Covid -19 Project Data and Records

Background

The Government will be holding a Public Inquiry into the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic and have committed to launching this in Spring 2022. Whilst the Terms of Reference of the Public Inquiry are not known at this stage local authorities will be called upon to produce evidence in the form of physical and electronic records, which may include Emails. it is expected that the vast majority of information provided to the Public Inquiry will be digitally born.

Whilst the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry are not yet known, it is important to remember that as employees of LCC we all have a personal responsibility for the data that we hold. Whilst this project is to focus on organising our data so that we are in a robust position to respond to any requests from the Inquiry, we also have to hold the information for statutory retention periods. How we manage our data generally will be the focus of other workstreams, but the same principles apply to all data as it does for Covid related information. The current advice is that Covid 19 related records should be kept for 6 years and then reviewed although we expect some of the information will need to be kept longer and some will need archiving - archiving meaning long term preservation with no foreseeable destruction date. For relevant records that are already subject to a retention period longer than 6 years, they will need to be retained for their statutory period as this supersedes the 6 year retention as the higher retention always wins out.

Our Covid-19 related records need to be managed and should be in an accessible and findable format. This not only meets our statutory duties and enables us to respond to the Inquiry, but it is an excellent historical resource. It will enable members of the public and senior managers now, and in the future, to be able to look back at what has been achieved during this pandemic both individually and as an organisation. During this recent pandemic information concerning how the authority responded to the 1918 Spanish Flu was referenced by Senior Managers.

Covid 19 saw a vast change to how services and individuals functioned within the County Council, with fast-paced decisions being made to better respond to the changing needs of our residents. Teams and individuals will have created and used various documents relating to Covid and now is the time to start reviewing the information you are holding in readiness for the public inquiry.

We are going to approach this in three different workstreams:

- Emails
- Shared drive
- M365

For each of these workstreams, the goal is to make sure that relevant information is identified and managed as outlined above.

Roles and Responsibilities

Records Managers/Digital Services

- We will provide guidance on what type of Email/document ought to be kept.
- We will give advice and guidance on naming conventions.
- We will attend team meetings and follow up with advice and determine what assistance each Service may need.
- We will keep in contact with you at each stage of the Inquiry from a Records Management perspective.

CEO/Executive Director/Director
- You may be called upon by the Public Inquiry to give evidence even if you have left LCC. You will be supported by LCC if called by the Inquiry.
- Ensure that HoS are instructing their teams to undertake this work.
- The data you are holding is your responsibility.
- You must follow the guidance and have your Covid information in a findable and accessible format.

Heads of Service
- Give clear instruction to your teams about this piece of work.
- Follow up in meetings and ask for evidence the work is being undertaken.
- The data you are holding is your responsibility.
- You must follow the guidance and have your Covid information in a findable and accessible format.

Staff Members
- The data you are holding is your responsibility.
- You must assess the records you hold for Covid.
- You must follow the guidance and have your Covid information in a findable and accessible format.

IG Champions
- As all Staff Members
- Work with RM to offer support and guidance to teams around this particular project.