ContactPoint

Fact sheet

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ContactPoint provides a quick way to find out who else is working with the same child, making it easier to deliver faster, more coordinated support.

This basic online directory is for authorised staff who need it to do their jobs. It is a key part of a wider programme to improve the health, well-being and safety of all children in England. Practitioners want to work more collaboratively, with services shaped around the needs of children and their families. If practitioners working with the same child know about each other, they can work together to find the right support quickly, before problems get more serious.

What are the benefits?

- Less time trying to find other practitioners working with the same child. Currently practitioners can spend days trying to find the right person.
- Quicker assessment of universal services being provided (education, primary health care).
- Enables more effective multi-agency working which leads to less duplication of work and a better service experience for children and young people.
- A national system helps practitioners to provide support for children who receive services across, or move across, local authority boundaries.

Feedback from those using the ContactPoint is positive and is providing evidence of these benefits. It is supported by a wide range of organisations, including seven National Partners: Action for Children, Barnardo's, CAFCASS, CEOP, Kids, NSPCC and The Children's Society.

What information is on ContactPoint?

ContactPoint holds the following information:

- Name, address, gender, date of birth and an identifying number for all children in England (up to their 18th birthday).
- Name and contact details for:
  - parents or carers
  - educational setting (e.g. school) and primary medical practitioner (e.g. GP practice)
  - other service providers (e.g. health visitor, social worker or lead professional), and an indicator for whether a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) exists. *Please note these will be added to the system over time.*
- Explicit consent is required to record contact details for sensitive services (defined as sexual health, mental health and substance abuse).

ContactPoint does not and will not contain any case information, case notes, assessments or medical data or exam results.

How secure is it?

ContactPoint has been designed, implemented and is managed using industry and UK Government best practice standards for security. It has undergone many levels of testing and design review. ContactPoint is Government accredited for security and is compliant with the international standard for information security management. A significant set of measures and controls are in place, which are continually assessed by DCSF and its expert advisors.

Who can have access?

Access to ContactPoint is strictly limited to those who need it to do their job. This includes those working in education, health, social care, youth justice and voluntary organisations. All organisations must meet the ContactPoint accreditation criteria; this is one of the means to provide assurance that it is under management control and being used appropriately.

Before being granted access, all users must have completed identity checks, enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure and mandatory training. To access the system users need a unique user name, password and/or security token and PIN. Access will be audited and monitored.

Authorised users will be able to access ContactPoint through a secure web link, through their case management systems, or through another authorised user (known as mediated access). It is not be possible for any user to access a case management system held by another agency.

How will it be updated?

Wherever possible, ContactPoint will be automatically updated from existing systems (national and local) so that practitioners do not need to enter the same information twice. The information held on ContactPoint will not be sent to or shared with any other systems.

What is the legal basis?

The Regulations (*The Children Act 2004 information Database (England) Regulations 2007)* made under section 12 of the Children Act 2004 came into force on 1 August 2007. They provide the legal framework for ContactPoint and place duties on all local authorities in England to operate ContactPoint. A public consultation on amendments to the Regulations is underway (open 2 Oct 2009 to 29 Dec 2009) - go to www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations

When will ContactPoint be available?

National rollout is underway, which means that local authorities and National Partners across England are able to train practitioners, building up use according to local needs. The implementation of ContactPoint has been steady and incremental. The ‘Early Adopters’ (18 local authorities in the North West and two National Partners) were the first to have management teams in place and to train practitioners. Their experience strengthened confidence that that national rollout could proceed. Local authorities are working with partner organisations to support them through implementation.

Further information

To find out more about ContactPoint, information sharing, CAF or other aspects of integrated working, go to the Every Child Matters area of the DCSF website www.dcsf.gov.uk/ecm