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# Data Standards for Social Care

## Newsletter 2

Hello from the Data Standards for Social Care team!

We are continuing to work with partners across children's and adult social care to refine and test the standards that will help improve how information flows across the sector.

This edition shares updates from each strand of the programme: **Placements, Multi-Agency Information Sharing (MAIS), and Adult Social Care (ASC)**.

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### Placements: Rapid Progress in the Southwest pilot

We're now nearing the finish line for the first version of the Placement Standard, which we expect to present to the Working Group for endorsement in **early November**. A guiding principle has been our **90-second rule** - every data field in the standard should take no more than 90 seconds for a Placement Officer to complete.

Some of the challenges have been around describing what the *preferred* placement is and whether it is a good match. Click below to learn about the considerations discussed and decisions made during the Deep Dive on describing placements.

[Link: Outputs from the latest Deep Dive](#)

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enough to use *and* detailed enough to drive better analysis and decisions. One of the key debates has been on how to describe costs. There is now consensus around regions that the agreed cost at the point of placement is not a good proxy for the actual spend as fees change over time with uplifts and changing staffing. We will explore existing regional approaches to map 'true cost' and how capturing this can be standardised. The aim is to balance accuracy, practicality, and granularity.

As the initial design phase draws to a close, our focus is shifting towards **implementation**. We're learning from the Southwest pilot, where the first data return using the draft standard is underway. Early insights are encouraging – participating authorities are successfully gathering standardised data through the new template, with strong engagement during QA sessions. Feedback indicates that the standardised elements such as the referral sheet are intuitive, requiring minimal hands-on support.

We are now speaking with regional teams across the country to identify where the standard could be implemented next and what support they would find most valuable. **Please get in touch if your region is interested.**

Our final Deep Dive, focusing on implementation, is scheduled for **22nd Oct**. It will answer key questions about rollout, including what guidance, tools, and support the sector will need for adoption. Register by clicking on the link below.

**[Registration link for the Implementation Deep Dive](#)**

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## Multi-Agency Information Sharing (MAIS)

We've now held three Standards Development Working Groups and a Deep Dive to develop the set of standards needed to make seamless sharing across systems possible. We've been delighted with the continued engagement from the sector in these groups, averaging between 30 and 40 attendees. We're expecting to put a full draft in front of the next working group on **13th November**.

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**Information Governance (IG)** policies - speeding up responses by removing the wait for a human review. The approach we developed in that session provides a standard and lightweight means for:

- Any controller to provide a machine readable statement of what types of response (if any) are pre-approved and in what circumstances. For e.g., *'we can confirm whether or not a child has been known to social work at our LA and provide both dates and a social worker's contact details, if request is demonstrably from another LA and if they have confirmed it is made in the context of S47 enquiries'*.
- A system to make such a request, including the necessary assertions and evidence.
- A system to record its decision both for the response, and for a local record of processing activities.

[Click here to learn more more about the IG standard](#)

### ***What's next on MAIS?***

We know that this work on multi-agency information sharing is ambitious and will create requirements for new technologies and national agreements, which we and other parts of the DfE programme are currently in the process of scoping. We're also going to test this standard against information sharing agreements available in the public domain, to understand whether our theoretical approach can be applied in practice.

Our next Working Group meets on 13th November, and we'd love to have you join to help apply the finishing touches to the IG standard, the rest of our standards and our future roadmap before testing and implementation begins early in the new year. Write to [DataStandards-SocialCare@socialfinance.org.uk](mailto:DataStandards-SocialCare@socialfinance.org.uk) to receive an invitation. **Please also let us know if you'd be interested in being one of the first local authorities to test the MAIS standards.**

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## **Prioritising What Matters in Adult Social Care (ASC)**

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**information sharing** could make the biggest difference in practice.

Our current focus areas are:

- **Facilitating Hospital Discharge:** Supporting data sharing between hospital trusts and social care to enable safer, faster discharge for people with care needs.
- **Transitions from Children's to Adult's Social Care:** Improving how information transfers at the transition point for young people moving into adult services.

We're speaking with practitioners from different contexts to understand what good looks like and where data or systems create barriers to effective practice.

If you'd like to share examples of what's working for you, or highlight where change is needed, please get in touch at [DataStandards-SocialCare@socialfinance.org.uk](mailto:DataStandards-SocialCare@socialfinance.org.uk).

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## What's coming up

22 Oct: Placements  
Implementation Deep Dive -  
register here

13 Nov: MAIS Working Group -  
click to send us an email so we  
can invite you to the session

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## Stay connected

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Thank you to everyone who has contributed time, ideas, and feedback so far.  
Your collaboration continues to shape this national effort.

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