

# North Somerset Community and Peer Group Conference 2025

## Introduction and scope

Sharing information is vital for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It is essential for ensuring effective and efficient services are coordinated around the needs of children or young people, and their family or community.

In North Somerset, we encourage a culture where information is shared with confidence as part of routine service delivery on community support and agree that:

‘Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.’

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

All information sharing needs to be managed in ways which respect a person’s right to privacy and confidentiality and must be carried out in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Seven Golden rules of information sharing (DFE 2018).

## What are Community Stakeholders?

Community Stakeholders are people or organisations who care about and want to see good community relationships in a place where they live or work. They may also be a person, service or organisation who has an agreement with the Council to contribute to the safety and well-being of children and young people in the area in which they live or work.

Section 11 of the Children Act 2001 places: duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Community Stakeholders are asked to share information with Devon Children and Families Services, through referrals, assessments and planning in neighbourhood and community conferences in the event that there are worries about risk to a family, child, group of children or a location where harm may be happening to young people.

In the event that concerns arise regarding harm or risk of harm, to a child or group of children or a location, Community Stakeholders are required to contact the Devon MASH on: 0345 155 1071 and give as much information as you can. Your information will be passed immediately to a manager who will decide the action needed and will normally respond to you within one hour. You must follow up your telephone call by sending a completed referral form to the MASH within 48 hours. If there are worries about a child or young person in an emergency, the Police should be contacted using the 999 system.

## **What the Council will do with the information shared**

Where there is sufficient information around risk to children and young people, the information provided will contribute to an assessment of the child or family, group of young people or location and support the development of a plan to create safety.

To protect your identity, you, your service or organisation will not be named to those receiving the intervention as the referrer of concern unless you explicitly consent for this to happen.

## **A Child and Family Assessment**

If the information provided relates to an individual child(ren) or a family, an assessment may be carried out by the department. As a community stakeholder or community guardian you, your service or organisation is unlikely to be involved further in the assessment process and will not receive any feedback about the intervention or outcome. This is due to the need to safeguard the confidentiality of children, young people and families who may be experiencing harm.

## **An Assessment Related to Multiple Young People**

If the information provided relates to multiple young people, an assessment may be carried out by the department. As a community stakeholder, given the need to protect young people's rights to confidentiality and dependent on the connection between any issue and you, your service or organisation, you may not be involved further in the assessment process. Likewise, to protect the confidentiality of those involved, you, your service or organisation will not be given any child or family-level information about any intervention with the group. You may be told on a need-to-know basis, whether or not an intervention will be taking place and how long this will be for. You may also be asked to monitor the impact of the intervention by sharing whether any problematic behaviour continues or whether any new behaviour arises. This information should be shared with the assessor who will review the intervention.

## A Location or Community Assessment

If the information provided relates to a location, an assessment may be carried out by the department. As a community stakeholder or Community Guardian during the assessment phase, you may be asked to help with tasks including, but not limited to: running a community survey or taking arms-length observations to contribute to information gathering.

At the end of the assessment, should it be concluded that this location is one in which young people are at risk of significant harm, you or a representative of your service or organisation may be invited to a Context Conference to consider the findings of the assessment and to contribute to a plan of intervention with the purpose of reducing harm to children and young people in the area. Any information shared at the Context Conference will be Private and Confidential and must not be disseminated further. You will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement on behalf of your service or organisation and may not be able to take away reports prepared. Any information that is disseminated must be stored in confidential files.

Context Protection Plans will be reviewed until all actions are complete and there is a measurable reduction of harm in the location or neighbourhood.

By attending a Context Conference, you agree to the confidentiality agreement on behalf of yourself, your service or organization, and to continue to be a Community Stakeholder or Community Guardian and consent to the advice and guidance and terms and conditions herein.