

## Information Sharing in Child Protection: General Principles

[National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014](#)<sup>1</sup>

- *The wellbeing of a child is of central importance when making decisions to lawfully share information with or about them;*
- *Children have a right to express their views and have them taken into account when decisions are made about what should happen to them;*
- *The reasons why information needs to be shared and particular actions taken should be communicated openly and honestly with children and, where appropriate, their families;*
- *In general, information will normally only be shared with the consent of the child (depending on age and maturity). However where there is a risk to a child's wellbeing, consent should not be sought and relevant information should be shared with other individuals or agencies as appropriate;*
- *At all times, information shared should be relevant, necessary and proportionate to the circumstances of the child, and limited to those who need to know;*
- *When gathering information about possible risks to a child, information should be sought from all relevant sources, including services that may be involved with other family members. Relevant historical information should also be taken into account;*
- *When information is shared, a record should be made of when it was shared, with whom, for what purpose, in what form and whether it was disclosed with or without informed consent. Similarly, any decision not to share information and the rationale should also be recorded;*
- *Agencies should provide clear guidance for practitioners on sharing information for example, the GMC guidance on Protecting Children and Young People. This should include advice on sharing information about adults who may pose a risk to children, dealing with disputes over information-sharing and clear policies on whistle-blowing; and*
- *It is not necessary to seek consent when there is legislative requirement to share information; for example when making a referral to the Children's Reporter, or the prevention and detection of crime.*

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<sup>1</sup> Extracted from the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014](#) (Scottish Government 2014).