

ContactPoint

Information for young people and parents

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www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/contactpoint

Version 2

Below is some important information for parents and young people about ContactPoint, and also their rights about the information held on the system.

All children and young people should get the best possible start in life. ContactPoint aims to make services better for children and young people, by helping people to work together.

ContactPoint is a contacts list for people who work with children and young people. It aims to make it easier for them to work as a team.

ContactPoint is part of the Government's Every Child Matters plan, which all local authorities follow.

How will ContactPoint benefit children?

ContactPoint will help professionals to contact each other quickly if a child needs support. If professionals working with a child know about each other they can:

- work together, which means that a child or a family doesn't have to explain the same things lots of different times, which can be upsetting
- make sure that every child is getting the support they need
- find the right support quickly, before problems get more serious
- make sure they are not doing work already being done by others.

ContactPoint will also help children and young people who use services in different areas or move between areas.

Children, young people and families should be at the centre of what is happening, and have a say in the services and support they get.



What information is held on ContactPoint?

- Name, address, date of birth, gender and ID number for every child in England up to their 18th birthday
- Name and contact details for each child's parents/carers
- Name and contact details for their school and their doctor's surgery
- Name and contact details for other services (e.g. health visitor) that are working with a child
- It will show if a worker is a 'lead professional' and/or if they have worked with a child (and their family) to do a Common Assessment Framework (*go to our website if you want to find out more about these*).

ContactPoint cannot hold any details like doctor's notes or school records.

Some young adults who need extra help or support can stay on ContactPoint past their 18th birthday, but only with the person's permission and only for specific reasons.

When information is taken off ContactPoint it will be locked away in an archive for six years and then deleted.

Sensitive services

If a sexual health, drug, alcohol or mental health worker is working with a child or young person, their contact details will only go on ContactPoint if that young person (and/or their parent/carer where appropriate) agrees. But ContactPoint will not show the name or contact details for that service – it will just say that one or more 'sensitive services' are involved.

If other professionals working with that child or young person want to get in touch with the 'sensitive service', they will have to ask a local ContactPoint manager to do this for them. It will then be up to the young person and the 'sensitive service' professional to decide whether they should talk to the other worker.

Why do all children in England have to be on ContactPoint?

Between 3 and 4 million children and young people in England need extra support at any one time, but no-one knows exactly which children are going to need this support or when they will need it. The purpose of ContactPoint is to help make sure all children and young people can get extra support if and when they need it. ContactPoint can also help to make sure that every child is being educated and is registered with a doctor (or has access to medical help).

Can I see the information held about me on ContactPoint?

Yes. The Data Protection Act 1998 gives you the right to ask to see personal information that is held about you. This is called a Subject Access Request. You have to make a Subject Access Request in writing and may have to pay a small charge. You need to send your request to the Data Protection Manager at your local authority, or



write to the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

You can also ask for your information on ContactPoint to be put right if you think it is wrong.

To find out more about the Data Protection Act go to www.ico.gov.uk

Who will use ContactPoint?

ContactPoint will only be used by:

- People whose job it is to help children and young people – such as a doctor, a school nurse or a youth worker. In most cases, only a few people in each organisation will have access to ContactPoint. So for example, not all people in a school will need to use it: it may only be the head teacher and a special educational needs coordinator (SENCO)
- People whose job it is to look after the ContactPoint system. This is a very small number of people who need to make sure it is working properly and that the information is correct. Most of these people will work in local councils.

Everyone who uses ContactPoint has to be security cleared and trained before they can use it. They will also need a user name, a password, a PIN and a security token. They must give a reason to look at a child's record.

What happens after someone has looked at ContactPoint?

ContactPoint will only show the contact details of professionals/services working with a child. A professional may feel they need to contact and talk to another professional to make sure that child is getting all the support they need. People should talk to the child/family about what they are doing and ask permission (known as 'consent') before they talk to other professionals. Everyone working with children must respect their confidentiality and privacy.

