REPORT BY THE INDEPENDENT ASSESSOR

DATA BREACH
INCIDENT AT THE
OFFICE OF THE POLICE
OMBUDSMAN ON 30TH
AUGUST 2024

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1. Terms of Reference

1.1 My terms of reference were agreed with the Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPONI) and contained in a brief to me as follows:

1.1 Appointment

Ms Sarah Havlin, Independent Assessor of Complaints for OPONI has been appointed to conduct an investigation into the matter detailed above.

The policies to refer to:

- Data Protection Policy
- Recruitment & Selection Policy

1.2 Terms of Reference

The agreed terms of reference for the investigation is as follows:

- To investigate the process and actions which led to the breach occurring
- To interview all parties deemed relevant to the investigation
- To review the effectiveness of the immediate OPONI response to the breach
- To consider the effectiveness of the changes OPONI plans to undertake to prevent any reoccurrence
- To make recommendations to assist in the prevention of further data breaches
- To provide a report on the investigation and findings to assist in lessons to be learned.

1.3 Methodology

- The investigator will conduct the interviews with all relevant parties
- The interviewer may interview any other person whom they consider may be able to assist in relation to the investigation
- A written record of the interview meetings will be made
- Confidentiality should be maintained at all times during the investigation and all parties should be reminded of this at the start of the investigation meetings

1.4 Report by the External Investigating Officer

On completion of the investigation, the external investigator will prepare a report summarising the evidence gathered in relation to section 3 of this document and providing recommendations. The report should also consider any other issues arising from the investigation. The report will be presented to the Chief Executive.

The report and all notes taken during the interviews remains the property of the Office and will be passed at the end of the investigation process to the Director of HR and Corporate Services.

1.5 Timescale for Report

The external investigator will aim to complete the investigation as soon as possible and between 4 – 6 weeks of commencing the process.

1.6 Further Actions

The findings and recommendations will be published.

A post investigation review will be put in place to monitor the effectiveness of the response and any subsequent recommendations.

2. Documents Considered:

- OPONI Internal Report 'Data Breach of 30th August 2024' dated 11th September 2024
- Personal Data Breach Notification ICO Reference Number IC-329119-L5Y9 from Mr H Sally, Head of Legal, OPONI dated 11th September 2024
- ICO Decision ICO Reference IC-329119-L5Y9 by Sophie Judge, 18 September 2024
- Security Notice: 03/2024 Dated: 19 September 2024 to All Staff Re: 'Email Address Errors'
- Response to Follow Up Questions by Independent Assessor from Ms P Gillespie, Head of Human Resources and Corporate Services, OPONI dated 7th October 2024
- Current OPONI Data Protection Policy (November 2023)
- Current OPONI Recruitment Policy (May 2017)
- Line Manager First Day Induction Training Record 6th August 2024

3. Background

- **3.1** Management in the Human Resources (HR) section of OPONI became aware of a potential data breach on **Friday 30th August 2024**. This followed the issuing of invite to interview letters and associated recruitment papers to candidates for an Investigation Officer Recruitment competition on Thursday 29th August 2024.
- **3.2** Awareness of the error was as a result of contact from an internal candidate who reported that part of the documents he received was a 'Staff Complement May 2022' document showing names of staff as at May 2022.
- **3.3** On initial investigation it became apparent that emails sent by Worker A, who is a temporary Agency worker in the HR team, had contained this document in error. Once this was confirmed, HR Management alerted the relevant members of OPONI senior leadership team, Hugh Hume, Chief Executive Officer and Paula Gillespie, Director of HR and Corporate Services.
- 3.4 An Incident Review Group was established immediately with a view to establishing:-
- I. The extent and initial cause of the breach
- II. Any immediate risks to staff or the integrity of the office
- III. Mitigation of the impact of the breach on those affected
- IV. The provision accurate and transparent information to all OPONI staff, those affected and key partners (PSNI/DOJ)
- V. The development of a media plan
- VI. Compliance with all statutory responsibilities
- **3.5** According to the Internal Report from the Incident Review Group, dated 11th September, communication in relation to recruitment competitions have, in the past, been sent in hard copy by post, but this practice has changed over the last number of years and it is now common practice that this information is emailed to candidates on the email address provided on application forms.
- **3.6** Due to the large numbers of interviews on this occasion, two interview panels had been organised which is not commonplace. Worker A had been tasked with sending the communication to those invited for interview for one of these panels. This totalled 23 candidates and these were the emails which included the erroneous document entitled 'Staff Complement May 2022'.
- **3.7** It is noted that Worker A was **inexperienced having only joined the HR team from a recruitment agency on 06 August 2024**. This was a maximum of 19 working days in post before the incident. The evidence available confirms that this person received 'on the job training' primarily from a Line Manager, who is a permanent OPONI staff member who sat in the office in close proximity to Worker A. There is evidence of Line Manager Induction training provided to Worker A on 06 August 2024. This confirms a range of induction training areas including 'mandatory e-learning' and 'introduction to the job and tasks'.

