**Information Management:**

**WhatsApp messaging service**

## We do not recommend using WhatsApp or similar apps.

We understand that Working From Home can present challenges and difficulties, and, that staff are endeavouring to continue working and finding different ways of overcoming some of these challenges. The need to communicating with colleagues that previously were sitting just a desk away or at the other end of a phone is causing some staff to use WhatsApp or similar products.

We do not recommend using WhatsApp; although it has benefits but also risks.

## Benefits:

* Quick and efficient communications between participants.
* Text, images, videos, and, audio and video recordings can be sent over Wi-Fi for free
* Audio and video calling is free.

## Risks and Recommended Mitigations:

* Everyone who has your number can access your profile picture and status. Avoid using pictures of yourself as it is not uncommon for images to be stolen and misused.
* It is common and easy to spend a disproportionate amount of time replying to WhatsApps, limit your usage and focus on work during work time.
* WhatsApp uses data when not connected to Wi-Fi. A secure Wi-Fi connection prevents data allowances being maxed out (applicable to both Council and personal smartphones) and protects a network from being hacked.
* If you are using your personal mobile ensure you are not sharing your personal number or information with others who you do not choose to share it with, especially so if you are added into WhatsApp group chats without prior consent as all participants will then have your personal mobile number.
* Do not send inappropriate messages or images; there may be numerous memes, images or videos that you find amusing but these are not suitable for work chat groups and may easily infringe copyright. If a work chat has been set up then only send appropriate messages.

## Always Avoid:

* If you need to make a work decision that would usually be documented or recorded then do not do this in WhatsApp as the Council has no access or oversight of these messages and information within them is outwith the Council’s control or record.
* Personal information of service users should not be discussed within WhatsApp. This goes against Policy as all personal information the Council has must be kept suitably safe, secure and accessible to the relevant departments, for example to fulfil any Subject Access Request submitted by the individual.
* Do not send files within WhatsApps; malware can easily be spread causing a multitude of security and functionality problems.