

## Information Sharing and Safeguarding Children

### Requests from Children's Social Care

<i>Children Act</i>		<i>Parental Consent Required</i>
Request for information	Information gathering from multiple agencies to assess level of concern	Yes
Child in Need: Section 17	Concerns about reasonable level of health or development, which is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled	Yes
Child Protection: Section 47	Concerns about maltreatment where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm	No*

\*Good practice to discuss with a parent/carer who has parental responsibility unless this would put child/ren at risk or jeopardise an investigation

Every request for information should contain explicit details of consent as above and brief context of case in order that the request for information and the medical records we hold can be reviewed and considered accordingly.

Only share information deemed relevant to case. Remember that many professionals reading the reports will not be medical, so ensure that risks and significance of medical history clear.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)

Information of factors with potential to impact parenting capacity should be considered, [General Medical Council \(2018\), Protecting Children and Young People: The responsibilities of all doctors Paragraphs 2, 32-38](#)

### Key Principles of information sharing

	Necessary and proportionate	
Relevant	Adequate	Accurate
Timely	Secure	Recorded

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice)

### Referrals to Children's Social Care

<i>Service</i>		<i>Parental Consent required</i>
<a href="#">Family Early Help</a> 020 7525 2714 <a href="mailto:earlyhelp@southwark.gov.uk">earlyhelp@southwark.gov.uk</a> Fax: 020 7525 2670	For families in need of increased support not meeting threshold for social care intervention	<b>Yes</b> -Written or documented as verbal consent granted
<a href="#">Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)</a> 020 7525 1921 <a href="mailto:mash@southwark.gov.uk">mash@southwark.gov.uk</a> Fax: 0207 525 7992	Concern about risk of significant harm	<b>Yes</b> -Good practice to discuss with a parent/carer who has parental responsibility <b>No</b> -If this would put child/ren at risk or jeopardise an investigation

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/childcare-and-parenting/children-s-social-care/child-protection/child-protection-referral-and-assessment>

**Suggested wording in reply to Children's Social Care and Social Workers for incomplete requests for information to edit/delete/check box as appropriate:**

Dear ...

Many thanks for your request for information on xxx family dated XX/XX/XX.

It has been agreed that every request for information to GP practices will contain details as to the assessment type (S47/17 etc.) and the background and context for current safeguarding/child protection concern.

Brief details of the case and context of concern is required to fulfil information sharing guidance, to ensure information shared is appropriate, relevant, and proportionate.

All that apply:

- Please confirm assessment type
- Section 17- please provide copy of consent form or confirm consent in writing
- Section 47- please provide copy of consent form, confirm consent in writing or confirm reason for request without consent
- Please provide details as to background and context for current safeguarding/child protection concern.

Kindly update your request for information in order that the request can be reviewed and processed,

Yours ....

## [Working Together 2019 \(P19\)](#) [Myth-busting guide to information sharing](#)

Sharing information enables practitioners and agencies to identify and provide appropriate services that safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Below are common myths that may hinder effective information sharing.

### **Data protection legislation is a barrier to sharing information**

No – the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prohibit the collection and sharing of personal information, but rather provide a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately. In particular, the Data Protection Act 2018 balances the rights of the information subject (the individual whom the information is about) and the possible need to share information about them.

### **Consent is always needed to share personal information**

No – you do not necessarily need consent to share personal information. Wherever possible, you should seek consent and be open and honest with the individual from the outset as to why, what, how and with whom, their information will be shared. You should seek consent where an individual may not expect their information to be passed on. When you gain consent to share information, it must be explicit, and freely given. There may be some circumstances where it is not appropriate to seek consent, because the individual cannot give consent, or it is not reasonable to obtain consent, or because to gain consent would put a child's or young person's safety at risk.

### **Personal information collected by one organisation/agency cannot be disclosed to another**

No – this is not the case, unless the information is to be used for a purpose incompatible with the purpose for which it was originally collected. In the case of children in need, or children at risk of significant harm, it is difficult to foresee circumstances where information law would be a barrier to sharing personal information with other practitioners<sup>14</sup>.

### **The common law duty of confidence and the Human Rights Act 1998 prevent the sharing of personal information**

No – this is not the case. In addition to the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR, practitioners need to balance the common law duty of confidence and the Human Rights Act 1998 against the effect on individuals or others of not sharing the information.

### **IT Systems are often a barrier to effective information sharing**

No – IT systems, such as the Child Protection Information Sharing project (CP-IS), can be useful for information sharing. IT systems are most valuable when practitioners use the shared data to make more informed decisions about how to support and safeguard a child.