

DATA BREACH POLICY

POLICY: DATA BREACH POLICY

ISSUE NUMBER: 4

ISSUED: May 2024

REVIEW DATE: May 2026

Purpose and Scope

The Age UK North Tyneside Group is obliged under the Data Protection Act 2018 to have in place a framework designed to ensure the security of all personal data during its lifecycle, including clear lines of responsibility.

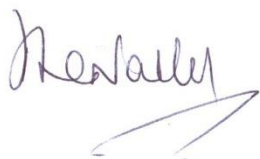
This policy sets out the procedure to be followed to ensure a consistent and effective approach is in place for managing data breaches and information security incidents across the Group.

This policy relates to all personal and special categories (sensitive) data held by the Group regardless of format.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers. This includes temporary or casual staff and contractors, consultants, suppliers and data processors working for, or on behalf of the Group.

The objective of this policy is to contain any breaches, to minimise the risk associated with the breach and consider what action is necessary to secure personal data and prevent further breaches.

Authorised by:



Dawn McNally
Group Chief Executive

The Age UK North Tyneside **Group** strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all, both as an employer and a provider of services. This policy has therefore been equality impact assessed by the Group Chief Operating Officer to ensure fairness and consistency for all those covered by it regardless of their individual differences

1. Introduction

The Group collects, holds, processes, and shares personal data, a valuable asset that needs to be suitably protected.

Every care is taken to protect personal data from incidents (either accidentally or deliberately) to avoid a data protection breach that could compromise security.

Compromise of information, confidentiality, integrity, or availability may result in harm to individual(s), reputational damage, detrimental effect on service provision, legislative non-compliance, and/or financial costs.

2. Definitions / Types of breach

For the purpose of this policy, data security breaches include both confirmed and suspected incidents.

An incident in the context of this policy is an event or action which may compromise the confidentiality, integrity or availability of systems or data, either accidentally or deliberately, and has caused or has the potential to cause damage to the Group's information assets and / or reputation.

An incident includes but is not restricted to the following:

- loss or theft of confidential or sensitive data or equipment on which such data is stored (e.g. loss of laptop, USB stick, iPad / tablet device, or paper record).
- equipment theft or failure.
- system failure.
- unauthorised use of, access to or modification of data or information systems;
- attempts (failed or successful) to gain unauthorised access to information or IT system(s).
- unauthorised disclosure of sensitive / confidential data.
- website defacement.
- hacking attack.
- unforeseen circumstances such as a fire or flood.
- human error.
- 'blagging' offences where information is obtained by deceiving the organisation who holds it.

3. Reporting an incident

Any individual who accesses, uses or manages the Group's information is responsible for reporting data breaches and information security incidents immediately to the Data Protection Officer using the Data Breach Form AUKNT190 who will then record this on the Data Breach Register.

If the breach occurs or is discovered outside normal working hours, it must be reported as soon as is practicably possible.

The Data Breach Register must include full and accurate details of the incident, when the breach occurred (dates and times), who is reporting it, if the data relates to people, the nature of the information, and how many individuals are involved.

All staff should be aware that any breach of Data Protection legislation may result in the Group's Disciplinary Procedures being instigated.

4. Containment and recovery

The Data Protection Officer (DPO) will firstly determine if the breach is still occurring. If so, the appropriate steps will be taken immediately to minimise the effect of the breach.

An initial assessment will be made by the DPO in liaison with relevant staff to establish the severity of the breach and decide who will take the lead investigating the breach, as the Lead Investigation Officer (this will depend on the nature of the breach; in some cases it could be the DPO).

The Lead Investigation Officer (LIO) will establish whether there is anything that can be done to recover any losses and limit the damage the breach could cause.

The LIO will establish who may need to be notified as part of the initial containment and will inform the police, where appropriate.

Advice from experts across the Group may be sought in resolving the incident promptly.

The LIO, in liaison with the relevant staff will determine the suitable course of action to be taken to ensure a resolution to the incident.

5. Investigation and risk assessment

An investigation will be undertaken by the LIO immediately and wherever possible, within 24 hours of the breach being discovered and reported.

The LIO will investigate the breach and assess the risks associated with it, for example, the potential adverse consequences for individuals, how serious or substantial those are and how likely they are to occur.

The investigation will need to take into account the following:

- the type of data involved.
- its sensitivity.
- the protections are in place (e.g. encryptions).
- what has happened to the data (e.g. has it been lost or stolen).
- whether the data could be put to any illegal or inappropriate use.
- data subject(s) affected by the breach, number of individuals involved and the potential effects on those data subject(s).
- whether there are wider consequences to the breach.

6. Notification

The LIO and or the DPO, in consultation with relevant colleagues will establish whether the Information Commissioner's Office will need to be notified of the breach, and if so, notify them within 72 hours of becoming aware of the breach, where feasible.

Every incident will be assessed on a case by case basis; however, the following will need to be considered:

- whether the breach is likely to result in a high risk of adversely affecting individuals' rights and freedoms under Data Protection legislation.
- whether notification would assist the individual(s) affected (e.g. could they act on the information to mitigate risks?).
- whether notification would help prevent the unauthorised or unlawful use of personal data.
- whether there are any legal or contractual notification requirements.
- the dangers of over notifying. Not every incident warrants notification and over notification may cause disproportionate enquiries and work.

Individuals whose personal data has been affected by the incident, and where it has been considered likely to result in a high risk of adversely affecting that individual's rights and freedoms, will be informed without undue delay. Notification will include a description of how and when the breach occurred and the data involved. Specific and clear advice will be given on what they can do to protect themselves, and include what action has already been taken to mitigate the risks. Individuals will also be provided with a way in which they can contact the Group for further information or to ask questions on what has occurred.

The LIO and / or the DPO must consider notifying third parties such as the police, insurers, banks or credit card companies, and trade unions. This would be appropriate where illegal activity is known or is believed to have occurred, or where there is a risk that illegal activity might occur in the future.

The LIO and or the DPO will consider whether the Communications Team should be informed regarding a press release and to be ready to handle any incoming press enquiries.

A record will be kept of any personal data breach, regardless of whether notification was required.

7. Evaluation and response

Once the initial incident is contained, the DPO will carry out a full review of the causes of the breach; the effectiveness of the response(s) and whether any changes to systems, policies and procedures should be undertaken.

Existing controls will be reviewed to determine their adequacy, and whether any corrective action should be taken to minimise the risk of similar incidents occurring.

The review will consider:

- where and how personal data is held and where and how it is stored.
- where the biggest risks lie including identifying potential weak points within existing security measures.
- whether methods of transmission are secure; sharing minimum amount of data necessary.
- staff awareness.
- implementing a data breach plan and identifying a group of individuals responsible for reacting to reported breaches of security.
- If deemed necessary, a report recommending any changes to systems, policies and procedures will be considered by Group Executive Committee.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be updated as necessary to reflect best practice and to ensure compliance with any changes or amendments to relevant legislation.