



7 August 2013

Dear Colleagues

The sharing of information in respect of children and young people has become something of an uncertain area for practitioners, many of whom see the Data Protection Act 1998 as an obstacle to sharing potentially important information. An understandable fear of breaking the law may have prevented many of us from sharing information – or at least making us hesitant to do so - with colleagues or fellow professionals, even though our instincts may have told us this was the right thing to do.

In response to requests for greater clarity on the issue, the Information Commissioner's Office has recently issued guidance to practitioners on whether, and to what extent, they can share their professional concerns about the wellbeing of children and young people.

A copy of that guidance, from the assistant commissioner, Dr Ken Macdonald, is attached.

The main thrust of the guidance is that where there is a perceived risk to a child or young person, based on professional opinion, the sharing of information is unlikely to constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act.

Similarly, the Act should not be seen as a barrier to proportionate information sharing where doubt exists about the wellbeing of a child or young person.

It is to be hoped that the guidance will help remove some of the uncertainty which many of you will have encountered on the issue of information sharing and help to ensure that the welfare and wellbeing of our children and young people is always the overriding consideration.

Yours faithfully

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