

The background features a series of light purple circles and triangles. A horizontal line of circles is at the top, with a large, light purple triangle to its right. Below this, there are two rows of circles: the first row has five medium-sized circles, and the second row has seven smaller circles. To the right of these circles are two large, light purple triangles. At the bottom, there is a row of ten small circles, with two medium-sized triangles interspersed among them.

Sharing Personal Information

*Made Simple*

A large print version is available from Pam Smith

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## ***Sharing Personal Information Made Simple***

Any organisation that holds personal information about living individuals must abide by the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

**The Act was not designed to be a barrier to the exchange of information but to ensure that information is exchanged with the best interests of the individual in mind.**

**Sharing Information - is when you pass information held by your organisation to another organisation or to another service within your organisation**

- e.g. A health visitor might disclose information to Social Services should they have concerns about the welfare of an individual.
- e.g. the Police might disclose to an Education Welfare Officer details held about a particular youth who is generally causing a nuisance.

**Information – can be anything that is held within your organisations systems/files.**

e.g. name, address, education attendance records etc.

**Personal information - is anything that would identify an individual such as a name or a photograph, or any reference that may identify an individual**

e.g. telephone number, national insurance number etc.

## ***When Can I Share Information?***

There are no hard and fast rules regarding sharing information, however, if, in your professional judgement you think that the person who you are sharing this information with 'needs to know' and you can satisfy one of the following – SHARE IT!

- The person to whom the information relates has given their consent to the disclosure
- Or
- You are clear that a power exists for you to share this information for the purpose for which it is required. eg Crime & Disorder Act or the Children's Act.
- Or
- It is not personal data e.g statistics

These situations which are illustrated on the attached process map cover only a few of the situations that allow you to disclose information.

Consideration of transactions will be speeded up if you are clear about the powers enabling you to share personal information.

***If unsure please seek advice***



## ***What information can I share?***

You can disclose the information requested providing: it is relevant - the information you disclose must only relate to the individual who is named by the organisation in the request and not excessive - blank out any information that relates to other individuals

## ***How do I share the information?***

You can pass information either by:

**Documenting it** - either by using the 'request form' attached or your own documentation which records details of who has disclosed what, to whom, for what purpose and on what date.

Or

**Verbally** - If you do not know the individual requesting the information always ensure that you receive a written request, or call them back by looking up the telephone number yourself.

Best practice would advise that you should always document the sharing of information. Whilst this may not always be practical, it is advised that any verbal transactions are followed up by documentation.

## ***How do I physically send the information?***

Ideally requests should be handed or posted. However, if faxed always make sure that your response has been received by the requestor.

When in a meeting this guidance still applies.

Not all organisations are able to e-mail information across the external internet, therefore please ensure that this is permissible prior to using this method of disclosure. Best practice would be not to e-mail personal information externally. Internal disclosures via e-mail within organisations e.g within Lancashire County Council Departments are permissible, however, best practice would always be to retain a paper copy of any information disclosed.

