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Background

Sharing information is crucial to safeguarding children, and poor or non-existent information sharing is a factor repeatedly flagged up as an issue in Serious Case Reviews carried out following the death, or serious injury to, a child. In a number of SCRs in Lancashire, information sharing has happened, but the practitioners involved have not checked that their meaning had been understood, so that some information has been over-emphasised or under-emphasised subsequently.

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Why it matters

"Fears about information sharing cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse and neglect. No practitioner should assume that someone else will pass on information which may be critical to keeping a child safe" (HM Government, 2015:5)



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Questions to consider

How do we share information?
What do we consider to be legitimate reasons to share information.

Do we always record when we have requested or shared information, with the reasons why?

Reference: HM Government (March 2015): Information Sharing; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers. DFE-00128-2015. Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>



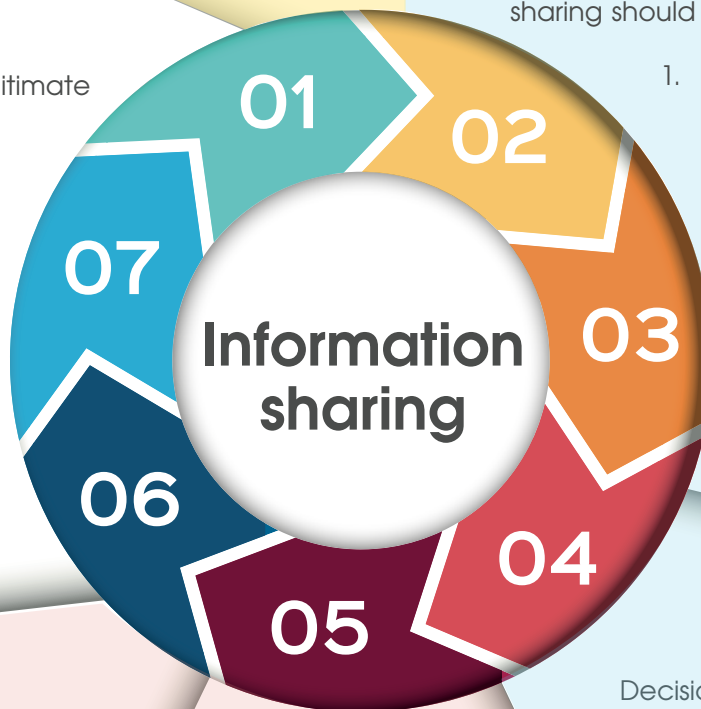
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Information



The Government published some six principles of information sharing. They are that information sharing should be:

1. Necessary and proportionate
2. Relevant
3. Adequate
4. Accurate
5. Timely
6. Secure



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- Ensure that you are giving the right information to the right individual
- Ensure where possible that you are sharing the information securely
- Inform the individual that the information has been shared, as long as this will not create or increase risk of harm

What to do

- Use the "seven golden rules to sharing information"
- Consider if there is a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing information
- Identify how much information to share
- Distinguish fact from opinion

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Decisions regarding information sharing, whether the decision is to share or not, should be recorded, with reasons for the decision. If the decision is not to share information, it is good practice to inform the requester of this.

"Remember: The most important consideration is whether sharing information is likely to safeguard and protect the child" (ibid 8).

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