- **3.8** The internal review confirms that a piece of work was completed in the HR Team to set up two sets of interviews and allocate dates and times to candidates. This was completed by Worker A, who also prepared the invite to interview letters.
- **3.9** This work was then **checked by a line manager** who then **wrote the TRIM reference numbers for the accompanying documents** (Valid ID document (TRIM ref 13/17279), Guidance for Interview document (22/18525) and Competencies (TRIM ref 23/20618) **on a post it note** and **provided this post-it note to Worker A**to include the directed TRIM identified attachments in the email to candidates along with the invite to interview letters.
- **3.10** It has been established that the document which Worker A attached in error is TRIM ref 22/8525 and is called 'Staff Complement May 2022'. It is **significant** that the erroneous attached document TRIM reference number **is one digit removed from the intended attachment**: 'Guidance for interview document TRIM 22/18525.
- 3.11 Immediate actions were taken on Friday 30th August 2024 including:
- a) An email was sent to the 23 email addresses apologising and asking each of the affected candidates to double delete the email. It has since become apparent that two of the email addresses were incorrect and it was later confirmed that only 21 emails were sent to correct email addresses. Of the two emails sent to incorrect email addresses one undeliverable email was received. An ongoing record kept of confirmation of double deletion was kept.
- b) Recall emails had been issued to all original 23 email addresses. It has since been established that recall emails can only occur if the recipient is within the OPONI e-mail organisation i.e. IT Assist /ITAC NW. As these emails were to candidate's personal email addresses, it is conceded that the recall of the emails was not a workable rectification.
- c) Checks were run to ensure there was no 'hidden' data in the initial email.
- d) An email was circulated to internal staff and issued by Chief Executive.
- e) The ICO informed by the OPONI Data Protection Officer.
- f) Trade Unions were briefed on the incident
- g) The Sponsor Team of OPONI at the Department of Justice was notified
- h) Decisions were taken around all key stakeholders to be informed
- i) A new email was sent to each of the candidates with correct information attached.
- j) Contact made with absent HR staff to ensure the information sent to other batch of candidates was correct and this was confirmed as being the case.
- k) A spreadsheet of email addresses for all ex-employees named on the document was collated and the Chief Executive Officer of OPONI personally contacted these individuals on the evening of Friday 30th August.
- **3.12** Further remedial action was completed over the weekend and by Sunday 1st September 2024:

- a) OPONI had established that the total number of individuals affected by the mistaken disclosure of information was 160.
- b) All OPONI staff were informed of the breach. They were provided with an opportunity to view the document via their Director.
- c) It was confirmed that 66 former or absent staff affected who would not have access to the internal email.
- d) 57 of these 66 individuals were notified via private email addresses held by OPONI. They have been provided with the opportunity to attend the office and view the document.
- e) 1 absent staff member was spoken to personally
- f) It was recognised that 8 former staff members who had not provided alternative email addresses and required notification via a hard copy remained outstanding.
- g) Deputy Chief Constable Chris Todd of PSNI was briefed on the breach and assured that no PSNI data was involved. An agreed internal message was subsequently issued to all PSNI staff.
- h) A briefing letter was sent to the Department of Justice.
- i) The 2 OPONI non-executive directors were briefed on the breach.
- j) Contact from the BBC was responded to by issuing a statement, which was also shared with the DOJ Communication team.
- k) 21 job applicants had confirmed that they have double deleted the relevant email. It was confirmed that 2 email addresses were incorrect. An undeliverable receipt was received for one of these addresses.
- I) On Saturday the BBC informed OPONI of an interview they were publishing with the Justice Spokesperson for the Ulster Unionist Party. A statement was issued in response as follows:

"The Chief Executive is responsible for the governance arrangements and operational management of the office, including the effectiveness of policies, procedures and processes. It is entirely appropriate and normal that he, with senior staff, would lead the organisation's response to the data breach: ensuring there was a strategy in place to mitigate the impact of the breach, that prompt communication took place with those affected, both current and former employees, and that measures are taken to investigate the issue and learn from it. It is important to recognise the distinct roles and responsibilities of the Chief Executive and the Police Ombudsman."

