

## Chief Officers Guidance on Information Sharing in respect of Children and Adults who may be at risk of harm

(August 2025)



21 August 2025

Dear Colleague

### INFORMATION SHARING

The protection of children, young people and adults at risk, continues to be **“everyone’s responsibility and everyone’s job.”** This cuts across all aspects of private life and professional business and there is a responsibility, individually and collectively, professionally and personally, to protect vulnerable people in our communities.

This continually requires staff to seek and exchange personal information about individuals. We, as chief officers, are aware that questions of privacy and confidentiality can and sometimes do get in the way of ensuring the safety of children, young people and adults at risk. **We wish to re-emphasise and provide continued clarity to reinforce the importance of sharing and exchanging information where the protection of these client groups is concerned.**

Children, young people and adults at risk always have a right to privacy and the utmost care must be taken when handling personal information. We continue to endorse the need for a sensitive and lawful approach when working in partnership with children, young people and adults at risk, together with their families and carers.

Where you have a concern about a child, young person or adult at risk of harm or you are made aware of such a concern, you have a responsibility to decide whether to share and exchange relevant information with other professionals. You should do so without delay and with confidence, following your own agency/service procedures.

All staff should be aware that their own agency will support them if they have shared personal information in these circumstances using their professional judgement.

Nationally and locally, we are aware that reviews have highlighted misconceptions about information sharing. We remind you that existing legislation does not prevent you from sharing and/or exchanging relevant information where you believe there are concerns about the protection of children, young people and adults at risk. In addition, you are lawfully able to share confidential information where disclosure is in the interest of public protection and necessary to protect the individual or another third party. This extends to all practitioners working with adults who may be self-harming or neglecting themselves.

We would wish to again highlight information from the Information Commissioner's office, that states:

*"My message to people supporting and working with children and young people is clear: if you think a child is at risk of harm, you can share information to protect them. You will not get in trouble with the ICO for trying to prevent or lessen a serious risk or threat to a child's mental and physical wellbeing."*

*"Data protection law helps organisations share data when required. Our guide will support senior leaders to put strong policies, systems and training in place, so their staff are encouraged and empowered to share data in an appropriate, safe and lawful way."*

John Edwards, UK Information Commissioner (14 September 2023)

Furthermore, we would draw your attention to the Scottish Government's *National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023* ([national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023.pdf](#)) which is clear that where there is a child protection concern, relevant information should be shared with police or social work without delay, provided it is necessary, proportionate and lawful to do so. If there is a child protection concern, consent is not required. The relevant section of the guidance is "Information Sharing: Inter-Agency Principles" 1.128 to 1.147. Further details are available within "Getting it right for every child - Practice Guidance 4 Information Sharing 2022" ([getting-right-child-practice-guidance-4-information-sharing-2022.pdf](#)) which refers to guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Furthermore, we have published our [Information Sharing - a 10 Step Guide Safeguarding Children and Child Protection.pdf](#). It aims to help you feel confident about sharing information when you need to safeguard and protect a child or young person at risk of harm.

The *Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 - Section 5* places a duty on those agencies named in the Act to:

*"Co-operate with the council making inquiries about adults thought to be at risk of harm and each other"*

They must share information where such co-operation is likely to enable or assist the council making those inquiries. Section 3(2) makes clear that an adult is at risk of harm if another person's conduct is causing (or is likely to cause) the adult harm; or the adult is engaging (or is likely to engage) in conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm.

It is important that we continue to be open and transparent and make people aware that we will share information when we suspect there is a risk of harm. It is also important that you record any decision to share or not to share information and your reasons for doing so.

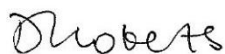
We hope this will confirm our ongoing support and provide confidence in decision making and sharing relevant information. In doing so, you will add to the protection of children, young people and adults at risk in Dumfries and Galloway and improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable in our community.

For further advice and guidance, we would encourage you to speak directly with your supervisor / manager or your organisation's Data Protection expert as follows:

Dumfries and Galloway Council [dataprotection@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@dumgal.gov.uk)

NHS Dumfries and Galloway [dg.dataprotection@nhs.scot](mailto:dg.dataprotection@nhs.scot)

Police Scotland: Information [Assurance@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Assurance@scotland.pnn.police.uk)



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**Nicole Hamlet**  
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Partnership



**Appendix 1:** Dumfries & Galloway Public Protection Committee Information Sharing - A 10 Step Guide Safeguarding Children / Child Protection - [Information Sharing - a 10 Step Guide Safeguarding Children and Child Protection.pdf](#)

**Appendix 2:** Dumfries & Galloway Public Protection Committee - Dumfries and Galloway multi-agency adult support and protection guidance – Chapter 2:5 Confidentiality and Information Sharing [5. Confidentiality and Information Sharing | Dumfries and Galloway Public Protection Partnership](#)

**Appendix 3:** Dumfries and Galloway multi-agency child protection guidance - [Dumfries and Galloway multi-agency child protection guidance | Dumfries and Galloway Public Protection Partnership](#)

**Appendix 4:** Dumfries and Galloway multi-agency adult support and protection guidance - [Dumfries and Galloway multi-agency adult support and protection guidance | Dumfries and Galloway Public Protection Partnership](#)