

PATCHWORK - a project of the Department of Family and Community Services, South West Sydney District (FaCS) and South West Sydney Local Health District: Information Sharing Guidelines.

Purpose for the sharing of personal information:

The purpose of this project is to facilitate the sharing of information between agencies and their partners using the Patchwork application to improve collaboration for the benefit of children, young people and families. The pilot will run from March 2015 for 3 years.

Government agencies involved in providing services to the public have a legal responsibility under the *NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (the Privacy Act) to ensure their dealings with a person's personal information is lawful, and that an individual's rights to privacy are respected. By joining the Patchwork system organisations are confirming their intention to deal with information in a lawful and controlled way.

FaCS intends Patchwork to be initially used to facilitate interagency collaboration with:

- Young People exiting Out of Home Care (OOHC).
- Young People exiting care managed by the ISS team

Users of Patchwork

This information outlines the use of Patchwork, a secure online web application, which promotes strong links between various agencies working with services users. Organisations will fall into the following sectors:

- Public sector organisations including but not limited to Department of Education and Communities (incl. schools, preschools and other child care providers), the Department of Family and Community Services and NSW Health.
- Non Government Organisations.

Type of information that may be shared

Within Patchwork practitioners are able to input their clients' personal details (name, address, date of birth). This information is the minimum amount of data possible to ensure practitioners have identified the "right" client. Organisations will either have the client's consent or another lawful reason, such as for children and young people, Chapter 16A of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act 1998)*.

This information is then compared to the same information from other organisations and, where there's a match, will provide practitioners with each other's contact details. This allows the creation of a virtual team of cross agency practitioners, built around the individual client.

Patchwork is a tool to share practitioner's information, not to share client information, other than the personal details set out above.

Purpose for sharing

Sharing is justified because the information contained within Patchwork is the absolute minimum necessary to promote co-operation between services which is vital in keeping children, young people and adults safe and promoting their welfare. It is a proportionate response to the problem of multi agency information sharing, and rests on the responsibility to share is as important as the

responsibility to maintain privacy. This principle in relation to children and young persons is set out in Chapter 16A. Chapter 16A is explained more fully later in the document.

Who else may this information be shared with?

Patchwork has been developed by FutureGov. FutureGov will not have access to the live data unless this is agreed by all parties and would be solely for the purposes of technical management. Any software updates will be tested on a development server using dummy data, before being securely deployed to the live environment.

Information will not be shared with any other organisations / individuals that have not been invited and approved to join Patchwork, except where required by law.

Restrictions on Information Shared:

The organisation / practitioner will be input into Patchwork by the Patchwork administrator on request by the organisation. Once on Patchwork, the practitioner will input the client's personal details into Patchwork and connect the relevant practitioners in other agencies that are working with the client as part of their case. Only practitioners involved with a client will be able to view that information.

In accordance with the Privacy Act a practitioner is prevented from using the information contained in Patchwork other than for this purpose.

How the information will be shared and security of that information

Patchwork can be accessed through the web, across a 256 AES encrypted connection. Participants are forced to create strong passwords to secure the accounts (12 or more characters, consisting of upper and lower case letters and numbers).

As a minimum the following will be in place:

- Access to the data should be restricted by password control;
- Access should be restricted to only those staff that require it as part of their role and are already working with the client;
- Data should not be stored / transferred on to any unprotected mobile equipment (for example data sticks);
- Information should not be printed from Patchwork;
- Up to date antivirus software should be running on all machines accessing the data; and
- Unprotected data should not be taken off site.

Data Quality

Each organisation will be responsible for the quality / accuracy of the information they have entered and for informing other organisations of any inaccuracies discovered.

Practitioners can only access information about their own clients, either having added them themselves or being granted access by being invited into their team. There is no case information, or free-text field for a practitioner to complete regarding their clients. Nor is there any capacity to upload or attach documents, such as case notes to Patchwork.

Management of Security Breaches

Should a security breach of Patchwork occur, the party discovering the breach will follow their local process and inform support@patchworkhq.com

The breach will be investigated under that organisation's security breach procedure. A security

breach includes, but is not limited to:

- Attempts at unauthorised access to the application.
- Compromise of passwords.
- Unauthorised introduction of software to the Patchwork hosting environment.
- Unauthorised modification or tampering with system components.
- Loss of magnetic, optical or other media including printed output, containing Patchwork data, e.g. screen prints, back-up tapes, data extractions, etc.
- Unattended end-user-devices left logged into Patchwork.
- Flooding of the system with access attempts or data.

Client Rights

Requests

Each organisation will be responsible for dealing with their own and their contracted agencies in relation to *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* requests. Each organisation will deal with their own client complaints.

Where a client wishes to be removed from Patchwork other organisations involved should be notified along with Patchwork@facs.nsw.gov.au so the record can be deactivated. This action will be performed within 24 hours of the request being received by the Patchwork Administrator.

Review, Retention and Disposal

The database will log modifications to the data and the application server will log access to the site. This will provide an auditable trail of activity.

Data will not be stored for longer than is necessary and will be subject to retention schedules that are already in place.

Any redundant data will be securely deleted. Should the application cease to be used by FaCS at the end of the project, the data will either be returned or notification of secure deletion will be provided by Futuregov.

These guidelines will be reviewed as part of the ongoing evaluation of Patchwork.

Chapter 16A

Under chapter 16A, prescribed bodies, including many human services and justice agencies and NGOs, are able to share information relating to the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people without consent, where necessary, and whether or not the child or young person is known to Community Services.

The information can be provided if the provider reasonably believes that the provision of the information would assist the recipient to make any decision, assessment or plan or to initiate or to provide any service relating to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person or class of children or young person.

Prescribed bodies are defined in Chapter 248 (6) of the Care Act and clause 7 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2000. Organisations not specifically mentioned there may be covered by the following general description: 'any other organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services, or law enforcement, wholly or partly to children.'

Further information about Chapter 16A is provided in the online Interagency Guidelines.

Frequently asked questions

1. *Does Patchwork replace my case management system?*

Patchwork is not a case management system, but a tool to facilitate better communication and coordination of professionals across multiple agencies in providing service to a client.

2. *Will I use Patchwork to enter documentation in relation to a client?*

Patchwork is not a document management system. No documentation in relation to the provision of services to a client can physically be added. You will need to utilise your existing systems.

3. *Will my clients have access to Patchwork?*

Clients or parties related to clients do not have access to Patchwork, although this functionality may be provided in the application in the future, if the pilot continues.

4. *What does it mean to Raise Attention for a client in Patchwork? Am I absolved of responsibility once I have Raised Attention?*

Raising Attention in Patchwork simply serves to notify the care team around a client that there is an increasing concern for the client. It does not replace good practice to communicate with the appropriate members of a care team or other agencies about the nature of the concern and devising a course of remedial action if required. Nor does it replace any mandatory reporting processes.

5. *I am concerned that adding practitioners from particular agencies into the clients care team may infer information about the client which may not be beneficial to the client. What should I do?*

You will need to exercise judgement and weigh up the benefit of including the agency in the clients care team against the risk that this brings. You may be able to alleviate this risk by communicating with the practitioners in the care team. The purpose of Patchwork is to promote collaboration by building a safe and secure network to connect with colleagues from different agencies for better outcomes for a child or young person. The value in Patchwork is to get a fuller picture of who is working with your client to better understand the needs of your client.

Patchwork does not remove the need to exercise good judgement that would need to occur in the existing environment, however, it should be acknowledged that as professional in the sector we would not make assumptions without communicating with the workers involved first.