

As far as possible the identity of the child should be protected until it is established that there is a reasonable cause for believing that they are at risk of suffering significant harm.

If you can not gain consent (it has been refused or it is unsafe to seek) you must determine whether there is sufficient risk to the child to share the information anyway. More information is available here: www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/24304child-protection or by calling **01609 534527** (or **999** in an emergency).

Consent Unavailable

In a small number of instances it may be more difficult to gain consent. For example, if a parent does not speak any English, has a learning disability, or another additional need which makes it difficult for them to understand what you are asking.

It is important that you do not accept consent if you are not confident that the parent/carer understands what you are asking. However, you should always take steps to help them understand; it may be helpful to seek advice from your line manager or other settings who have previously worked with a parent/carer with similar needs.

Identifiable information should be shared with the minimum number of people who need access to the information.

It is important that the information you share is only accessible by the teams and individuals you intended to see it.

Emails You should use the most secure email system available to you: Between public sector bodies using GCSx, use Egress for other recipients, or password-protect a document and attach it to your email. Always give the password by phone or in person and never leave it on a voicemail or email.

Paper information should be stored securely in a locked cabinet, only accessible by the people who need to see the information. Information should not be kept for longer than it is needed. Specific advice on storage duration can be gained from NYCC Archives Centre.

Contact us

**North Yorkshire County Council,
County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire,
DL7 8AD**

Our Customer Service Centre is open
Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm
(closed weekends and bank holidays).

Tel: **01609 780 780**

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If you would like this information in another language or format please ask us.

Tel: **01609 780 780**

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Information sharing in Early Years

A guide to information sharing in the early years foundation stage. For children's centres, early years providers and schools.



About this leaflet

This leaflet is a guide on information sharing for all practitioners and professionals who work with children under the age of five. This includes, children's centres, early years providers and schools. Parents and other professionals may also be interested. There is also a leaflet on information sharing designed for parents, this is available through children's centres and online.

The Basics

Families have the right to assume that information they share with any professional should be kept in a secure and legal manner.

This does not mean information can never be shared; because there are instances when it is appropriate to share information in order to improve outcomes for children.



Sharing information in an appropriate and timely manner can help to close the achievement gap.

Sharing information when the child or family is identifiable

If you can identify an individual(s) from the information you intend to share, you need informed consent from the parent/carer.

Getting explicit informed consent should be a routine aspect of working with a child, and should be gained when the practitioner first starts working with the child.

The consent should confirm that the parent/carer is happy for the practitioner to share information with the team who usually support that setting when it is considered necessary to do so in order to support their child. Although you have consent, it is good practice to tell the parent/carer when you are sharing information.

If it becomes necessary to share identifiable information in a new way, for example with another service/organisation you will need to seek additional explicit consent.

Consent should be

- 1) **Explicit:** The parent/carer should clearly and formally give their consent. Your setting should have a form for parents/carers to sign which acts as an explicit record of their consent.
- 2) **Informed:** The parent/carer should understand who will see the information, how it will be used, and the consequences of not giving consent. Only accept the consent when you are confident the parent has fully understood what they are signing.

Sharing information when a child or family is not identifiable

It is possible to share information about children or families without consent as long as none of the individuals can be identified. This information may be shared with anyone who will use the information to improve services for children and their families in North Yorkshire.

Example 1: Sharing numbers or percentages to describe your service. The only exception is with small groups where might be possible to identify individuals from the information.

Example 2: Sharing case studies where identifying details have been removed. You will need to be mindful if the child is distinctive in some way and more easily identified through the case study, and simple removing their name may not be sufficient to ensure they are not identifiable.

Exceptional circumstances

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

If you have reasonable cause to believe that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering neglect or significant harm you should always tell someone and seek advice.

