

integrated working

Fact sheet

Integrated working is everyone supporting children and young people working together effectively to put the child at the centre, meet their needs and improve their lives.

By combining their professional expertise, knowledge and skills, and involving the child or young person and family throughout, practitioners can identify needs earlier, deliver a coordinated package of support that is centred on the child or young person, and help to secure better outcomes for them.

Integrated working is achieved through collaboration and coordination at all levels, across all services, in both single and multi-agency settings. It requires clear and ongoing leadership and management. At an operational level, it is facilitated by the adoption of common service delivery models, tools and processes.

Integrated strategy

At a strategic level, implementation of integrated working is underpinned and supported by:

- development of Children and Young People's Plans;
- the Children's Services Grant;
- Regional Development Managers from the Children's Workforce Development Council offering regional support and advice on the development of integrated children's workforce strategies.
- monitoring – using the annual performance assessment and joint area reviews (JARs.)

Integrated processes

Integrated processes will 'drive' multi-agency working. They will also support the delivery of integrated frontline services. Key integrated processes include:

Better information sharing between professionals: appropriate information sharing underpins all integrated processes. Clear cross-government guidance has been developed for all practitioners who work with children and young people to ensure they understand when, why and how they should share information.

The Common Assessment Framework for children and young people: a national, common process for initial assessment to identify more efficiently the additional needs of children and young people at risk of poor outcomes. It will reduce duplication of assessment, produce a shared language across agencies and improve referral between agencies.

The role of the lead professional which is to:

- act as a single point of contact that children, young people and their families can trust, and who is able to support them in making choices and in navigating their way through the system;
- ensure that children and families get appropriate interventions when needed, which are well planned, regularly reviewed and effectively delivered;
- reduce overlap and inconsistency when more than one practitioner is working with a child.

Piloting the concept of the budget holding

lead professional: testing whether better service packages could be delivered by giving lead professionals a budget to procure goods and commission services directly from providers.

Developing ContactPoint: ContactPoint will provide a quick way for a practitioner to find out who else is working with the same child or young person, making it easier to deliver more coordinated support. This basic online directory will be available to authorised staff who need it to do their jobs.

On 1 October 2006, CWDC took over responsibility from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, formerly DfES) for the implementation of:

- Information Sharing skills, knowledge and practice
- The Common Assessment Framework
- Role of the lead professional
- Structuring multi-agency working

This fact sheet and other useful information can be found on the CWDC website which also has links to the information on the Every Child Matters website.

For more resources and information:
visit the Children's Workforce Development
Council website: www.cwdcouncil.org.uk,
or the Every Child Matters website:
www.ecm.gov.uk.

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multi-agency working

Fact sheet

Multi-agency working is about different services joining forces in order to prevent problems from occurring in the first place.

It is an effective way of supporting children and families with additional needs and helping to secure real improvements in their life outcomes.

Background

Since the publication of the Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (Sept 2003), health, youth justice, social care, youth work, voluntary and community sector and other children's services have been joining forces to work more collaboratively around a preventative and early intervention agenda.

Multi-agency working has been shown to be an effective way of addressing the wide range of cross-cutting risk factors that contribute to poorer outcomes for children and young people.

Local areas are undertaking an extensive reconfiguration of services, to offer earlier, more coherent support, which meets the needs of children and families in convenient locations and in a more streamlined way.

Different models of multi-agency working

There is no one, correct way of multi-agency working. However, a review of practice shows that it is possible to group multi-agency working into three very broad models. These are intended to assist local areas in thinking through the different structures and issues, but there are no hard and fast rules about how multi-agency services should be set up:

1. Multi-agency panel

- Practitioners remain employed by their home agency.
- They meet as a panel or network on a regular basis to discuss children with additional needs who would benefit from multi-agency input.
- In some panels, case work is carried out by panel members. Other panels take a more strategic role, employing key workers to lead on case work.

An example of this type of working arrangement is a Youth Inclusion and Support Panel.

2. Multi-agency team

- A more formal configuration than a panel, with practitioners seconded or recruited into the team.
- Team has a leader and works to a common purpose and common goals.
- Practitioners may maintain links with their home agencies through supervision and training.
- Scope to engage in work with universal services and at a range of levels – not just with individual children and young people, but also small group, family and whole school work.

Examples include Behaviour & Education Support Teams and Youth Offending Teams.

3. Integrated service

- A range of separate services share a common location, and work together.
- A visible service hub for the community.
- Has a management structure that facilitates integrated working.
- Commitment by partner providers to fund/facilitate integrated service delivery.
- Usually delivered from school/early years settings.

Examples include Sure Start children's centres and extended schools that offer access to a range of integrated, multi-agency services.

Getting started in multi-agency working

A web-based resource to support managers and practitioners is now available. It describes features of the three service delivery models, providing working solutions and good practice examples.

The resource addresses:

- The benefits of multi-agency working.
- Success factors for effective multi-agency working.
- Toolkits for managers and practitioners.
- Case study examples
- A common language glossary.
- The roles and responsibilities of different agencies.

The Children's Workforce Development Council has now developed a framework called *Championing Children*. It establishes a common understanding about the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed by leaders and managers of integrated or multi-agency children's services.

For more resources and information:
visit the Children's Workforce Development
Council website: www.cwdcouncil.org.uk,
or the Every Child Matters website:
www.ecm.gov.uk.

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information sharing guidance

Fact sheet



Sharing information is essential to enable early intervention for people who need additional services to achieve positive outcomes. It is vital for providing effective and efficient services that are coordinated around the needs of an individual or family and for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of individuals.

