



**Mersey Care**

NHS Foundation Trust

Community and Mental Health Services

# T.H.E. I.G. C.O.D.E

WHAT I NEED TO KNOW



If it's personal, it's private.

[merseycare.nhs.uk](https://merseycare.nhs.uk)

## What I need to know

Keeping our service users, patient and staff information confidential.

It is important that you know what is expected of you so that the personal information you collect, store, use and share is safe, secure and legal. This is everyone's responsibility.

Service users and patients trust us to keep their information confidential. These rights are legally-binding as stated in the NHS Constitution.

"You have the right to privacy and confidentiality and to expect the NHS to keep your confidential information safe and secure."

**Respect, Consent and Confidentiality: Your Rights, NHS Constitution**

The NHS also trusts us to handle personal, service user, patient and organisation sensitive information securely. "You have a duty to protect the confidentiality of personal information that you hold." **Staff: Your Responsibilities, NHS Constitution**

## What is Information Governance?

Information Governance is a series of legal and best practice standards that govern the way in which the NHS handles all organisational information - in particular the personal and sensitive information of service users, patients and employees.

**T.H.E. I.G. C.O.D.E.** is an acronym which will help you to remember what is expected of you. This booklet also explains where you can go should you feel you need more help in understanding and incorporating these processes into your working day.



## Think

Think when sharing personal information about service users, patients and colleagues. Does the information need to identify the individual involved? Are you storing and transferring it securely? Are you authorised to have access to it or to share it?

## Handle

Ensure confidential information is not unlawfully or inappropriately read, used or shared. Is the fax number correct? Is your screen locked? Are confidential documents secure and not left unattended? Is the method of disposal or destruction safe and secure?

## Encrypt

All laptops and memory sticks must be encrypted. Do not hold personal information on removable media, such as memory sticks, disks or laptops unless it is encrypted. Call the IT helpdesk if you need advice or help.

## Information

If it's personal, it's private. You should report incidents of confidentiality breaches and loss of data. This will ensure that we all learn from incidents and develop ways of stopping similar incidents happening again. Ask your line manager, or I.G. lead if you are unsure.

## Governance

This is the legal and best practice standards that you should be using in your day-to-day work when handling personal information. You have a responsibility to make sure you are complying with the Trust's policies and the law. Find the policies on your space or the website and read them.

## Confidential

You should only share personal information with others who are authorised to see it and need to know it in order to do their job. Do they need identifiable information? Is it relevant and not excessive to the purpose they need it for? Do you need to get consent to share it?

## Overheard

Think about the conversations you have in public places and messages you leave. Can other people overhear you? Can that message be accessed by others? Does it need to identify the individual concerned?

## Do not share passwords

Passwords, Smartcard and PIN numbers are there to protect you and the information you are authorised to have access to - don't share them under any circumstances and don't use anyone else's.

## Everyone

Everyone working for or with the NHS has a legal duty to protect information. You have a responsibility to keep information safe and secure. This includes all personal information held electronically or in paper format.

# T.H.E. I.G. C.O.D.E

**T**hink - when using personal information

**H**andle - information securely

**E**ncrypt - all laptops and memory sticks

**I**nformation - if it's personal, it's private

**G**overnance - you are accountable for personal information

**C**onfidential - prevent unauthorised disclosure

**O**verheard - remember, sound travels

**D**o not share passwords or PIN numbers

**E**veryone has a responsibility

**To find out more on how to handle personal information and where to get further help, please visit: [merseycare.nhs.uk](https://merseycare.nhs.uk)**