

## REVIEW OF PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE PRIVACY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (N. IRELAND) 2015

The NI Privacy Advisory Committee (PAC) has the following ongoing responsibilities:

- To oversee the implementation of the recommendations agreed by Minister on Protecting Personal Information;
- To manage a Project Team to complete a Programme of Work to give effect to the recommendations agreed by Minister;
- To report regularly to the Department on progress on implementing the recommendations;
- To keep consent and confidentiality matters in HPSS under continuous review and to provide timely and relevant best practice advice to HPSS bodies; and
- To consider current and new uses to which personal information is put in HPSS bodies and to authorise such uses of personal information, taking particular account of the legal and ethical issues surrounding privacy and confidentiality.

The following is an update on the work of PAC over the past twelve months.

### 1. Advice and guidance to inform service users and staff

PAC provided advice on a patient Diabetic Eye Screening information leaflet, in relation to patient confidentiality. Advice was also provided on the section of the NI Household Survey “Public attitudes to data sharing”.

The PAC Chair participated on the GMC Task and Finish Group reviewing the current GMC guidance on confidentiality and to assist with the development of updated guidance.

### 2. Procedures to improve working practices

**Personal Data Guardians:** PAC has continued its yearly meetings with Personal Data Guardians and Executive Directors of Social Work to share and discuss current issues relating to service user confidentiality and informational privacy.

**The Health and Care Number:** PAC continues to encourage the use of the Health and Care Number which should, among other things, facilitate arrangements for pseudonymisation.

### 3. Training to increase awareness and understanding on confidentiality

**Personal Data Guardian Training:** The new training arrangements, introduced in 2013 and organised by the HSC Leadership Centre, The Beeches, has been working well. A seventh training day for Personal Data Guardians was provided in 2015 which included top-up training.

PAC continues to review training arrangements. This year’s participant feedback has again been very positive. Further training is being arranged for 2016.

**Staff Training:** An E-learning programme on confidentiality, developed during 2013 and 2014 was tested by PAC and uploaded by the HSC Leadership Centre, The Beeches during 2015. It has since gone live. The module, for all HSC staff, is based on the Code of Practice on the Protection of Service User Information. It should also support the promulgation of the NIECR.

#### **4. Information and communication technology improvements regarding access and security of personal information**

PAC has continued to support the Board's ICT Unit in the promotion of privacy enhancing technologies, the incorporation of methods to record consent and the use of anonymised databases for secondary uses.

A proposal to link Mental Health systems to NIECR was reviewed by PAC. This included a consideration of the access arrangements and restrictions, in addition to the general NIECR controls, audit facilities and consent to view arrangements. PAC is in no doubt of the potential benefits for patient care that can arise from inclusion of mental health information within the NIEHR. We also noted the positive response to the proposals from the Bamford Monitoring Group. PAC supported the proposals.

#### **5. Consideration of legislative changes**

PAC having submitted comments supporting the introduction of legislation and was invited to provide oral evidence to the Committee for Health and Social Care and Public Safety on the Health and Social Care (Control of Data Processing) Bill. PAC also submitted a written paper to the Committee providing background information on the legislative proposals and comments on the Bill.

#### **6. Advisory Role**

PAC, in fulfilling its responsibilities as outlined in the recommendations provided by the Minister, has continued to advise on existing and new uses of personal information and to generally advise on confidentiality issues in HPSS.

PAC provided advice on several national projects approved by the Confidentiality Advisory Group of the Health Research Authority, where access to HSC (NI) data on service users was being sought. These included the Cost-effectiveness of Models of Care for Young People with Eating Disorders study, the Mental Health Clinical Outcome Review Programme and the National Audit of Cardiac Rehabilitation.

PAC has also provided advice to the Attorney General, the DHSSPS and to individual clinicians and researchers.

**Roy McClelland OBE**  
**Chairman, Privacy Advisory Committee (N. Ireland)**  
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