- **3.13** Follow up activity in the week commencing Monday 2nd September included:
- a) An Incident Review Group met Monday 2nd September and considered further mitigation/communication/recovery action.
- b) Options for identifying an independent review of the matter were considered
- c) All names were checked again to ensure that no one had been missed in terms of notification and rectification.
- d) Confirmation was received from ICO that they had opened a case file Reference Number IC-329119-L5Y9
- e) Confirmation that all 21 candidates who received the email confirmed double deletion.
- f) Template of communication to all affected individuals drafted and redacted document for each individual prepared.

- g) On Tuesday 3rd September, HR staff contacted each impacted individual via email with a redacted document showing their information only and also responding to those individuals who had sent specific responses to initial communication.
- h) Follow up communication was issued to all staff advising them of progress of mitigation plan.
- i) It was resolved that there would be a review of access to HR TRIM folders would be carried out by Friday 5th September in relation to appropriate access by Agency staff.
- j) It was resolved that the work of Worker A would be monitored and any communication being issued, including emails, would be reviewed by a more senior member of staff for a period of at least 3 months.
- k) A TRIM folder was set up on data breach and all relevant documents and communication stored within.
- I) Approach was agreed for moving forward that recruitment documents will be stored on Office webpage and candidates will be provided links to these documents as opposed to attaching separate documents to emails.
- m) In respect of a small number of ex-employees who did not leave an email address, it was noted that these individuals were in the process of being contacted by letter or by confirming email addresses and was completed by Friday 6th September.
- n) Ongoing interest from Press was managed
- o) A meeting was held with Trade Union representatives where matter was discussed and it was noted that there was satisfaction with OPONI communication on the issue.
- **3.14** Some Outstanding actions were noted and objectives for these were outlined:
- To complete a Rapid Review of all internal process including document classification, access controls and weeding of data.
- To appoint External Investigator
- To provide ICO with initial material.
- **3.15** OPONI has confirmed that this rapid review is in progress.
- **3.16** OPONI Independent Assessor, Sarah Havlin, was appointed, and all necessary papers were provided to her, on 19 September 2024.
- **3.17** ICO was provided with all relevant information and the decision of the ICO was set out in a decision dated 18th September as follows:

We have considered the information you have provided and we have decided that **no further action by the ICO** is **necessary** on this occasion. This decision is based on the information we have recorded about the breach.

- **3.18** The reasons for our decision are as follows:
- 1. You have taken steps to contain the breach, and received from confirmation from the recipients that they have deleted the email.

- 2. The affected data subjects have been informed about this incident, which would, where necessary, allow them to take steps to protect themselves from risk.
- 3. You are not aware of any detriment being caused as a result of this incident and no formal complaints have been received.
- 4. This incident appears to be the result of human error. The staff member involved will be monitored and any communications they send will be checked by a senior staff members for a period of at least three months.
- 5. You have proposed steps you intend to take in order to prevent a recurrence. Such as, moving to storing recruitment documents on a webpage so candidates can be provided with a link rather than attaching a document. You are also looking at access controls for HR TRIM folders.
- 6. However, we recommend that you investigate the causes of this incident to ensure that you understand how and why it occurred, and what steps you need to take to prevent it from happening again.
- **3.19** *In particular, we recommend that you consider:*
- 1. Reviewing your processes to ensure that you have clear and robust naming conventions in place when saving documents containing personal data. Documents containing personal data should also be saved in a different folder to template documents. This should help reduce the risk of sending an incorrect document to third parties.
- 2. Determining whether it is appropriate to password protect documents containing personal data. This may reduce the likelihood of unauthorised access to personal data should it be sent to an incorrect recipient.
- 3. Highlighting the importance of double-checking attachments and recipients when communicating both internally and externally. You could emphasise this within your data protection training for staff, and frequent reminders could be issued to ensure that data protection awareness remains embedded in daily tasks.
- 4. Ensuring that any changes that have been implemented as a result of this incident has been communicated to all relevant members of staff. These changes should be regularly tested and reviewed to ensure they are effective at keeping personal data secure.
- **3.20** The ICO may make additional enquiries if they become aware of new information which affects the circumstances of the case, but they confirmed that they considered the matter to be closed.

