

Practice guidance for information sharing changes

- Consent is no longer required to share information with Early Help Services, but it is still an expectation that referrals are discussed with parents by the referrer before the referral is completed.
- All EH staff should provide a link/hard copy of the Early Help privacy notice to currently allocated and newly allocated families. A casenote should be uploaded to the family's casefile titled "privacy notice shared" to evidence that the privacy notice has been shared
- Conversations with families around information sharing will move from "do you consent to us speaking to/sharing information with XXXX" to conversations like those below

For new families

"As part of our work with you, we will be speaking to/sharing information with professionals/agencies that have supported you and your family e.g. school, GP CAMHS. This will help us to understand what support you have already and what other agencies/professionals can do to support you and your family in the future. Here is a copy of our privacy notice if you would like more information about what information is gathered by Early Help and who this information is shared with"

For existing families

"Early Help have now changed the way we share information in Early Help which means that we no longer need consent to share information as information sharing is a key part of our public duties as a local authority. Here is a link/copy of our privacy notice that outlines what information is gathered by Early Help and who this information is shared with"

We will only share relevant information with professionals that need to know (information that will help them to help you or your child).

If in the past, you have told us that there are professionals that you do not want us to share information with. We will work with you to understand why and will only speak to these agencies if we are worried about you or your child/ren and think that information that is shared can help in some way. We will always aim to speak to you about this unless we are worried about you or your child's immediate safety"

- Frontline practitioners are still expected to inform families in advance that information about them will be shared with others unless informing the family would;
 - Put the child at risk of harm
 - Interfere with a criminal investigation
 - Cause undue delay to safeguarding the child
- When discussing information sharing with families, family workers should explain:
 - What information is being shared
 - Why this information is needed
 - What it will be used for

- To whom it will be disclosed
- To remain within the legal basis, the information shared must be **proportional, relevant** and shared only for the purposes of **promoting the wellbeing of children** (safeguarding) and with those professionals/agencies who need to know. Any information sharing outside this will require consent or may potentially be a breach of confidentiality.
- If a family has concerns about the service sharing information with a particular agency this should be explored with them to understand what the barriers may be for them. The family should be reassured that only **relevant and proportional** information is being shared with agencies that **need to know** in order to promote the wellbeing of the child. Management oversight should be recorded on the casefile clearly outlining decision making.
- Early Help services are still voluntary, if a family decides that they do not wish to work with us. EH staff should discuss this with their line manager at the earliest opportunity for management direction/decision making re. case progression.
- The same considerations that would be given to case progression/trajectory when a family declines Early Help support are applicable here
 - How can the existing needs be supported by the existing network?
 - Who will you need to inform of EH closure?
 - Does the family declining early help escalate concerns for the child/ren? Is a threshold discussion required?

All relevant Early Help policies and leaflets will be updated to reflect these changes.