

Shielding records from ContactPoint Guidance

ContactPoint has the facility to hide or shield data from ContactPoint users. This is principally intended to prevent the whereabouts of a child being identified through:

- visibility of the address details from ContactPoint
- or**
- ContactPoint providing enough information for a likely whereabouts to be deduced (such as a service address).

For the system to work effectively, and for children and young people to receive the benefits offered by ContactPoint, a shielded record will only show the ContactPoint unique identity number, the child or young person's names, their gender and their date of birth.

Determining whether to protect a child's whereabouts by shielding a record can only be done by a local authority which is under a duty to consider the views of the person the record relates to, the views of their parent or carer and of any Schedule 4 or 5 body involved with the child or young person.

It is vital that shielding (and disclosing the whereabouts of a child or young person) is only applied where there are strong reasons, for example, where a practitioner has reason to believe that not doing so is likely to:

- place a child at increased risk of significant harm
- put a child's placement at risk (in the case of adoption)
- place an adult at risk of significant harm
- prejudice the prevention or detection of a serious crime.

Such cases could arise for example where:

- a child or young person is adopted where there is little or no contact with birth parent(s) or wider family members
- a child or young person and/or their parent or carer, are fleeing abuse or domestic violence
- a child or young person and/or their parent or carer or family member are subject to police protection.

The need to shield a record may also arise for children and young people or their parent or carer in a very limited number of unique circumstances not covered by these categories, for example, siblings or co-habiting children and young people. The necessity to shield a record must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.