4. Assessment/Root Cause Analysis of Why Breach Occurred

- **4.1** On review of all the evidence and information it is clear that this incident was a one off mistake caused primarily by human error. This is also the conclusion of the ICO.
- **4.2** It is my role to assist OPONI in identifying the **root causes of the circumstances which led to the human error which caused the breach**.
- **4.3** It is my assessment that there are several factor in play which led to the error occurring. One such factor is the **reliance on Agency staff who may not be sufficiently trained or experienced** in handling and managing risks around sensitive data. Training was provided to Worker A, but there is no specific evidence of training in managing the risks of data handling and/or information security.
- **4.4** Worker A had only been working in OPONI for a maximum of 19 working days before the incident occurred. It is confirmed that induction training and on the job training had been provided. I therefore would make the observation that the human error identified by OPONI is not simply attached to that one person. The likelihood of error on the part of this person was entirely foreseeable on the grounds of their inexperience and the degree of training provided. Accordingly it is important for OPONI to recognise that there is systemic error involved as well as human error.
- **4.5** It is always difficult for organizations when relying on Agency staff. The use of Agency staff often suggests organizational capacity pressures, but it can also be the case that the use of inexperienced causal staff can create more work for permanent staff because such workers may require close supervision and therefore delegation does not in fact save staff time, and it may even waste time.
- **4.6** Agency staff are brought in to relieve work pressures and it would be a reasonable expectation that the task in question was commensurate with the ability and experience of the worker involved. It would be wrong to criticize permanent staff for delegating simple administrative tasks to Agency staff, such as collating and sending out pre-written correspondence with directed attachments by email.
- **4.7** The pre-digital equivalent of the task would be assigning the photocopying of the relevant original documents 23 times to create attachments for 23 letters. This might be followed by the stapling of the copied attachments to the 23 signed letters, placing all into correctly addressed envelopes and posting to recipients. It would be difficult to see why an Agency administrative worker could not be left to carry out such a routine task unsupervised, and been trusted to double check the documents being included, **provided that the worker had been given the correct documents to photocopy**.
- **4.8** By comparing the pre-digital system example, it raises the question of why the equivalent digital method might carry more risk than the postal method and how best to manage those risks. In terms of risk analysis it is my view that the risk arises not just in the adequate training, supporting and supervising the staff member in question, but **in assuring the accuracy of instructions given to the worker in the first place.** (see 4.10 and subsequent paragraphs below)
- **4.9** A 'lessons learned' approach may be that OPONI management should **reflect on its organizational policy on how to make the best use of Agency staff which analyses and mitigates risk**. This could be achieved, for example, as part of reviewing the organization's HR strategy together and by reviewing the mandatory system user training for all users of the OPONI IT systems, particularly in respect of data handling risks.

- **4.10** A further contributing cause lies in **the method of instruction** given to Worker A, and administrative office practices which can carry risk of administrative mistakes in the handling and transfer of data.
- **4.11** The internal review confirms that a piece of work was completed in the HR Team to set up two sets of interviews and allocate dates and times to candidates. This was completed by Worker A, who also prepared the invite to interview letters. This work was then checked by a line manager who then wrote the TRIM reference numbers for the accompanying documents (Valid ID document (TRIM ref 13/17279), Guidance for Interview document **(22/18525)** and Competencies (TRIM ref 23/20618) on a post it note and provided this post-it note to Worker A to include the directed TRIM identified attachments in the email to candidates along with the invite to interview letters.
- **4.12** It has been established that the document which Worker A attached in error is **TRIM ref 22/8525** and is called 'Staff Complement May 2022'. It is **significant** that the erroneous attached document **TRIM reference number is one digit removed from the intended attachment**: 'Guidance for interview document TRIM 22/18525. **The error in terms of degree was therefore very minor** as all it involved was omitting to type the digit '1' in the TRIM reference which would have immediately embedded the wrong document as an attachment. This wrong document was a document which contained personal information and resulted in the data breach.
- **4.13** Accordingly there are **five relevant factors** in play within the OPONI system and approach which allowed for human error to arise which includes:
- 1. inexperience of Worker A
- 2. lack of double checking email attachments in terms of each document name as well as the reference numbers before sending
- 3. level of training and support provided to Worker A
- 4. method of instruction given to Worker A
- 5. IT system weaknesses in respect of file naming conventions, separation and protection of personal data files and access control system
- **4.14** An area not fully explored by the OPONI internal investigation, in terms of understanding **all** contributing factors which resulted in the data breach, was the possibility that Worker A did not in fact make the mistake individually, but had been given information and directions in a format which may have already contained an erroneous TRIM reference or which may not have been fully legible.
- **4.15** As part of my own assessment, I enquired with OPONI as to whether the instructing 'Post-it' note was available to the internal review team and whether it was available for me to examine. I was informed by OPONI that the note was not in fact inspected as part of the internal investigation and it was not available.
- **4.16** It is significant that the TRIM reference number for the correct document is only different **by one digit** and simply by leaving out the digit '1' the error was unavoidable due to the automatic embedding of the wrong document. The documents had very similar reference numbers, but it is clear that both documents had different names and the mistake could have been avoided with double checking both the number and the name of all documents attached. **The importance of double checking both names and reference numbers of attached documents is a lesson that OPONI has already learned and taken action upon,** as evidenced by an internal staff communication dated 19 September.

