caldicott, the National Data Guardian for Health and Social Care (NDG), today launches a [public consultation](#) about the Caldicott Principles and Caldicott Guardians.

The Caldicott Principles

The Caldicott Principles were developed in 1997 as a result of [a review chaired by Dame Fiona](#) of how patient information was handled across the NHS. They have since become widely used across health and social care to help ensure that confidential information is protected and used when appropriate.

The NDG now proposes to add an eighth Caldicott Principle to the seven in use to emphasise the importance of there being no surprises for patients and service users with regard to how their confidential health and care data is used.

During work to develop this, the NDG has taken the opportunity to review the wording of the existing principles. As a result, the NDG is proposing some amendments to the existing principles in order to ensure that they are as clear as possible, consistent with other data sharing requirements and guidance, and that the language is up-to-date.

Caldicott Guardians

There are currently more than 18,000 Caldicott Guardians working in health, social care and other sectors; they help their organisations to ensure that information is used legally, ethically and wisely in accordance with the principles.

[The National Data Guardian is seeking views](#) on whether, under her [statutory power to issue guidance](#), she should issue guidance proposing that all health and adult social care organisations in England should appoint a Caldicott Guardian. We would particularly like to hear people's thoughts on how we can ensure that such guidance is appropriately and proportionately implemented in a range of organisations, in particular small organisations.

Dame Fiona said: "I have long emphasised the importance of dialogue with the public about how confidential information is used by the health and care system. This is essential to ensure that people can trust that what they tell their doctor, social worker, nurse or other care professional is treated with appropriate respect and used beneficially. All those working in health and care have a part to play in that dialogue.

"I hope that our proposals will support this and look forward to hearing how

they are received.”

Background

The work that has led to this consultation has been taking place over more than two years. There is greater detail on our consultation page about this.

These proposals are not a response to the current pandemic or the data sharing arrangements that it has prompted. However, we are mindful that when we look beyond the current pandemic, there must be careful consideration of which temporary data sharing arrangements should end – as what is appropriate during a public health crisis to protect everyone from a dangerous disease may not be appropriate when the danger recedes. Equally, discussions must also be had about which of the changes (such as those expedited to improve and speed up data sharing) are beneficial and should be maintained.

We hope that by conducting this consultation now, we can develop an improved set of Caldicott Principles and guidance in time to inform and support these important discussions, which will be important to maintaining public trust for health and care data to be used.

Consultation plans

[The consultation will be open](#) for an extended period of two months until Thursday 3 September to allow organisations and individuals supporting the fight against COVID-19 more time to respond.

To ensure that a variety of voices are heard, the NDG has commissioned YouGov to run workshops with members of the public about the consultation. We will also be engaging with a range of groups and stakeholders over the next two months to ensure that we obtain a diversity of perspectives. If you would like to discuss the consultation, please contact the Office of the National Data Guardian: ndgoffice@nhs.net