



Information Sharing Duty

What partner agencies need to know

From 30 September 2026

A clearer legal duty to share relevant information early, proportionately and confidently to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

What changes, and what stays the same?

The duty largely formalises good safeguarding practice, while strengthening the legal expectation to share.

Rationale: "Practitioners have told us that the complexity of legislation can leave them unsure about when they can share information, particularly where concerns relate to a child's welfare or emerging need, rather than harm." P.6 The Information Sharing Duty [Information sharing to safeguard children and young people - GOV.UK](#)

What stays the same

- Share lawfully and securely
- Share only relevant and proportionate information
- Use professional judgement
- Record the decision and rationale to share or not share
- Be transparent with children and families where safe to do so

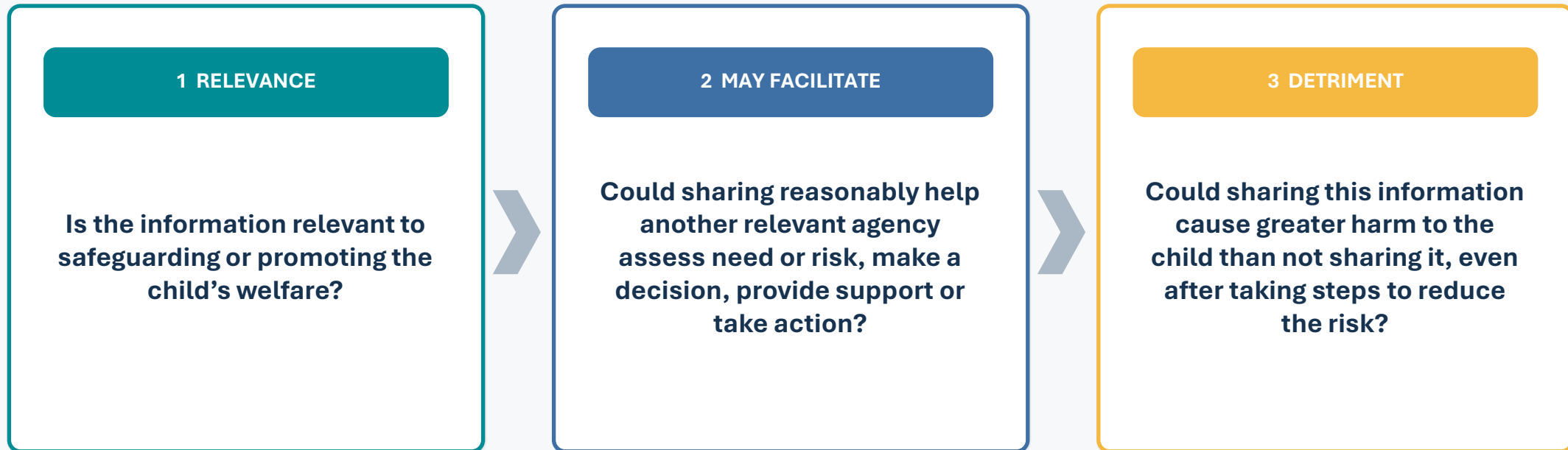
What is clearer and stronger

- No need to wait for Section 17, Section 47 or another service threshold
- Relevant information about emerging need and welfare may have to be shared
- Relevant information about adults or other children connected to a child must be shared where the statutory criteria are met.
- The duty applies proactively and when responding to requests
- Common law confidentiality is not a barrier when the duty applies

Key message: this is not “share everything”. Share what is relevant, necessary and proportionate.

The practitioner decision

Three tests should guide whether information is shared.



YES + YES + NO = SHARE

If uncertain, seek prompt advice. A lack of consent, fear of complaint or practitioner discomfort are not reasons to withhold information. Data protection law must be followed, but it does not prevent appropriate information sharing.

What may look different in practice

Earlier sharing where concerns are emerging, partial or held by different parts of the system.

1

ADULT SERVICES

Parental mental health, substance misuse, missed appointments or domestic abuse information shared earlier where relevant to a child.

2

EDUCATION & FAMILY HELP

Attendance, behaviour, presentation or unmet need shared before a statutory social care threshold is reached.

3

POLICE & CONTEXTUAL RISK

Relevant intelligence about peers, exploitation or adults of concern shared to build the wider safeguarding picture.

4

CHILD MOVING TO ANOTHER AREA

Relevant safeguarding information shared with the new area when a child moves, so important information is not lost.

Partner action: brief staff and review local pathways for information sharing.

Who is covered, and what about consent?

The duty applies between specified safeguarding organisations and practitioners acting on their behalf.

WHO IS IN SCOPE

Section 11 organisations, including local authorities, ICBs, NHS trusts, police, probation, prisons, youth justice and youth custody; designated education and childcare agencies; and commissioned providers carrying out relevant safeguarding or welfare functions.

CONSENT

Consent is not required to share relevant information when the statutory criteria are met. Information sharing is separate from consent to receive a voluntary service or medical treatment.

TRANSPARENCY

Where safe and practicable, explain to children and families what will be shared, with whom and why. Do not present sharing as optional where the duty requires it.

OUTSIDE THE DUTY

Sharing with charities, community groups, private providers outside scope, or services in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland may still be lawful, but relies on other legal powers and duties.

Important: the duty applies from birth to the child's 18th birthday. The duty does not apply to unborn children, but relevant information about unborn children should continue to be shared in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children.

What organisations need to do now

Core responsibilities

MUST

Share when the statutory criteria are met

MUST

Consider and respond to information requests

MUST

Comply with data protection, purpose limitation and security

MUST

Restrict access to those who need the information

Good implementation practice

SHOULD

Act promptly and proactively

SHOULD

Record decisions to share or not share and the rationale

SHOULD

Provide context with requests and feedback after sharing

SHOULD

Use agreed local routes and inform families where appropriate