- **4.17** The human error was very minor in degree but very unfortunately it was much more serious in terms of impact. OPONI must therefore focus strongly on the systemic issues which enabled the human error and not just focus on the actions of the worker or workers in question. It is my assessment that based on the available evidence, such a minor typing or transcribing error may have occurred in one of several ways:
 - a) Worker A mistyped the TRIM reference, which was written accurately and clearly in the 'post-it' note, when copying it from the note as written by the instructing staff member (this is the conclusion reached by the internal investigation)
 - b) the 'post-it' note contained the minor error in the first place
 - c) the hand writing on the post-it notes was difficult to decipher which led to Worker A missing out the extra '1' of the TRIM number.
- **4.18** Regardless of which of the above is the case, the last chance to avoid the error was in the double checking of names and reference numbers. This was not done sufficiently or at all by Worker A, an inexperienced temporary worker. Therefore, a review of the training provided to new workers is important and data risk training should be a prerequisite to tasks which involve sending out external data and communications from OPONI.
- **4.19** That said, as the post-it note was not preserved, it is my view that it is **not possible** to conclude that the error was wholly caused by a mistake on the part of Worker A. Without the benefit of viewing the 'post-it' note I would be reluctant to reach this conclusion.
- **4.21** It therefore may also be the case that the 'post-it' note containing the TRIM reference numbers was also a contributing cause of the mistaken reference number making its way into the email that was sent, either due to error on the part of the author of the note or the simple misreading of handwriting in the note by Worker A.
- **4.22** Either way, I think it is clear that the practice of using 'post it' notes to give instructions carries significant risk for transcribing errors in data inputting. The risks of this practice should be highlighted to managers and procedures revised to ensure that digital task instructions are given to staff with absolute clarity, for example by typing or embedding the TRIM references in an email of instruction or other method of merging data to eliminate transcribing errors.
- **4.23** As highlighted in the ICO decision, staff must be fully supported with very regular reminder training to ensure that all staff using OPONI systems understand the complexities of handling data, the common mistakes that can be made and providing strategies and directions on how to avoid them. This training can be embedded into staff IT equipment, for example in many Civil Service departments staff must complete compulsory online training through its LiNKS system, which provides interactive learning on cyber security and data protection which raises staff awareness of risk.

5. The effectiveness of the immediate OPONI response to the breach

- **5.1** It is my assessment, based on all of the documents and available evidence reviewed, that the response by OPONI was both rapid and effective in rectifying the error, mitigating the impact and communicating clearly and honestly about what had occurred.
- **5.2** Further, it is clear that the senior leadership of OPONI, particularly the CEO, accepted personal responsibility for any administrative system failure and the CEO had the courage to lead from the front of the organisation in honestly accounting for the error and seeking ways to scrutinise it openly through honest and direct communication with those impacted, with the all staff, stakeholders and the wider public. There is evidence of strong 'fronting up' and speedy communication internally and externally such as with the OPONI staff, Trade Unions, Media, The Department of Justice and the PSNI.
- **5.6** There was a rapid referral of the breach to the ICO and the decision of the ICO confirms that all necessary action was taken by OPONI in handling the breach and no further action was directed.
- **5.7** Accordingly, I have no recommendations to make in terms of how the response could have been done better.

