

Coronavirus Pandemic

Information Security Measures – using WhatsApp for keeping in touch

Keeping in touch during the coronavirus pandemic is key for continuing to provide essential services and for teams to keep communicating.

In the current circumstances it could be more harmful not to share information than to share it. We will need to work in different ways from usual and the focus should be on **what** information you share and **who** you share it with, though due regard should be given to **how** you share it.

Council Provided Equipment

The Council provides equipment and tools for staff to maintain communication. These tools should always be used first when available including the use of:

- Encrypted laptops;
- Secured and managed smartphones;
- Skype for Business with instant messaging, web conferencing and file sharing;
- Teams for collaboration, instant messaging (chat), web conferencing and file sharing.

Where staff are unable to use Skype for Business or Teams, WhatsApp can be used on Council owned equipment and should be done so in such a way that limits the use of personal identifiable information.

Personal Owned Computing Equipment

Where staff have no access to Council owned and managed equipment such as laptops, desktops or smartphones and there is an **urgent** or **ongoing need** during the pandemic to keep communication channels open it is generally accepted that personal owned devices can be used with WhatsApp. This must be done in such a way that:

- prevents the use of personal identifiable information;
- guarantees that unauthorised persons cannot gain access to the information shared within WhatsApp i.e.
 - you must log out of WhatsApp when not in use;
 - if remaining logged into WhatsApp due operational requirements, sharing of the device with others **must** cease and:
 - devices must be setup to auto lock when not in use and require a password / pin / phrase to be re-opened that is not known to any other party;
 - where biometrics is used to unlock the device any unauthorised parties setting must be removed while the device is being used for work communications.

Official Council Records

Staff must ensure that any information shared with WhatsApp is officially recorded within official council systems where there is a requirement for that information to be retained or audit logged.