

Information Sharing

How to record decisions

How to record decisions on sharing personal information

This guide describes how to record information sharing decisions, whether you are the requestor or the recipient of a request for personal information and whether the decision is to share or not. It should be read in conjunction with the other Information Sharing 'How to' guides, *Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers*¹ and any relevant local organisational or professional guidance.

This guide is for practitioners and managers who may have to make decisions and share information on a case-by-case basis. It does not relate to bulk or pre-planned sharing of information between organisations or systems. This guide describes best practice. It does not replace existing local policies and procedures for recording decisions.

Why should we record information sharing decisions?

Recording information sharing decisions, including the reasons for the decisions, is necessary as part of the audit trail of a case. As part of the case notes, these records can help other practitioners understand what happened and why and help to avoid duplication. Without these records it may be difficult to prove that due process was followed if legal action is brought against an organisation.

Recording information sharing decisions where you are the decision-maker

When you receive a request or decide it is appropriate to share personal information with another agency or service you must ensure that you record:

- the date and time;
- a summary of the information with a case reference, if available, and the reason for the request;
- the requestor's name, job title, organisation (and telephone number);
- your decision (whether to share or not) and the reasons for this decision.

¹ *Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers* (HM Government, 2008)
<http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00807-2008>

If you decide to share information you must also record:

- whether you are sharing with or without consent;
- if sharing without consent, whether the person or family were informed and, if not, why not;
- who consented to or authorised the information sharing, if appropriate;
- what type of information you shared (but not the content);
- how you shared the information, e.g. email, phone and if appropriate how receipt was confirmed.

Example of recording information sharing decisions

The table below presents one example of how information sharing decisions may be recorded. You must make sure you follow your own organisation's procedures where available.

Date & Time	Information requested / case ref / reason	Name of requestor /agency & contact details	Decision to share (Y/N) and reason	Who consented / authorised / informed	Type of information shared	How info was shared
8/8/09 11:30	Professional observation of Joe Smith (ref JS12345); input to CAF	Pam Jones, Learning Mentor, High School, Anytown, 01632 56789	Y - with consent; requestor working with child	Consent to share obtained from Betty Smith (mother)	Observations of historic development and behaviour patterns	By telephone
12/8/09 14:30	Professional observation of Ike Thomson (ref IT54321); concerns over safety of child	Lisa Agbe, Child Protection Officer, Anytown Constabulary, 01632 98765	Y - without consent; concerns over safety of child	Child / parent not informed because of potential risk to child	Information from recent health check related to physical condition	By secure email, confirmed by delivery receipt
22/8/09 15:30	Services being delivered to Ken George (ref KG5555); recent missed school attendances	Pam Jones, Learning Mentor, High School, Anytown, 01632 56789	N; mother asked for this to be confidential; child not thought to be at risk of harm	Decision not to share agreed with Bob Zake (manager)	N/A	N/A

Recording information sharing decisions where you are the requestor

If you request personal information from another agency, you should record:

- date and time;
- a brief summary of the information requested with a case reference, if available and the reason for the request;
- the practitioners' name, their job title, organisation (and telephone number);
- their decision (whether to share or not) and any reasons given;

If their decision is to share:

- what type of information was shared (but not the content);
- whether this information is being shared with or without consent (with reasons if without); and
- any limits to the consent to share all or some of this information with others.

If they decide not to share: any actions taken as a result of this decision.

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