The Caldicott Guardian

The purpose of the Caldicott Guardian originated from the 1997 report produced by the Caldicott Committee chaired by Dame Fiona Caldicott, which dealt with the use of patient identifiable information held by NHS organisations.

The idea of a Guardian was to have a senior person in each NHS organisation responsible for the oversight of the arrangements in that organisation for the use and sharing of clinical information. Subsequent work extended the requirement in 2002 to appoint Guardians into Councils with Social Service responsibilities.

In 2005, an elected body was created, made up of Caldicott Guardians from organisations involved in the provision of Health and Social Care services in the United Kingdom. It was set up to facilitate the sharing of good confidentiality practice and the promotion of a national approach to confidentiality and appropriate information sharing.

Caldicott Principles

Six principles relating to data-handling and use were established on which the role was to be based. These key principles enable the safe and secure handling of clients’ personal data.

Principle 1: justify the purpose(s) for using confidential information
Principle 2: do not use or transfer personally identifiable information unless it is absolutely necessary
Principle 3: only use the minimum personally identifiable information that is required
Principle 4: access to personally identifiable information should be on a strict need-to-know basis
Principle 5: everybody must understand his or her responsibilities and obligations to respect client confidentiality
Principle 6: understand and comply with the law

Who should perform the role?

The person best equipped to be the Caldicott Guardian should fit one or more of these requirements:

1. Be a senior person within the Council’s Social Care management team
2. Be a senior Social Care professional
3. Have the responsibility for promoting information governance within the organisation

The current holder in North Somerset Council is Gerald Hunt, Assistant Director (Strategy, Commissioning and Quality Assurance)