

What is ContactPoint?

ContactPoint is a contacts list for professionals who work with children and young people. It will provide them with a quick way to find out who else is working with the same child, making it easier for them to work as a team and deliver more coordinated support.

It is part of the Department for Children, Schools and Families' Every Child Matters plan, which all councils follow. It will come into use across England across from the start of 2009.

How will ContactPoint benefit children?

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

- make sure that every child is getting the support they need;
- find the right support quickly, before problems get more serious;
- 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 distressing; and
- make sure they are not duplicating work already being done by others.

It will also help children and young people who access services in different local authority areas or move between areas.

Children, young people families should always be at the centre of what is happening, and have a say in the services and support they get. **Kelly's story** at the end of this document gives just one example of how ContactPoint can help.

What information will be on ContactPoint?

ContactPoint will only hold the following information:

- name, address, date of birth and gender of every child in England up to their 18th birthday;
- name and contact details for each child's parents or carers; their school and their doctor's surgery;
- contact details for other services (e.g. health visitor) that are working with a child and, if there is one, a lead professional.

It will show if a child has or has had an assessment made under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the contact details for the professional who has it. But it will not show the CAF itself.

Some young adults who need extra help or support can stay on ContactPoint past their 18th birthday but only with their permission and only for specific reasons. When information is taken off ContactPoint it will be locked away in the 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 be passed to ContactPoint if that young person (and/or their parent/carer) agrees that it can. 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.

Shielding

Some people may have some of their details hidden on ContactPoint to prevent their location being identified – this is called shielding. It’s for people who are at risk of significant harm, such as victims of domestic violence. The shielding concept is used by lots of systems, not just ContactPoint.

In most cases practitioners will ask for a shield to be applied for a child or parent. The Department for Children Schools and Families and local authorities are working with local agencies and services to shield necessary records before ContactPoint is used by practitioners. This work started in January.

If anyone is concerned, and has reason to believe a child should be shielded on ContactPoint will be able to contact their local authority. Local authorities need to apply the criteria set out in statutory guidance to determine whether they should shield the record on ContactPoint.

Can I see the information held about me on ContactPoint?

Yes. The Data Protection Act 1998 gives you the right to see personal information that is held about you. This is called a Subject Access Request. You may have to pay a small charge. You have to make a Subject Access Request in writing.

You can also ask for your information on ContactPoint to be put right if you think something on there 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. We think that only a few people in each organisation will have access to ContactPoint. For example, in a school, ContactPoint will only be available to some workers whose job it is to help children and who need to talk to other professionals.
- People whose job it is to look after the ContactPoint system itself. 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.

After someone has looked at ContactPoint, and wants to contact someone, what happens then?

ContactPoint will 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 working with you should always talk to you about what they are doing and ask your permission (known as 'consent') before they talk to anyone else. Everyone working with you must respect your 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

Will it be secure? How will access be controlled?

Making sure that ContactPoint is kept safe is extremely important. ContactPoint will use the latest technology and security measures. These measures make sure that information is stored safely, and that it can only be used by the people who need to use it.

The following rules apply to anyone who will have access to ContactPoint.

- It can only be used by people who need it to do their job
- They must have passed security checks and been trained
- They must have a user name, a password, a PIN and a security token.
- They must give a reason to look at a record
- They will automatically have their details recorded – who they are and what they looked at. This is called an audit trail.
- The audit trail will be looked at regularly to make sure ContactPoint is being used in the right way.
- People can be prosecuted if they have been found to misuse ContactPoint.

Where will 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 existing systems (national and local) 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 information will 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.

If you would like to see a list of the local computer systems that provide information to ContactPoint, please go to www.cornwall.gov.uk for services delivered from Cornwall e.g. Connexions, health, Youth Offending Teams, etc. Systems on Scilly include those provided by Five Islands School, Children's Social Care, Medical Centre and Police.

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 (whether at school or home) and is registered with a doctor (or has access to medical help).

