



[Read the New
Information Sharing
Guidance here](#)

Information Sharing Duty Frequently Asked Questions

1

What is the information sharing duty?

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduces an Information Sharing Duty, placing a clear legal expectation on multi-agency partners to share information relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

From 30 September 2026, an organisation covered by the duty must share information with another organisation covered by the duty where:

- it holds information about a child, or another person connected to that child;
- it considers the information relevant to safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare; and
- it considers that sharing the information may help the recipient assess need or risk, make a decision, provide support or take safeguarding action.

The duty applies both when an organisation identifies relevant information itself and when it receives a request for relevant information from another organisation covered by the legislation.

2

What is changing?

The new duty is intended to remove uncertainty about whether information can be shared, particularly where concerns relate to emerging needs, early help or a child's wider welfare rather than an immediate risk of significant harm.

There is no requirement for a child to have reached a particular statutory threshold before relevant information can be shared. This represents an important change in emphasis. Previous guidance focused largely on giving practitioners confidence that the law allowed them to share information. The new legislation creates an express duty to share where the statutory conditions are met.



**[Read the New
Information Sharing
Guidance here](#)**

3

Does GDPR prevent me from sharing information?

Data protection legislation provides a framework for proportionate and lawful information sharing, rather than preventing it. The Information Sharing Duty creates a clear statutory obligation to share relevant information for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Organisations must still ensure that any information sharing is necessary, proportionate and compliant with data protection requirements.

4

How do I decide what information to share?

The law does not require blanket information sharing.

Practitioners must continue to exercise professional judgement and consider:

- whether the information is relevant to safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare;
- whether sharing it may help the recipient carry out its safeguarding or welfare functions;
- what information is necessary and proportionate to share;
- who needs to receive it; and

whether sharing would be more detrimental to the child than not sharing.

(Extremely limited circumstances where this would apply.)

5

Should I tell the child or family that I am sharing?

Yes, wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so. Transparency helps to build trust, supports effective working relationships and enables children and families to understand what information is being shared, with whom, and for what purpose.

Practitioners should not avoid these conversations simply because a child or family may disagree with the information being shared. The Information Sharing Duty does not require consent, but open and honest communication remains an important part of good practice. Families should only not be informed where doing so would place a child or another person at risk, prejudice a safeguarding enquiry, or otherwise be unsafe.



**[Read the New
Information Sharing
Guidance here](#)**

6

What if I think telling the family will damage my relationship with them?

Concerns that a child, parent or carer may be unhappy with information sharing is not, on its own, a reason to withhold information. Practitioners should explain their responsibilities, the purpose of sharing information and how it may support the child's welfare. Open and transparent conversations are generally more likely to maintain trust than information sharing that comes as a surprise to the family at a later stage.

7

Should I seek consent from the child or family before sharing information?

Consent is not required to share information under the Information Sharing Duty and the statutory guidance warns against seeking consent where information will be shared regardless of whether permission is given. It describes this as presenting children and families with a “false choice”.

The absence of parental or child consent should not be used as a reason to withhold relevant information.

It is important to distinguish between consent to share information and consent to receive a voluntary service. A family may choose whether to engage with services such as Family Help, but their agreement is not required before relevant information is shared where the statutory duty applies.

8

What are my responsibilities after sharing information?

The duty requires professionals to share information; it does not mean a transfer of responsibility from one professional or organisation to another. If you have shared information, what happens next is still your business. To best support children and families professionals across different organisations must work together.



**Read the New
Information Sharing
Guidance here**

9 Will sharing information with the Integrated Front Door mean my referral is automatically accepted?

No. Information should be shared where it is relevant to safeguarding or promoting a child's welfare. However, the Information Sharing Duty does not alter service thresholds. Any referral or request for support will still be considered against local threshold criteria and the child's assessed needs.

10 What records should I keep?

The decision to share or withhold information should be recorded, alongside the rationale for that decision which should reference the tests set out in q 3 above.

If requesting information from another organisation it is important to include enough contextual information why the tests under q3 apply to the information being requested.

11 What should I do if I am unsure whether to share information?

Seek advice from your manager, safeguarding lead, information governance lead, or Caldicott Guardian.

Refer to the statutory guidance which contains further information and examples

[Click here to read the full guidance.](#)

There is also a one page guide that you may
find useful. [Click here to read this](#)