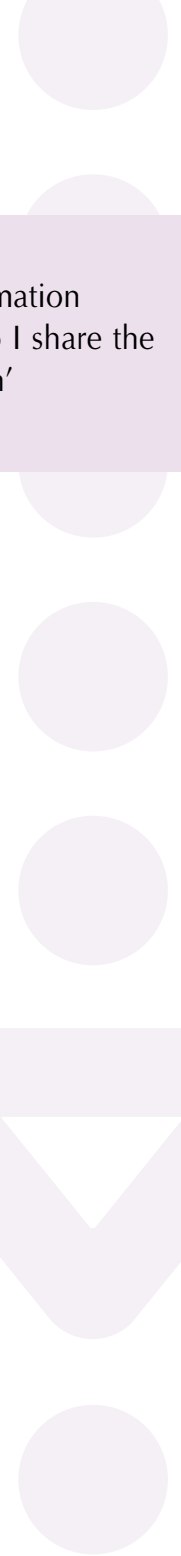
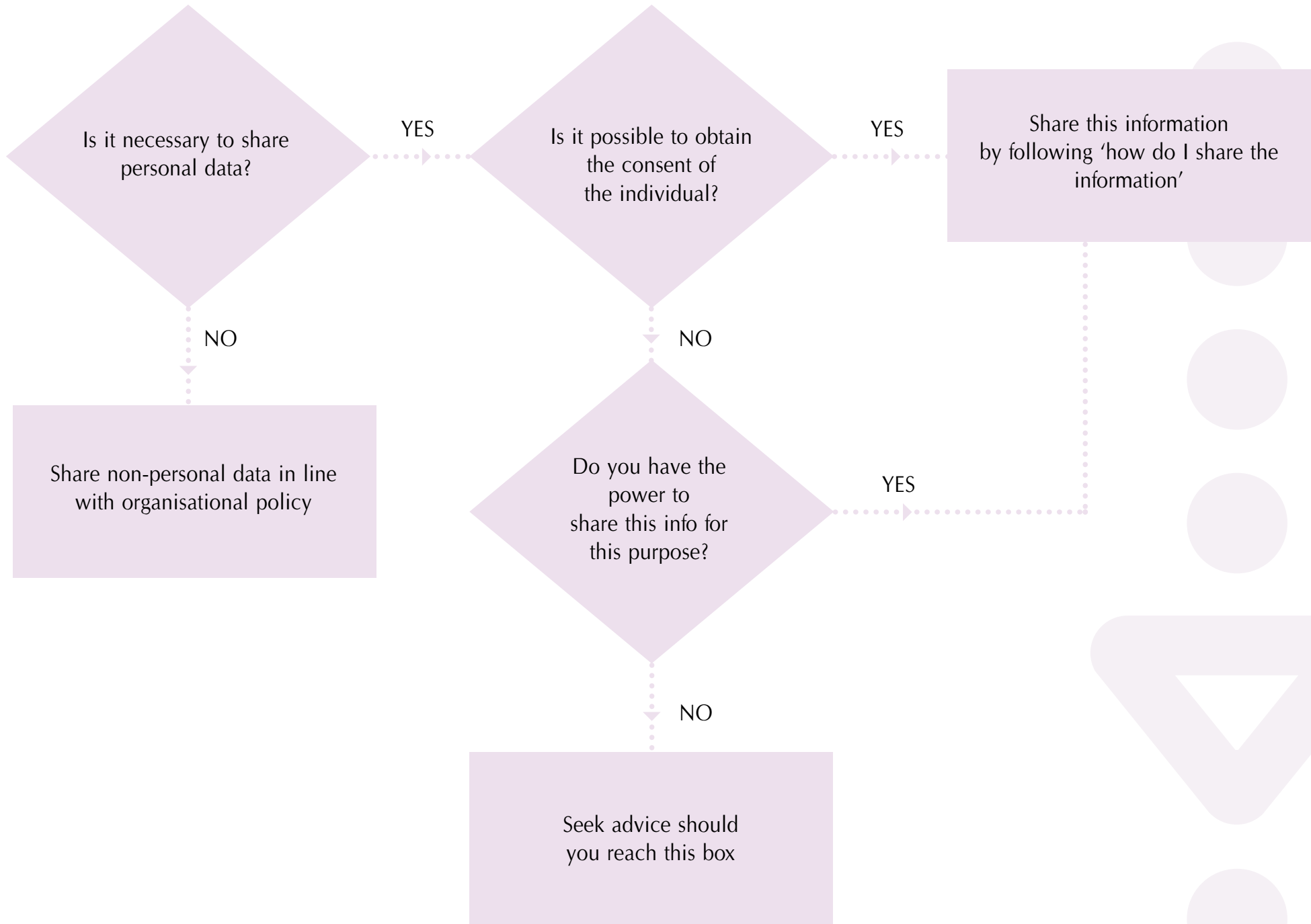
If unsure always ask the requestor how they would like the information to be forwarded.

## ***What happens following the sharing of information?***

Keeping the information secure - Once information has been disclosed it is the responsibility of the receiving agency to ensure that the information is kept secure and is not disclosed to individuals/organisations who don't 'need to know'.

Accessing information held - Should you receive an application from an individual to access information held about them by your organisation please seek advice from your Data Protection Officer or relevant individual.

Using the information disclosed – organisations should ensure that once information has been disclosed by an agency that it is isn't further used for a different purpose, and that it is destroyed as confidential waste when it is no longer required.



Always ensure that the individual/agency you are disclosing  
the information to is allowed to receive it

## REQUEST FOR THE SUPPLY OF INFORMATION

Often, when you share information you do it verbally, however, you are advised to document all transactions. You may use this form (or similar) to do this.

NAME OF REQUESTER .....

ORGANISATION (to include Division/Department) .....

I can confirm one or more of the following:

The individual has consented to the sharing of this information

A power exists to allow me to share this data for this purpose

Please state this power .....

The request is for de-personalised data

*Tick relevant box(es)*

Information required

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Signed ..... Date .....

*The following information is provided on the understanding that it will be treated as confidential and should only be used in connection with the purpose for which it has been requested. The information will be kept secure and will be disposed of as confidential waste on conclusion of the relevant proceedings*

continue overleaf





