

## CONTACTPOINT IMPLEMENTATION

### Summary of Key Issues:

- ContactPoint will be a national online directory which will provide a quick way for those working with children to find out who else is working with the same child.
- ContactPoint will hold name and contact details for all children in England (up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and beyond that date in certain limited circumstances), their parents/carers and practitioners working with a child.
- This directory is being developed with the aim of improving services for children and young people by facilitating early intervention and prevention.
- Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for implementation in the County.
- Deployment in Oxfordshire from June 2009; ContactPoint Team trained in June 2009, training of other professionals to use and access ContactPoint planned to start in November 2009.

### Overview

ContactPoint will be a national online directory which will provide a quick way for those working with children to find out who else is working with the same child. It will hold name and contact details for all children in England (up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and beyond that date in certain limited circumstances), their parents/carers and practitioners working with a child. This directory is being developed with the aim of improving services for children and young people by facilitating early intervention and prevention.

ContactPoint is being introduced across England in phases, with the first practitioners to use the directory being those in 'early adopter' areas, representing local authorities in the North West of England. It is anticipated that these authorities will start using the system from April 2009.

Oxfordshire's deployment slot is currently June 2009 and we anticipate that the first group of local practitioners will start using ContactPoint during the Autumn 2009.

## **What is the legislative basis for ContactPoint?**

Section 12 of the Children Act 2004 provides the legislative basis for establishing ContactPoint. The Children Act 2004 Information Database (England) Regulations 2007<sup>1</sup> came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2007.

The Regulations provide for the establishment and operation of ContactPoint under section 12 of the Children Act 2004. They specify what information will be held; who must or can provide it; how long it can be retained; who can be granted access; and how accuracy will be maintained.

## **Local Implementation Programme**

Local implementation is the responsibility of local authorities across England. In Oxfordshire we have established a small project team who have actively been engaging with partner organisations for some time, including the PCT, voluntary organisations, Thames Valley Police and maintained/independent schools.

Our main focus is currently is three fold:

- The identification of priority staff teams who will be trained to access ContactPoint from November 2009
- The identification and preparation of local data sources to be loaded onto ContactPoint from October 2009
- The identification of those children's records that will need to be shielded once early adopter Authorities start using ContactPoint.

## **Shielding**

There are limited circumstances where shielding would be applicable. Chiefly these are when there are strong reasons, for example where a practitioner has reason to believe that not doing so is likely to:

- place a child at increased risk of significant harm;

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<sup>1</sup> The Regulations [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi\\_20072182\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20072182_en_1)

- put a child's placement at risk (in the case of adoption)
- place an adult at risk of significant harm;
- prejudice the prevention or detection of a serious crime; or,
- provide a link between pre- and post-adoption identities.

Such cases could arise for example where:

- a child/young person is adopted where there is little or no contact with birth parent(s) or wider family members;
- a child/young person and/or their parent/carer, are fleeing abuse or domestic violence; and/or
- a child/young person and/or their parent/carer or family member are subject to police protection.

Basic information about ContactPoint is available on the Oxfordshire County Council website and more detailed information will be posted as we get closer to our deployment slot in the summer. Information is also available on the every Child Matters web site - [www.ecm.gov.uk/contactpoint](http://www.ecm.gov.uk/contactpoint)

Attached with this briefing paper is a copy of the DCSF ContactPoint fact sheet aimed at parent/carers, children and young people. For further information please contact [ContactPoint@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ContactPoint@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or Lindsay Russell, Local Implementation Manager on telephone number 01865 816239 or Rosalind Pearce, ContactPoint Project Manager on telephone number 01865 81065.