DATA QUALITY POLICY

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POLICY SUMMARY
This policy has been produced to provide clear guidance of the controls and procedures that must be followed by all staff within the Trust in relation to all aspects of Data Quality

The Trust monitors the implementation of and compliance with this procedure in the following ways:
Data quality standards will be monitored monthly throughout the Trust via a number of agreed mechanisms, as detailed in the Procedure attaching to this Policy.

SCOPE

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The Director responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy is
The Executive Chief Finance Officer
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Department of Health has for a number of years placed requirements on NHS organisations to ensure that the data they hold is of good quality and have required trusts to have in place processes and procedures to provide assurances to both themselves and to users that their information / data is of a consistently high quality. This was re-emphasised by the findings and recommendations of the report by Mr Robert Francis QC in relation to the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Enquiry and by Dame Caldicott’s review of information governance.

1.2 Good quality data is and always has been a key part of improving services through informed decision making, regardless of whether those decisions affect an individual or the whole of the health and social care system.

1.3 The Trust recognises the importance of high quality information and data in ensuring the delivery of safe, effective and efficient health services. It is critical that all decisions whether clinical, managerial or financial are based on good quality information which is of the highest standard.

1.4 The availability of accurate, complete, comprehensive and timely data is therefore essential to support patient care, clinical governance, service and performance management, accurate payment by commissioners, planning and service development, accountability and assurance.

1.5 The Trust is continually working to achieve the highest standards of data quality across all systems in the trust, whether they are manual or electronic.

1.6 The use of manual, electronic and / or digital systems for data capture provides the capability to store and access a diverse range of data and it is essential that this data is accurate, complete, comprehensive and timely.

1.7 One of the misconceptions about data quality is that it is important to have something in the ‘box’. This is called coverage. The truth is, it is important to have the correct data in the correct box. This is quality.

1.8 The purpose of this policy and its associated procedures is to provide clear guidance to staff working for, or on behalf, of the Trust about their responsibilities in relation to data quality and about the controls and procedures that must be followed by all staff within the Trust in relation to data quality.
1.9 Good Data Quality does not happen by accident. The Trust needs a trust-wide commitment to improving data quality, which requires good procedures, appropriate training programmes and hard work. It is more about encouraging positive attitudes than installing IT systems and therefore requires effort, resources and commitment at all levels of the Trust. Data Quality is the responsibility of everyone.

1.10 The content of this policy has been developed in line with NHS guidance and relevant legislation – see section 6.0 below for further information.

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 This policy and accompanying procedure sets our data quality requirements applicable to all data collected within the Trust. This includes (but is not limited to):
- Service user information
- Staff Information
- Corporate Information

2.2 The standards set out within this policy should therefore be applied across all media for recording information within the Trust regardless of the information they hold.

3.0 DUTIES

3.1 Trust is committed to continually improving data quality and its fitness for operational and strategic use.

3.2 The Trust will ensure that all staff understand and take responsibility for high data quality, ensuring that information is recorded accurately, consistently, completely and on a timely basis on both computerised and manual record systems.

3.3 The Trust will ensure that data is validated and that quality standards are monitored on a regular basis for the purposes of identifying areas where improvement is required and ensure that action is taken to improve these areas.

3.4 In order to achieve the above, the Trust will ensure that staff are provided with the necessary guidance and training to ensure they collect and record data in a consistent, accurate and timely manner. The Trust will also provide mechanisms to enable staff to seek guidance on any issues of data quality.

3.5 The Trust will ensure that central information returns to the Health and Social Care Information Centre and other external bodies are completed accurately and fully and are despatched in a timely, efficient and secure (encrypted / protected) manner.
4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 The definition of data quality is an assessment of data's fitness to serve its purpose and that it must be "fit for purpose" both in terms of the provision of individual patient care and in terms of organisational information requirements for performance monitoring, business planning etc.

4.2 Some of the benefits of maximising data quality are:
- From a patient perspective good data quality supports improved decision making about their care
- High quality data is a valuable resource to the Trust to enable informed decision making
- Where data is used externally, greater accuracy in reporting for the Trust, especially where Trust performance is rated
- The Trust will receive the correct remuneration for the contracts we deliver.

4.3 Good quality information is derived from data that is:
- Valid – All data items should be valid. Codes should comply with national standards or map to national values
- Complete – All entries should contain all appropriate valid data
- Accurate – All recorded data must be correct on input and must accurately reflect what actually happened
- Up to date – Contemporaneous data entry into the electronic patient record is beneficial to the treatment of a patient and staff should record all activity undertaken with a patient within 24 hours of the activity taking place.

5.0 MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

5.1 Data quality standards will be monitored monthly throughout the Trust via a number of agreed mechanisms, as detailed in the Procedure attaching to this Policy.

5.2 Results of this monitoring will be reported to Senior Management Team meetings, the Performance and Scrutiny Committee and the Trust Board via Performance Reports and any necessary remedial action agreed.

5.3 An ongoing programme of data quality audits undertaken through Trust internal audit will be undertaken to ensure implementation of this policy and procedure.

5.4 Overall responsibility for co-ordinating the monitoring of compliance rests with the Finance and Performance Committee.
6.0 POLICY REFERENCES / ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

6.1 The Data Protection Act 2018, which came into force on 23rd May 2018.

6.2 The Health and Social Care Act 2012, which came into force on 1st April 2013

6.3 “Quality of Nationally Submitted Health and Social Care Data Annual Report 2013” (published on 24th September 2013 by NHS Digital)

6.4 Department of Health’s Information Strategy “The Power of Information: putting all of us in control of the health and care information we need” (May 2012)

6.5 The Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DPST)

7.0 REFERENCE TO OTHER TRUST POLICIES/PROCEDURES

7.1 The following Trust Policies and Procedures are relevant to data quality and should be read in conjunction with the policy and procedure:
   - Records Management (CP9)
   - Information Governance and Security (CP50)
   - Data Protection and Confidentiality (CP59)
   - Freedom of Information (CP25)
   - Information Risk Policy (CP57)
   - Information Sharing and Consent Policy (CP60)

END