

INFORMATION SHARING

All staff have a responsibility to act to make sure that all children are protected from harm. Responsibility to children is not limited to responding to requests for information from other professionals or agencies. All NHS staff are responsible for acting on concerns about a child **even if the child is not your patient**

If there is reasonable concern that a child may be at risk of significant harm this will always override a professional agency requirement to keep information confidential.

Staff caring for adults should always ask whether there are dependent children at home who may be endangered by the adult's condition. This includes sharing information prior to the birth of a child to ensure protective plans are in place from the moment of birth.

If staff are concerned that action is not being taken on information they have given, they should discuss this with the child protection lead member of staff, Senior Nurse Child Protection or Lead Clinician Child Protection.

Staff should involve parents or parents to be in decisions about the disclosure of information, unless this would increase the risk to the child, parents or staff.

When any professional or agency approaches another to ask for information they should explain:

- What information they need (in plain English)
- Why they need it
- What they will do with the information
- Who else needs to be informed if concerns about the child persist?

If a professional or agency is asked to provide information, they should never refuse solely on the grounds that all their information is confidential.

They should consider:

- What information the service user has already given permission to use
- Any perceived risk to a child which would warrant breaching confidentiality
- Any relevant information on risk to the child, which would allow another agency to offer appropriate help and services or take action to reduce risk to the child
- Whether to ask advice from their line manager, Child protection staff or information from Caldicott Guardians

Staff should record when, what and why information has been shared, and with whom (or why sharing was refused) as they may have to justify their reasons at a later date.

Staff should also keep clear, legible and up-to-date records of their contact with parents and children including:

- What information is held and any consent to information being shared
- The assessment, care plan and any changes as a result of reviews
- The date and identity of the person sharing and recording the information

Staff should always seek advice if unsure and never refuse to provide information without considering the risks of not sharing.