The Department for Children Schools and Families and local authorities

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and local authorities are responsible for ContactPoint. It will be one system with lots of sections. Each local authority looks after the information of children living in their area. Section 12 of the Children Act 2004 provides the legal basis for ContactPoint.

For further information

For further information and examples of how ContactPoint will help improve services go to:

www.scilly.gov.uk or contact the ContactPoint manager on Scilly:

Trish O'Neill

Town Hall

St Marys

Isles of Scilly

Tr21 0LW

Tel: 01720 424364

Email: to'neill@scilly.gov.uk

Or contact:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families, Sanctuary Buildings,
Great Smith Street,
London,
SW1P 3BT
tel: 0870 000 2288

Kelly's Story

Learning Mentor Jane helps Kelly with her schoolwork. Kelly's been falling behind and not doing her homework. She's also missing lessons. She gets upset sometimes and then her teachers call her rude and aggressive. Jane wants to help but doesn't know what is wrong

Kelly is 15. She has 3 younger brothers and sisters. She has to look after her family because her mum is sick (her dad left a few years ago and she doesn't see him anymore). A few adults have been asking her questions but she doesn't want to tell anyone she can't cope. She's also been hiding things from her mum (like letters from school) because she doesn't want to worry her. She's scared of what might happen. She doesn't want her family to be split up.

Social Worker Paul started helping Kelly when her mum got sick. After a while Kelly told Paul her mum's much better and everything is fine. They agreed he didn't need to help them anymore. Paul didn't know how much work Kelly is doing at home or about problems at school.

Housing officer, Tim noticed the family haven't been paying their rent for a while. He's worried about them. If they miss too many payments they might have to move out. He doesn't know that Kelly's mum is ill.

With ContactPoint

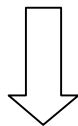
Jane looks on ContactPoint. She sees Paul and Tim's names and job titles. She asks Kelly if it's ok if she contacts them. She's explained that there's nothing to worry about, but that there might be things that they could help her together on and that they won't do anything without telling Kelly. Kelly says it's ok.

Tim gets a call from Jane. After checking it is ok with Kelly, Tim talks to Jane.

Kelly is a bit nervous when Jane asks her if she can talk to the others, but Jane explains clearly how they could help her, and that they wouldn't do anything without talking to her first and letting her know what's happening. Kelly knows that she needs help and she agrees.

Even though Paul has stopped supporting Kelly, his name is still listed in ContactPoint (It will stay on for a year).

Paul gets a call from Jane. After checking it is ok with Kelly, Paul tells Jane about how he was helping the family.



After talking to Tim and Paul, they agree that they should all meet and that Kelly and her mum should be at the meeting. Kelly and Mum agree.

What happened next...

Jane has been able to come up with a plan to help Kelly with her schoolwork. Now she knows about Kelly's situation at home, they've been able to set different homework deadlines and better times to meet up. Also, because Kelly is getting more help at home, she's a lot happier at school and her behaviour has got better.

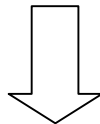
Kelly now understands better what everyone's job is in helping her and about the kind of help and support they can offer her.

Kelly is now part of a young carer's group. It's helped her a lot to get to know other young people in her situation. She's also getting a lot more help around the house, so she has time to spend with her friends and is getting back on track with her schoolwork. She's much happier as she's not worrying about everything.

Paul was able to get a young carer's group involved. He's also arranged for extra help with housework so Kelly doesn't have to do everything

Tim has been able to get help for the family to pay the bills until Kelly's mum is well enough to go back to work. They also came up with a plan about how to catch up with the rent payments they've missed.

Libby works for the **young carer's group**. She is now part of the team that is helping Kelly and her family. Her name is now listed on ContactPoint



Without ContactPoint, it might have taken these professionals a long time to find each other, or some of them might never have got in touch. This meant that it would have taken much longer to get Kelly and her family the help and support they needed. Kelly's problems could have got a lot more serious by the time they got help.