



Integrated Working Multi Agency Support Teams

Briefing Paper 4

For practitioners

Information sharing

Information Sharing is key to the Government's goal of delivering better, more efficient public services that are co-ordinated around the needs of the individual. It is essential to enable earlier intervention and preventative work, for safeguarding and promoting welfare and for wider public protection. But we all need to feel confident that our personal information is safe and will be shared only where essential to our best interests.

We have to remember, however, that there can be as many significant consequences to NOT sharing information as there may be to sharing it. The Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but is the framework to ensure that information:

- Is shared appropriately and responsibly;
- Is managed in a sensible way;
- maintains and strengthens safeguards;
- preserves the privacy of individuals, and
- balances public protection against the benefit to the individual.

There are seven 'golden rules' for information sharing and these are explained and discussed in the HM Government 'Information Sharing: Pocket Guide' which is available for download at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications; you can also order hard copies of the publication on line at this address or by writing to:

Department for Children, Schools and Families Publications
PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley,
NOTTINGHAM NG 15 0DJ
Tel 0845 60 222 60
Please quote ref 00808-2008BKT-EN

MASTs will use this guidance as the basis for sharing information between professionals and will expect those they work with to do so too.

Support/further guidance on Information Sharing can be obtained from Ersuline Whittle, Partnership Manager, Children & Young People's Service, The Civic Centre, Wolverhampton on 01902 558090 or at ersuline.whittle@wolverhampton.gov.uk

