

ContactPoint - What's it all about?

ContactPoint is part of a big plan called 'Every Child Matters'. The plan involves everyone who works with children, and is about making sure that all children and young people can have a good life, whoever they are, and no matter what problems they may face.

At the moment, it can take a long time for a professional (e.g. a doctor or a social worker) to find out who else is working with the same child, which means a child may have to wait a long time to get the help they need. This is where ContactPoint will help.

ContactPoint will be like a computer-based phone book. It will help people who work with children to quickly find out who else is supporting the same child. It will only hold information such as name and contact details.

Why professionals need to talk to each other

If the people who are working with a child can find each other easily they can:

- make sure that every child is getting the support they need;
- find the right support early, before problems get bigger; and,
- work together, which means that a child (or family) doesn't have to explain the same things lots of times to different people.

People should only talk about a child if the child (or parent/carer) agrees. But there may be times when they have to talk to someone urgently, such as if a child is in danger or seriously ill.

The information on ContactPoint

ContactPoint will only hold *simple information* such as:

- Name, address, and date of birth of everyone in England up to their 18th birthday;
- Name and address for each child's:
 - Parents or carers;
 - School and doctor;
 - Other services (e.g. health visitor).

By law, ContactPoint cannot hold any details like doctors' notes or school records.

Who can use ContactPoint

ContactPoint will only be used by:

- people whose job it is to help children and young people – this could be a school nurse or a youth worker.
- people whose job it is to make sure ContactPoint is accurate and up-to-date.

Keeping ContactPoint safe

ContactPoint will meet tough security standards and experts will keep testing it.

Before professionals can use ContactPoint they must:

- be trained to make sure they know how to use it properly and securely.
- have passed strict security checks, and have their own user name, password, PIN and security token.

There will be checks to make sure ContactPoint is always being used by the right people in the right way. If someone uses ContactPoint without permission or good reason, they will be punished.

How long a record will be on ContactPoint

A young person's record will be removed from ContactPoint when they turn 18 (apart from some young people who can choose to stay on until they are 25).

Children and young people can see their record

Children and young people, or their mum, dad or carer when acting on a child's behalf (e.g. when a child is very young), can see their record and ask to have it corrected if they believe something on there – e.g. an address - is wrong.

When it will be ready

ContactPoint deployment will start from early 2009.


ContactPoint
because every child matters

Every Child Matters
Change for Children

For more information go to www.ecm.gov.uk/contactpoint