6. The effectiveness of the changes OPONI plans to undertake to prevent any reoccurrence

- **6.1** As stated above the rapid response to the situation by OPONI was commendable. OPONI has already carried out a substantial amount of work to address these issues. Immediate steps were taken to prevent reoccurrence including moving to storing recruitment documents on a webpage so candidates can be provided with a link rather than attaching a document. OPONI is also reviewing and improving access controls for HR TRIM folders.
- **6.2** Once complete, the embedding of the new practices should be monitored and perhaps internal audit would be a useful tool for measuring effectiveness of the new procedures and ensuring that all recommendations from both the ICO and as contained in this report have been completed and are operating effectively.
- **6.3** The available evidence confirms that OPONI have progressed on a strong process review journey and has accepted all suggestions from the ICO contained in its decision. The areas of planned and ongoing reform include:
 - d) processes and procedures
 - e) staff training and support strategies
 - f) raising staff awareness of data handling risks
- **6.4** In my assessment, the breach was not due any inadequacy of the OPONI polices or frameworks for either Data Management or Recruitment/Selection. These policies are appended to this report at Appendix 1. However, it is concerning that the Recruitment Policy was due for review in 2020 and this does not seem to have been actioned. This should be actioned immediately, but it may be advisable to review and update all relevant policies in light of the learning from this incident whether they are due for review or not.
- **6.5** The breach was caused by a combination of administrative processing issues within the HR department, individual staff error, weaknesses in file access control and in staff training and support. I have set out recommendations for OPONI systemic improvement at section 7 of this report which may assist in preventing the same human error occurring in future.
- **6.6** It is noted that an all staff security notice was issued by the Head of Security on 19 September informing all staff of the risks of inaccurate email attachments. However, more meaningful and interactive staff training may be more beneficial in raising awareness and reminding staff of the need to check and double check. NICS HR provides regular online data protection and cyber security training strategies for NICS system users which may be a useful benchmark.
- **6.7** It should be noted that the ICO was satisfied with the actions taken and proposed by OPONI to reduce future occurrence, but also suggested further specific actions which may improve the OPONI data protection policy and practice. I would reinforce these ICO suggestions and they are included in my own recommendations at Section 7.

- 7. Lessons Learned and Recommendations to assist in the prevention of further data breaches
- **1. Robust document naming conventions:** As suggested by the ICO, documents containing personal data should also be saved in a different folder to template documents. This should help reduce the risk of sending an incorrect document to third parties. It is noted that a full review of access control in TRIM files is already underway
- **2. Use of password protection' for documents containing personal data.** As suggested in the ICO decision, this may reduce the likelihood of unauthorised access to personal data should it be sent to an incorrect recipient in future. It is noted that a review of document access control is already underway.
- **3. Data protection and cyber security training:** it is essential to support staff and heighten awareness of the importance of double-checking attachments and recipients when communicating, particularly when communicating externally. Emphasise and embed this culture within data protection training for staff, issue frequent reminders for all OPONI systems users to ensure that data protection awareness remains embedded in daily tasks. NICS HR online training tools are particularly strong in this context and may be a useful benchmark for embedding a cycle of regular interactive training for OPONI staff through use of video and 'quiz' based training on cyber security and data handling risks.
- **4. Eliminate the risk of transcribing errors in data input tasks:** hand written instructions and 'postit' notes should not be used for giving digital task instructions.
- **5. Review the OPONI approach to the use of Agency staff,** for example ensure that Agency staff are assigned to tasks which are appropriate for their experience and skills level, embed strong induction training which includes data handling as well as reminder and interactive training as part of on the job training. It is also important to check appropriate supervision is in place for ongoing support of Agency staff, particularly those who are new to the organization.
- **6. Communicate Change Effectively:** changes that have been implemented as a result of this incident should be well communicated throughout the organization.
- **7. Policy review and update** Data Protection Policy and Recruitment/Selection Policy and Procedures should be reviewed and updated as a result of lessons learned from this incident. This is particularly urgent in respect of the Recruitment Policy which is significantly out of date and was due for review in 2020.
- **8. Plan, Do, Review**: Changes should be regularly tested and reviewed to ensure they are effective at keeping personal data secure. Use of internal audit and reporting to OPONI audit committee may be helpful in this context.

Sarah Havlin, Independent Assessor of Complaints

25th October 2024