



Dear Safeguarding Partners,

### **Multi agency information sharing- Information Sharing Duty**

You will all recognise poor information sharing has been a contributory factor to serious child safeguarding incidents for too long. Whilst there are multiple barriers hindering effective information sharing – practitioner confidence, leadership and culture play a leading role.

To address this longstanding system challenge, the *Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act* introduces a new **statutory Information Sharing Duty**, coming into force on **30 September 2026**. The duty responds directly to practitioner feedback and places a clear legal obligation on organisations listed under section 11 of the *Children Act 2004*, those delivering safeguarding and welfare functions on their behalf, and designated childcare and education agencies, to share information with one another where it is relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes information relating to **emerging needs and prevention** and is not limited to circumstances where the statutory threshold for child protection intervention has been met.

Alongside commencement of the duty, we will publish statutory guidance, co-created with multi-agency practitioners and relevant government departments. The guidance is intended to support a decisive shift in practice by making clear that the law both enables and requires relevant information to be shared in order to safeguard and promote children's welfare. It also clarifies that whilst data protection laws still apply in how information is shared i.e. it is relevant and proportionate; **consent is not required**. Guidance aligns with *Working Together 2026* and reinforces the role of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA) in setting clear local expectations, supporting confidence, and providing consistency for practitioners across the system.

We have launched a six-week **public consultation** on the draft statutory guidance and data sharing agreement (DSA) closing on 14 July. This consultation is a critical opportunity to ensure that the guidance is clear, workable and effective across sectors, and that it supports the cultural and operational change needed to improve information sharing locally and nationally.

## A call to action for safeguarding partners

As safeguarding partners, you have a central leadership role in preparing your local systems for the new duty. We are therefore asking you to take action now by:

- **Engaging with the consultation**, please encourage your teams to review and comment - bringing together systemwide perspectives to inform a collective response; and
- **Preparing for commencement**, following Royal Assent of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act, the duty will commence in September 2026.

The draft guidance and DSA template are being consulted on at a formative stage and may change in light of feedback. Please take the time to consider the draft and provide comments through the consultation: [Information sharing duty statutory guidance - GOV.UK](#).

The legal duty, established by s16LA of the Children Act 2004, will be commenced on 30 September 2026. Safeguarding partnerships should ensure they review and refresh local agreements so that they are ready for the change. This includes:

- Considering how they will adapt for the Information Sharing Duty in practice, including through workforce development, and clear messaging with practitioners, children and families about what the new duty means and how it will operate;
- Ensuring that all relevant agencies, including education providers and childcare settings, are involved in shaping local adaptations;
- Determining what training they need to build practitioner confidence around information sharing; and
- Updating their information governance locally, including whether changes are needed to what or how information is shared.

This collective work is essential to establishing a consistent, system wide understanding of information sharing expectations, reducing variation between agencies, and ensuring practitioners are supported by clear strategic agreements that enable confident and proportionate sharing.

As a reminder, from the specific commencement date, local areas will be required to meet the new statutory Information Sharing Duty. This will be the point at which the Government begins monitoring implementation.

We will write again following the conclusion of the consultation, ahead of commencement of the duty, to confirm final arrangements and share further implementation materials, including resources for children and families.

We thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to strengthening multi-agency safeguarding practice.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh MacAlister". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Josh" being more prominent.

**Josh MacAlister OBE MP**  
**Minister for Children and Families**  
**Department for Education**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Hodgson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

**Sharon Hodgson MP**  
**Minister for Public Health and Prevention**  
**Department of Health and Social Care**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Natalie Fleet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the width of the name.

**Natalie Fleet MP**  
**Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls**  
**Home Office**