



All managers and staff who work with Children and Young People in:
Devon Maintained Schools
Devon County Council
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary
Devon Health Services

January 2011

Dear colleague

Information sharing update

We are writing to you in your professional role as working with or managing staff who work with children and young people in Devon.

The sharing of client information with colleagues across children's service partners is key to providing a coordinated response to need and Devon must be consistent in its approach.

Taking a phased approach, this initial communication is going to Schools, DCC, Police and Health service's children's staff. Colleagues in private, voluntary and independent organisations, Probation, Further Education Colleges and other Children's Trust Partners will be included in the next phase.

This is Devon's first step in response to **The protection of children in England: Action Plan, the Government's response to Lord Laming Action 23** which reads as:

"All children's Trusts should assure themselves that partners consistently apply the Information Sharing Guidance published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department for communities and Local Government to protect children."

The principles and expectations

It is important to remember there can be as many significant consequences to not sharing information as there can be to sharing information. You must use your professional judgement to decide whether to share or not, and what information is appropriate to share. The seven golden rules and seven questions detailed in the enclosed pocket guide will help support your decision making so you can be more confident that information is being shared legally and professionally





Support and advice

If you have a query you should take this up with your line manager in the first instance. This could be

- guidance on whether to share or not
- confidence in the handling of information you have shared with another agency/service
- loss of information
- if a service is refusing to share information with your service.

You/your manager may choose to escalate your query to the designated lead in your service. Contact details are enclosed.

A working group has been formed of Information Sharing leads from partners across the Children's Trust. This group will

- Review information sharing policies and procedures
- Audit information sharing practice across the Children's Trust partnership
- Ensure individual agencies provide support to practitioners to promote effective information sharing

Enclosed you will find:

- Information Sharing: Pocket Guide – Summary of key decision making considerations
- Information Sharing: Quick Reference Guide
- Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing
- Flowchart of Key Questions
- Information Sharing Service Lead Contact Sheet
- S.A.F.E.R – The Safeguarding Golden Rules for multi-agency working

Resources including those enclosed in this letter and many others are available online at

www.devonchildrenstrust.org.uk/toolkit/informationsharing.html

Yours Sincerely

Anne Whiteley
Director of Children's Services
Devon County Council

Alan Wooderson
Independent Chair
Devon Safeguarding Children Board

