

what is...

B3SDA

BURY THIRD SECTOR
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Information sharing?

Factsheet 10
Oct 09

Sharing information in a timely and effective way, within and between agencies, is an essential part of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults (C/VA) and promoting their welfare. It enables early intervention for those C/VA who need additional help or support and vital for providing services that are coordinated well. It is important that staff and volunteers understand why, when and how they should share information so that they can be confident when looking to meet the needs of C/VA they are working with.

However, the government also recognises that it is important that people remain confident that their personal information is kept secure and that organisations maintain the privacy rights of the individual. In the current climate there is much suspicion about how agencies store and pass on information about individual people. It is therefore important that we share information appropriately and in the right way, remaining transparent at all times.

background

Good information sharing is a key part of the government's goal to deliver better and more efficient services that are coordinated well around the needs of the individual. This is particularly highlighted in the 'Every Child Matters' strategy that was released in 2003. Lord Laming's report into the death of Victoria Climbié in February 2000 informed that considerable lack of communication and sharing information between agencies was a key contributing factor to her death at the hands of her abusers. This report formed the foundation of Every Child Matters. Effective and efficient information sharing is critical in ensuring C/VA are protected.

seven golden rules

The seven golden rules for information sharing are taken from HM Government *Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers*.

- 1. Remember that the Data Protection Act 1998 is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately.
- 2. Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared. You must seek their agreement, unless you feel it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

3. Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person.

4. Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not give consent to sharing confidential information.

5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.

6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose you are sharing it, it is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion and is shared securely.

7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it, whether you share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

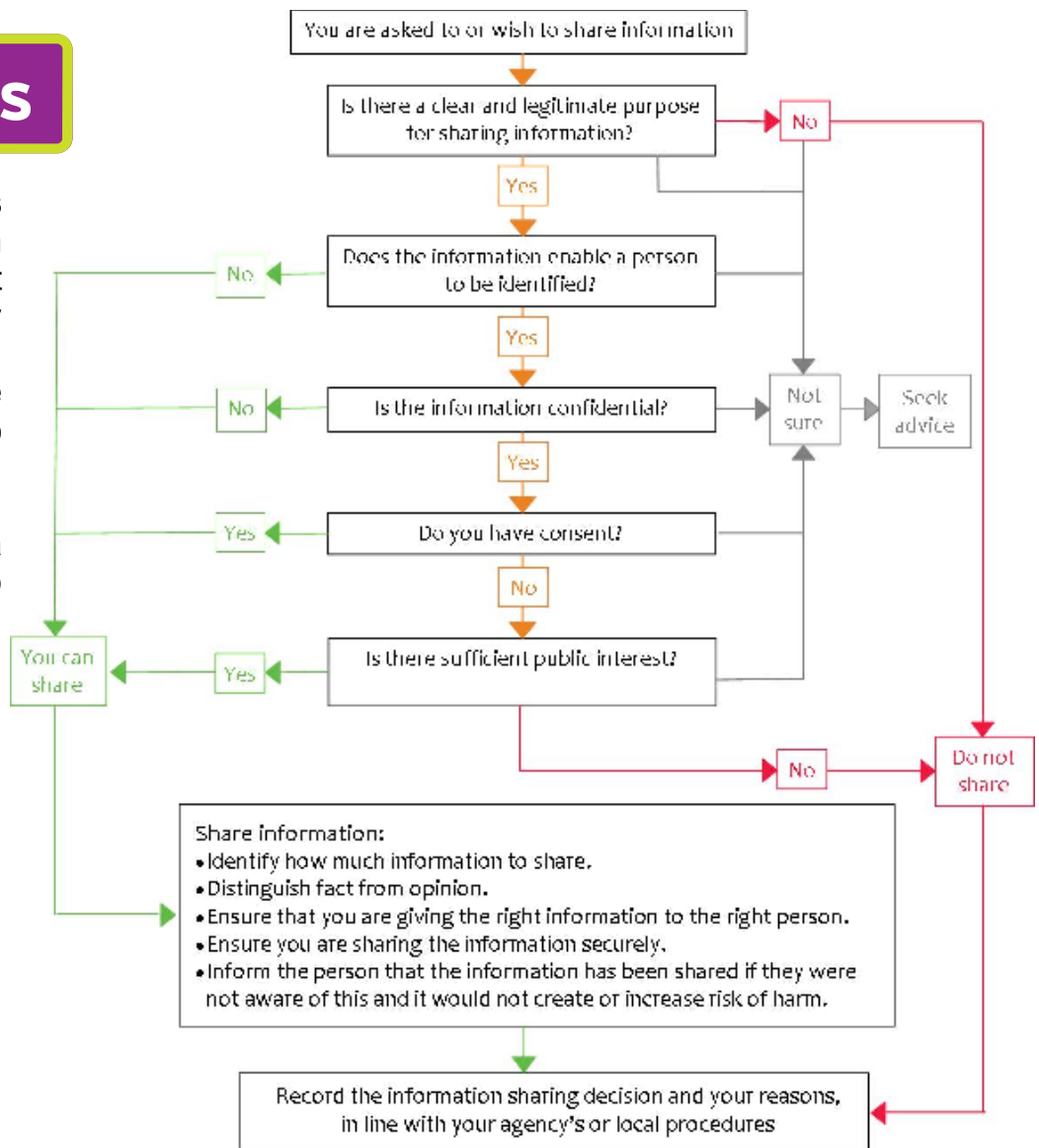
The process

The diagram opposite is a flowchart taken from the HM Government *Information Sharing: Pocket Guide*, outlining the key questions to be asked when it comes to sharing information.

This should be used a basic helpful tool to remind you of the main points to consider.

For further guidance on information sharing and documents for download, go to:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/informationsharing



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