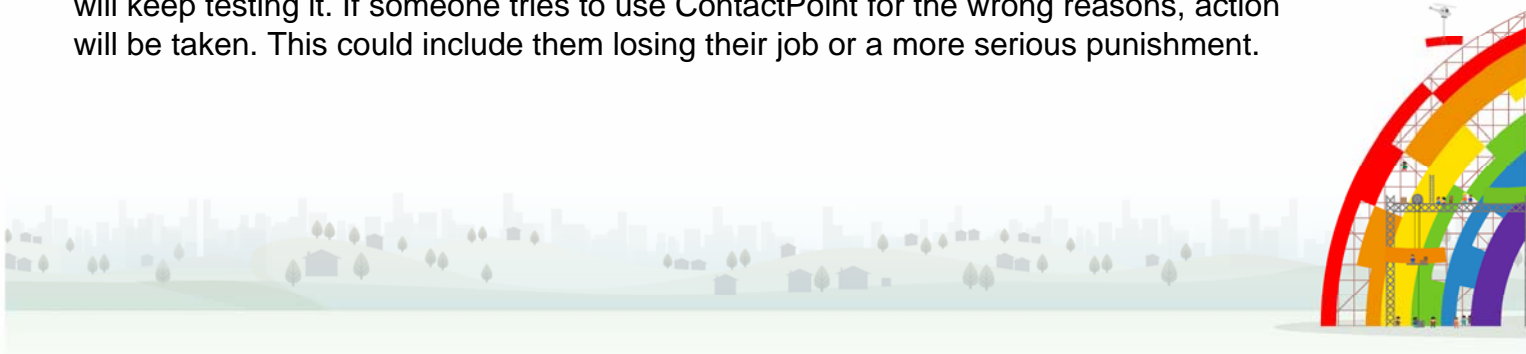
In very few cases, they might not be able to ask permission. For example, they might have to talk to another professional urgently if they think a child is in danger or seriously ill.

Everyone who works with children and young people must follow these rules. If you want to know more about these rules go to www.ecm.gov.uk/informationsharing

Keeping information safe

ContactPoint uses the latest technology and security measures to make sure information is safe and that it can only be used by people who need to see it.

ContactPoint will be checked to make sure it is being used properly. Security experts will keep testing it. If someone tries to use ContactPoint for the wrong reasons, action will be taken. This could include them losing their job or a more serious punishment.



Shielding

Some people may have information about their location (e.g. their address) hidden on ContactPoint – this is called shielding. It is for people who are at risk of significant harm, such as victims of domestic violence who are now living in a place of safety. Shielding is used in other systems, not just ContactPoint.

In most cases professionals will ask for a shield to be applied to a record. Local authorities have been working with local agencies and services to identify records that should be shielded. In January, two qualified, trained people in every local authority began shielding records on ContactPoint.

Anyone who has reason to believe their own/their child's record should be shielded on ContactPoint can contact their local authority. Local authorities will apply the reasons set out in guidance when deciding whether to shield a record. A fact sheet about shielding is available from our website.

Where has the information come from? How will it be kept up-to-date?

The information on ContactPoint comes from the computer systems that different services use (national and local). This includes systems in health, education, youth justice and voluntary organisations. ContactPoint will usually be updated automatically from these systems so that information only has to be entered once. So for example, if a doctor updates an address in their system because a child has moved, that address will automatically be updated on ContactPoint. ContactPoint will not hold any detailed information such as doctors' notes, school records or assessments.

Services that hold information about you have to keep your information safe and up-to-date by law.

The national systems that have provided basic information to ContactPoint are: the General Register Office (register of births and deaths), the Department for Children, Schools and Families' schools census, the Department for Work and Pensions' child benefit database and the NHS Personal Demographics Service, which has provided GP practice information.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and local authorities

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and local authorities are responsible for ContactPoint. We are all 'data controllers' for ContactPoint for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998. Each local authority looks after the information of children living in their area.

Legal basis

Access to and use of ContactPoint, and all information held on it, is covered by law: Section 12 of the Children Act 2004 provides the legal basis for ContactPoint. Other relevant legislation includes the Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 2000 and the Computer Misuse Act 1990.



For further information

To get more information about ContactPoint you can:

Contact your local council – visit www.directgov.uk for contact details

OR

Contact the Department for Children, Schools and Families

- Tel: 0870 000 2288
- Email: info@dczf.gsi.gov.uk
- Write to The Department for Children, Schools and Families, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT

OR

- Visit our website – www.ecm.gov.uk/contactpoint - where you will find a range of information and related documents. These include:
 - ContactPoint fact sheet and leaflet for young people and parents (each one provides a short summary about ContactPoint)
 - ContactPoint shielding fact sheet
 - ContactPoint fact sheet (general information about ContactPoint)
 - ContactPoint Q&A
 - Examples of how ContactPoint will help improve services for children and young people.

For independent advice about data protection, privacy and data-sharing issues, visit the Information Commissioner's website at: www.ico.gov.uk or write to Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

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