



Information Sharing Gateway: 'sharing made simple'

SUMMARY

The Information Sharing Gateway provides a simple answer to a big challenge for public sector organisations – overcoming information governance requirements when sharing records.

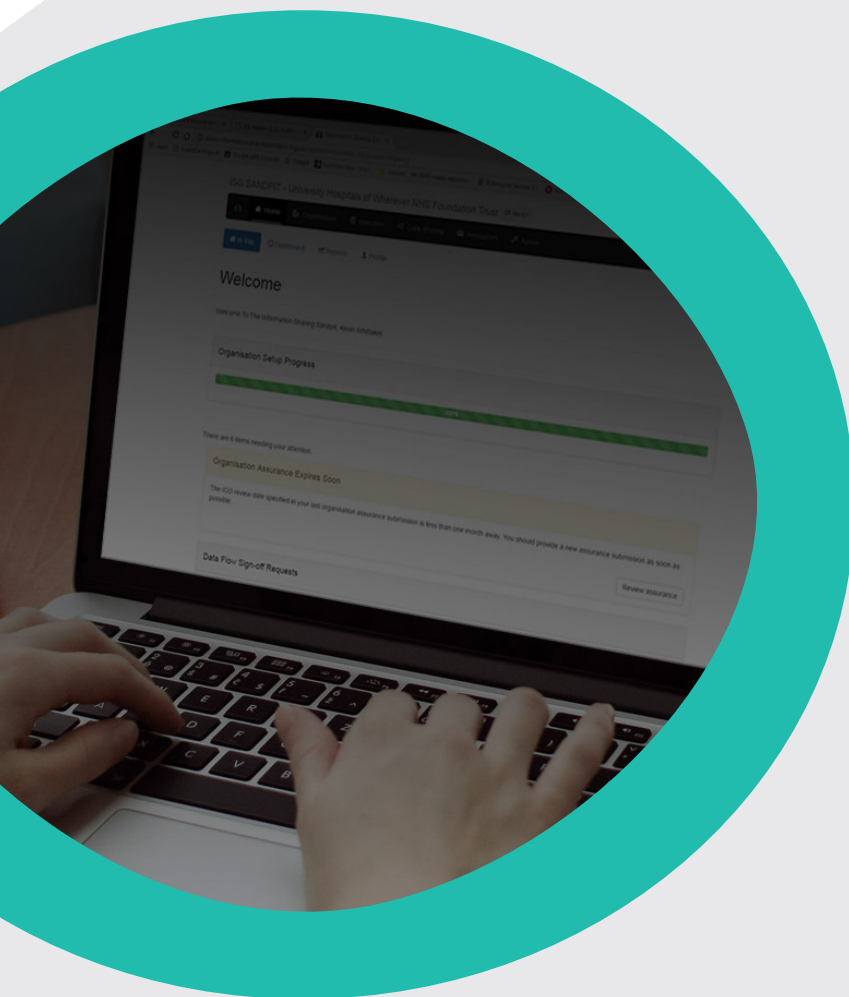
The solution was developed with funding from the Innovation Agency and has been adopted by nearly 1,200 organisations across England within just three years – with the likelihood of national coverage within a few more years.

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

A group of information governance specialists from organisations in Lancashire and Cumbria developed the system, to improve and modernise the administration and risk assessment of information sharing in the public sector.

Having come up with the idea of a single gateway, the challenge was to find funding for a project which spanned different organisations – and didn't match funding specifications which were focussed on technologies.

The answer came from the Innovation Agency-funded Lancashire Person Record Exchange System (LPRES) team, who allocated £100,000 for the Gateway to be developed. They recognised the value of the Gateway in supporting LPRES, a healthcare information exchange platform which received more than £200,000 from the Innovation Agency over its first two years.



THE CHALLENGE

In the past, information governance has held up the technical sharing of data for months while sharing agreements were signed - often on paper - necessitating a cumbersome, bureaucratic paper chase. IG is a back-room service that had not been given suitable investment to modernise its processes.

As dozens of organisations are often involved in each record sharing agreement and there is a requirement for regular review, the status and tracking of the agreements was a nightmare. Large organisations may have more than 100 of these agreements to manage, with more being added all the time as the requirement to support integration of services and new care pathways expands.

ACTIONS TAKEN

The Innovation Agency was a catalyst for the development of the Lancashire Person Record Exchange System and subsequently the Information Sharing Gateway.

We provided more than £200,000 to LPRES over two years, leveraging further support from throughout the health system. The LPRES team directed £100,000 of the funding to the development of the Information Sharing Gateway, with the backing of the Innovation Agency.

Starting development in November 2014, within 12 months the Gateway had won an iNetwork Innovation Award. As of July 2017, nearly 1,200 public sector organisations across England use the system and it is financially sustainable.

There were ten development partners from NHS, local authorities and police.

For further information:
Kevin.whittaker@mbhci.nhs.uk
www.informationsharinggateway.org.uk

IMPACTS

By July 2017 there were 2,057 users in 1,182 organisations using the Information Sharing Gateway to manage 659 data sharing agreements.

They include NHS, local authorities, police, third sector, schools and many other organisations throughout England – and one in the Netherlands.

WHICH NATIONAL CLINICAL OR POLICY PRIORITIES DOES THIS EXAMPLE ADDRESS?

- Care and Quality
- Funding and Efficiency
- Health and Well Being

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PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The plan is to cover the country and to reinvest income from its wider adoption, into continuing developments.

The key item under development currently is an API to enable 'live' dynamic sharing agreements and integration with data exchange platforms (eg Tiani Spirit / Graphnet) and other systems.

The system will be fine-tuned for the new General Data Protection Regulations which will be introduced in May 2018, so that all users will be compliant in their data sharing from day one of the new rules.

The design has been made easy for small organisations such as GP practices to use; and costs are kept to a minimum.

TESTIMONIALS

Helen Speed, IG Lead for LPRES:

"The Innovation Agency funded a group of professionals to solve their own problems and develop a solution fit for interoperable information sharing, when there was no prospect of a bid or other funding being available. Their role has been crucial in LPRES and in the exciting success of the rapidly spreading Information Sharing Gateway."

Tony Atkinson, Information Sharing and Privacy Coordinator, Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust:

"We have agreed common rules of information sharing and are able to map data flows all in one place with quick and easy sign-off by the right people. Spreadsheets, paper agreements, SharePoint directories and scanned signature sheets are all, thankfully, history."