

ContactPoint

because every child matters

ContactPoint Newsletter April 2008

Introducing ContactPoint in Worcestershire



ContactPoint is a major national initiative to safeguard children and young people and to ensure they receive services

as quickly as possible. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) is leading on this project however Local Authorities are responsible for the implementation of ContactPoint across the country.

A lot of work has already gone into preparing for the launch of ContactPoint in Worcestershire by way of engaging with partners, however there is much more to do. This newsletter provides you with information about the ContactPoint project along with some of the key dates.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with one of the key contacts listed in this newsletter who will be happy to help.

Gail Quinton

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Director of Children's Services

What is ContactPoint?

ContactPoint is a national database of all children resident in England, and is part of the wider Every Child Matters programme. It will provide a way for people working with children or young people to find out who else is working with the same child.

ContactPoint will contain basic information on each child up to their 18th birthday. In certain circumstances, a young person's record could stay on ContactPoint up until their 25th birthday. It will also contain contact details for parents and carers and for practitioners and organisations working with a child.

It will identify whether a practitioner is a lead professional and/or whether an assessment under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) exists.

The legislative basis for ContactPoint is section 12 of the Children Act 2004 and supporting regulations.

The ContactPoint system will 'go live' in Worcestershire at the end of July 2009 and will initially be populated with data from national sources including the DCSF and National Partners (Department of Health, Office for National Statistics and Department for Work and Pensions).

Further information regarding timescales can be found within the timeline on the back page.

Who will have access to ContactPoint?

Only practitioners (i.e. Children's Services and school staff, Police, YOS, Connexions, Health etc.) who need to know specific details on a child as part of their job will have access. They must have a current enhanced criminal record bureau check (e-CRB) and will need to complete a comprehensive training package.

The user will be given a dedicated security token, which will allow them to access ContactPoint and view other professionals working with the child.

There will be no case information about the child on ContactPoint. E.g. Adoption case notes would not be available. Indeed, some records will be 'shielded' in order to protect vulnerable children or young people. More information about shielding can be found overleaf.



What about vulnerable children and young people?

ContactPoint will not hold any child assessment or case information relating to a child. However, it will not be appropriate for all records to be accessible to all ContactPoint users. Shielding is a facility that restricts access to information held on ContactPoint to protect the whereabouts of vulnerable children. It is the Local Authority's responsibility to determine and review shielded records.

Each Local Authority (LA) is responsible for identifying the children and young people records that will need to be shielded within their area. This will be based on data held centrally and through ongoing engagement with partner organisations. Worcestershire is currently working with partners to ensure ongoing identification of these records. A local policy has also been devised to aid the shielding activity and to ensure compliance with DCSF guidance.

The DCSF advises that shielding must be carried out on a case by case basis and that it should be applied when not doing so could:

- Place a child at increased risk of significant harm e.g. escaping domestic violence.
- Place an adult at significant harm e.g. Witness Protection Scheme.
- Prejudice the prevention or detection of a serious crime e.g. Request made by Police as part of a 'current' investigation.
- Provide a link between pre or post adoption identities e.g. All post adoption records will be shielded.

Each LA is required to nominate two individuals who will be responsible for shielding and will receive formal training from the DCSF. Worcestershire has already identified their shielders and training has been completed.

Once records have been identified and meet the criteria listed above, these records will be shielded on ContactPoint by the designated shielders.

It is vital that these records are identified and shielded on ContactPoint before Early Adopter Local Authorities 'go live'. Please see overleaf to find out more information on Early Adopters.

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How will the data be collected?

ContactPoint will initially be populated by national data sources from Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Department of Health (DoH).

In time, this data will then be enriched by feeding ContactPoint with data from local systems used by staff in the Children's Services Directorate as well as local systems operated by partner agencies.

Nationally, data management tools will be used to remove duplicates from the main ContactPoint database and the data will be cleansed from different sources.

Once the database is 'live' to practitioners it will be refreshed by automated data feeds from the national and local data providers.

How accurate is our data?

A great deal of work has been undertaken to date to ensure our data is accurate.

The Local Authority is now exchanging data with schools on a daily basis. A major review of all Children's Services systems is ongoing and work continues on improving the processes around data collection to improve our data quality both for the benefits of ContactPoint and our local practitioners working with our children and young people. It is important for both the Local Authority and partner agencies to ensure our data is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. The consequences of providing poor data could mean practitioners (across England) making misinformed decisions, which could impact on the needs of a particular child.

Useful Web sites:

Visit Every Child Matters website: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/contactpoint
OR

Visit WCC (Worcestershire County Council) website: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/home/wcc-education-contactpoint



Joe Colleran - DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families).

I am the Implementation Co-ordinator for the West Midlands region and part of my role is to meet up with the Project Managers for each of the 14 West Midlands Local Authorities on a regular basis to discuss the pre-deployment requirements of the ContactPoint project.

I also deal with any issues and questions which may arise and escalate them to the National ContactPoint Team as required. Worcestershire have been consistent and met each of their milestones within the timescales provided and we are, as a region on target for our deployment in 2009.

Early Adopters

A group of Local Authorities in the north-west of the country will be deploying ContactPoint earlier than the rest in order to fully test the system and the process of deployment. This group are called the Early Adopters and they are scheduled to 'go live' in March 2009.

The Early Adopters are currently undertaking an evaluation of ContactPoint in order to establish best practice principles for the remaining LA's when deploying ContactPoint locally.



ContactPoint Implementation Timeline

Date	Stage	Description
January 2009	System Delivered	Initial version of ContactPoint delivered by Capgemini (the manufacturer) containing data from the DCSF, DWP, ONS and DoH.
February 2009	Shielding Training	Two users from each LA trained to use ContactPoint in order to carry out the pre-deployment activity of shielding.
February 2009 onwards	Shielding Process	Each LA carries out the shielding of records based on information provided by partners. This is an ongoing process as records must continue to be shielded to protect vulnerable children and young people.
March 2009	Early Adopter ContactPoint Management Teams	Early Adopter LA ContactPoint Management Teams will gain access to ContactPoint and receive formal training from DCSF. This stage is dependent on all LA's successfully shielding their records during the shielding process.
March 2009 – August 2009	Early Adopter Users	During this time, access will be provided to the Early Adopter practitioners. This will involve registering and training users and ensuring all the relevant policies and procedures are in place to ensure ContactPoint is used appropriately.
January 2009 – September 2009	Early Adopter Evaluation	From January 2009 until all users are live in the Early Adopter regions, an evaluation will be carried out to charter the progress of these LA's. This will be used to inform best practice for the remaining LA's.
June 2009 – August 2009	Non-Early Adopter ContactPoint Management Teams	At this stage, Management Teams within each non-EA authority will gain access to ContactPoint and be provided with formal training from the DCSF.
October 2009 – January 2010	Other Users	All remaining practitioners will be registered and trained to use the system during this time. All authorities must ensure they have the appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure appropriate use of ContactPoint.
January 2010	Steady State	It is anticipated that by this stage, ContactPoint will be a fully functional database containing data from National Partners as well as all LA's in England and all practitioners requiring access will be able to do so and will be fully trained on the system.

