

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

TO:	Health and Wellbeing Board		
DATE:	17 April 2015	AGENDA ITEM:	7
TITLE:	Letter from Ministers regarding sharing information effectively for the protection of children		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	Cllr Jan Gavin	PORTFOLIO:	Children's Services
SERVICE:	Children's Services	WARDS:	All
LEAD OFFICER:	Esther Blake	TEL:	X73269
JOB TITLE:	Business Manager for Reading LSCB and Children's Trust Partnership	E-MAIL:	Esther.blake@reading.gov.uk

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 A joint letter from Government Ministers, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015, has been sent to all Chief Executives, Directors of Children's Services, Local Safeguarding Children Boards and Health and Wellbeing Boards. It follows the publication of the Government response to the child sexual exploitation cases in Rotherham and states that a key factor in keeping children safe is the effective sharing of information.
- 1.2 This letter was discussed at the Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) on 5<sup>th</sup> March, with actions agreed to review the existing Information Sharing Protocol and produce a revised document in time for the next meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May.
- 1.3 The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to note the contents of the Ministers letter and sign up to the principles it contains (letter attached), and note the actions set by the LSCB (below). A further report will be produced for the July Health and Wellbeing Board to update on the progress.

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

That the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the Ministers letter
- 2.2 Sign up to the principles of multi-agency information sharing as stated in the letter
- 2.3 Note the actions taken by the LSCB
- 2.4 Request a progress report for the July Board meeting

### **3. REPORT**

- 3.1 The attached letter sets out how and when personal information should be shared and 'is clear on the need for genuinely integrated multi-agency approaches to underpin information sharing'. Local areas are asked to consider five principles for multi-agency work.
- 3.2 The letter was discussed at the Local Safeguarding Board meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March, and Board members were challenged whether the current Information Sharing protocol, written on behalf of the Children's Trust in 2013, was sufficiently embedded into practice. A copy of this protocol can be found on the Children's Trust website: <http://www.reading2020.org.uk/childrens-trust/information-sharing-code-practice/>
- 3.3 The Board agreed that a multi-agency task and finish group be set up to review and update the current protocol, and report back at the next Board meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May. Once agreed and disseminated/communicated, an audit will be undertaken in the summer to identify how well embedded the new protocol is in practice, with a report back to the LSCB in the autumn.
- 3.4. The Board also agreed that the 'Eight Golden Rules of Information Sharing' will be disseminated out to all frontline staff immediately. A copy of the document sent out to all Board members for dissemination is attached below.

### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 A protocol, signed up to by all partner agencies, must be in place to allow effective and appropriate sharing of information and data for the protection of children and young people.

### **5. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Letter from Ministers dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015
- Reading Children's Trust Information Sharing Protocol



## EIGHT GOLDEN RULES FOR INFORMATION SHARING

1. **Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
2. **If there are concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm**, then it is your duty to follow the relevant procedures without delay. Seek advice if you are not sure what to do at any stage and ensure that the outcome of the discussion is recorded.
3. **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
4. **Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
5. **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You should go **ahead** and share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest, or where a child is at risk of significant harm. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
6. **Consider safety and well-being**: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
7. **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure**: Ensure that the **information** you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
8. **Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it - whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.