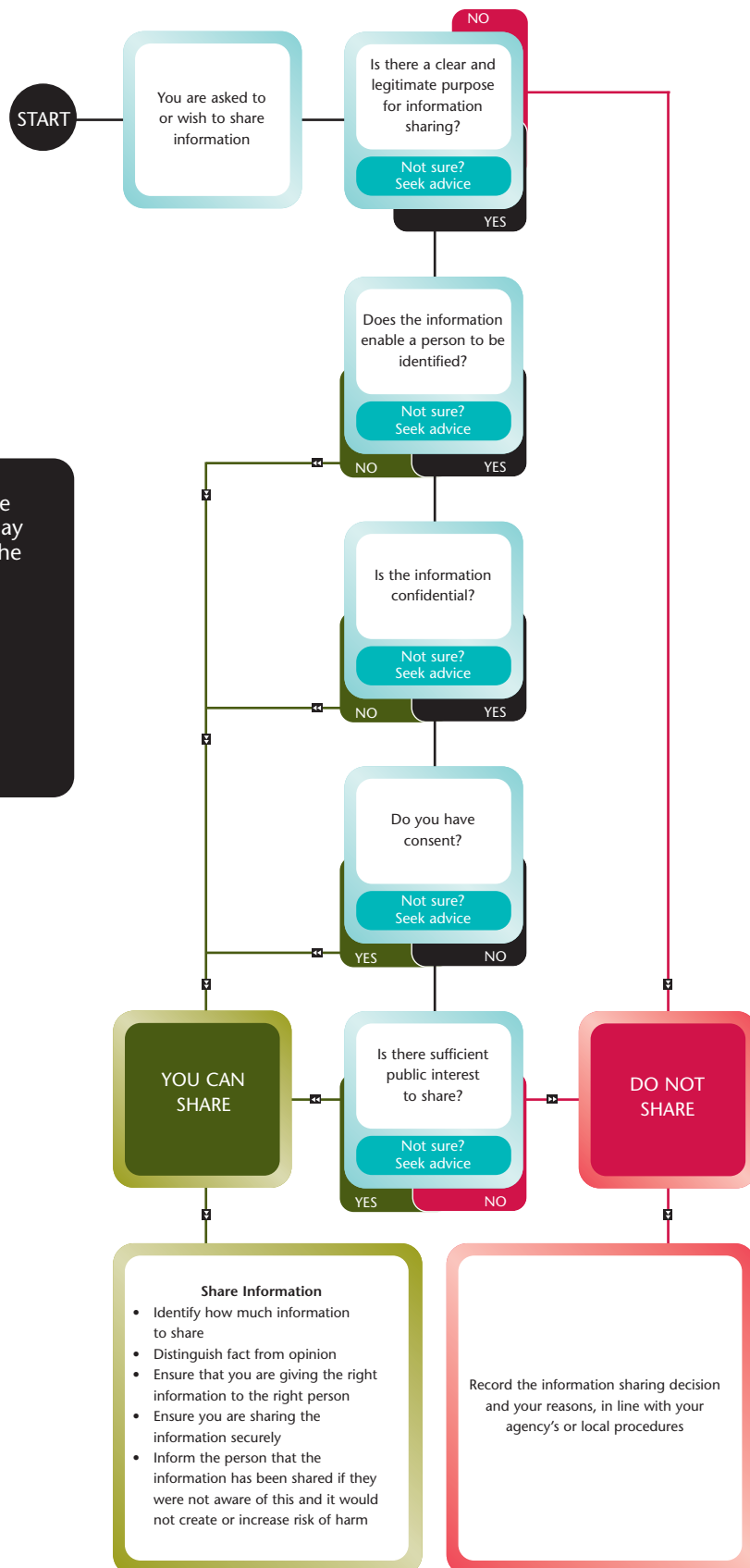


Information
Sharing
Flowchart on
page 2

Flowchart of key questions for information sharing

If there are concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm or an adult may be at risk of serious harm, then follow the relevant procedures without delay.

Seek advice if you are not sure what to do at any stage and ensure that the outcome of the discussion is recorded.



SOURCE
Information Sharing: Pocket Guide
HM Government

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

MASTs will be using the Information Sharing Protocol agreed by the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership, the protocol is currently being revised but it gives a framework to work within and sets the principles that all practitioners need to work to when sharing information.

In their everyday work, MASTs will work to the Government's guidance published in 'Information Sharing: Pocket Guide'. Any subsequent local policy documentation will be based on this. Information Sharing will form a key part of the induction programme for MAST Managers and subsequently for their teams.

When a child/young person, parent/carer consents to a CAF, they will receive a copy of a leaflet that explains how we manage information we hold about them when using the CAF process. All CAF forms are stored securely, centrally with the CAF team.

Local Management Arrangements

WHAT ARE THEY AND WHY?

They offer the opportunity for locally based Children & Young People professionals to influence and shape MAST services in their area. They will be developed for each of the eight areas and are based on the concept that all Children & Young People professionals in the area have a joint and collective responsibility to the well-being of children, young people and families in that area. For some, such as Neighbourhood Managers and the Primary Care Trust, that responsibility may extend to more than one area because of the way in which they work; for others, such as primary schools or key voluntary agencies, it will be mainly for the area in which they are based.

HOW OFTEN WILL THEY MEET?

They will meet three times a year, initially to pool their individual knowledge in order to identify the key issues for families in the area and how MASTs can contribute to addressing these with other agencies. MASTs will work with universal and specialist services to provide targeted support for children, young people and families at the earliest stage possible, bearing in mind that early intervention can often significantly reduce the risk of escalation to more acute services.

HOW WILL THEY INFLUENCE WHAT MASTS DO?

One of the MAST Managers' key first tasks, which will be started during their two week induction period at the end of June 2009, will be to prepare an Action Plan for their area based on the data and information available including that held by the partners and agencies in the area.

The local management groups will contribute to the action plans ensuring that they can meet local needs. In this way, the action plans should capture all the key issues for the area although MASTs, of course, cannot deliver against them all. MAST managers will have to agree with partners those for which they can be responsible and those to which they will contribute although the ultimate responsibility is held elsewhere.

It is intended that this process takes place between June and September this year with first final plans agreed by the end of October 2009.

Monitoring & Review

Action Plans will include performance indicators against which the success of MASTs performance can be measured. They will be output focussed and show how the MAST contributes to the performance of the local area as a whole, through e.g. Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets and those of the Local Area Agreement, as well as including specific local targets for the MAST area itself. It will be part of the remit of the Local Management Arrangements to monitor their MAST's performance against the local Action Plan.

WHO WILL BE INCLUDED ON THESE GROUPS?

We are currently finalising the representation on the Local Management Boards but intend that it will include those professionals within each MAST area who have:

- A legitimate interest in CYP and families in the area;
- Robust understanding and knowledge of the area and its needs;
- Significant Influence within the area on the delivery of services for CYP and families, and
- The desire to develop further the scope and quality of services for clients.

Representation is likely to be included from neighbourhood management, primary health care, schools, key community and voluntary agencies (the Third Sector), Children's Centres, youth services and the police as a minimum. Once established, each group will elect its own chair person. The group will NOT discuss individual cases but, instead, will focus on the continuous improvement of MAST services for CYP and families in the area in order to meet their needs. The first round of meetings has been delayed but will now take place in September/October 2009 to focus on the development and agreement of the area action plans. Dates will be advised in Bulletin 3 due out later in June 2009.

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