It is important that practitioners understand why, when and how they should share information so that they can do so confidently and appropriately as part of their day-to-day practice.

Background

Improving information sharing practice is a cornerstone of the government's strategy to improve outcomes for all people. This is exemplified in the *Every Child Matters* strategy (2003) and in more recent policy and guidance including the *HM Government Information Sharing Vision Statement* (2006), the *Children's Plan* (2007) and the *Think Family* reports (2006, 2008).

The government recognises it is important people remain confident their personal data is kept safe and secure and practitioners maintain the privacy rights of the individual, whilst sharing information to deliver better services.

Many practitioners recognise the importance of information sharing and there is much good practice. However there is also uncertainty

around the legal framework, particularly as children's services move towards more multi-agency working.

Information Sharing: Practitioners' guide (2006) was the first cross-government guidance for practitioners across the whole of the children's workforce. This guidance has now been updated to extend its relevance to practitioners working with adults and families as well as children and young people.

Aims of the guidance

Most decisions to share information require professional judgement. The information sharing guidance aims to improve practice by giving practitioners clear advice on when and how they can share information, and help them to understand the circumstances when sharing information is inappropriate. The guidance seeks to provide clarity on the legal framework for information sharing at the front-line and to develop practitioners' understanding and confidence in sharing information professionally and lawfully. It also complements and supports wider policies to improve information sharing across services for children and adults.

Who is the guidance for?

The guidance is intended for practitioners who have to make decisions about sharing personal information on a case-by-case basis whether they are:

- working in the public, private or third sector;
- providing services to children, young people, adults and/or families; or
- working as an employee, a contractor or a volunteer.

This includes front-line staff working in health, education, schools, social care, youth work, early years, family support, offending and criminal justice, police, advisory and support services, culture and leisure. It is also for managers and advisers who support practitioners in their decision making and for others with responsibility for information governance.

The guidance may be less relevant for staff in agencies or government departments whose information sharing practice is governed by statute and specific policies or agreements.

Guidance content

- *Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers*;
- *Information Sharing: Pocket guide* - a summary of the key decision making considerations;
- *Information Sharing: Case examples* - illustrating best practice in information sharing situations;

- *Information Sharing: Training materials* - available for local agency and multi-agency training, and for use by training providers; and
- *Information Sharing: Further guidance on legal issues* - a summary of the laws affecting information sharing.

Developing the guidance

The development of the cross-government guidance was led jointly by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Communities and Local Government. Representatives from a wide range of government departments, professional and regulatory bodies and statutory and voluntary agencies across health, education, social care and justice also contributed to the development of the guidance.

Endorsing the guidance

The guidance has been formally endorsed by a wide range of organisations across all sectors.

A copy of the guidance and further details about the endorsements can be obtained from www.ecm.gov.uk/informationsharing

For more resources and information visit the Children's Workforce Development Council website: www.cwdcouncil.org.uk or the Every Child Matters website: www.ecm.gov.uk

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service directories

Fact sheet

Online local-area service directories enable practitioners to access up-to-date details of the services available to meet the needs of children and young people.

Background

Part of the Information Sharing and Assessment funding given to local authorities in 2003 was for the setting up and maintenance of service directories.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children (December 2004) reinforced the importance of the service directory in helping children and families access services to meet their needs and enabling practitioners to make informed referrals.

What is a service directory?

A service directory is a comprehensive online information-bank of all types of children's and young people's services available in a local area. It should be easily searchable, and should include a broad range of preventative services from providers in voluntary and statutory agencies.

Basic content should include:

- contact details of local providers;
- eligibility criteria;
- geographical location;
- referral procedures.

By providing this information, the service directory should contribute to the reduction in the number of inappropriate and misdirected referrals.

Who will use the service directory?

The online service directory should be widely available and easily accessible to practitioners from statutory and voluntary sectors.

Children, young people and families should also be able to access the directory in an easy to read format.

Accessibility

Access should be web-based but could also include a telephone helpline or print version, although the costs and difficulties of maintaining an up-to-date print based directory may be prohibitive.

Many local areas have placed their service directories on their existing local authority website whilst others have created a new site and given it a title appropriate to local community circumstances (eg Help 4 You).

Some of the established services directories span local authority boundaries providing information about services across a wide geographic area.

The Childcare Act 2006 gives a duty to local authorities to provide information to parents, or prospective parents, on childcare and other services in their area that will enable them to identify sources of support and help for children and young people.

Keeping the service directory up-to-date

Responsibility needs to be allocated to an individual or team to ensure that the service directory is kept up-to-date. As a minimum, the directory should be updated annually. The procedure followed in local authorities varies but includes:

For practitioners:

- individual practitioners being responsible for updating their own contact details;
- departmental responsibility;
- agency responsibility;

For local authorities:

- dedicated individual team;
- website team.

Some areas have also joined with providers of other directories, such as their local Connexions and/or Children's Information Services, to develop and maintain their service directories and avoid duplication of effort.

Research in to the development of service directories and the links made with Children's Information Services was carried out by the National Family and Parenting Institute between September 2005 and March 2006. The report sets out twelve key principles to govern good practice in the development and sustainability of directories and includes case studies from 16 local authorities to illustrate these principles.

The full report 'Linking up Directories of Children's Services' (RR731) and the accompanying brief (RB731) are available to download from www.dcsf.gov.uk/research.

For more resources and information: visit the Children's Workforce Development Council website: www.cwdcouncil.org.uk, or the Every Child Matters website: www.ecm.gov.uk.

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