

Safeguarding and information sharing training for partner organisations

Safeguarding and information sharing training to improve the knowledge of partner organisations around the law and information sharing, including limitations of the “right to ask” process.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Organisational Prevention
Topic	Child sexual exploitation and abuse Leadership, development and learning Vulnerability and safeguarding
Organisation	Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary
HMICFRS report	PEEL 2023–25 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary
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Region	South East

Key details

Partners	Police Community safety partnership Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services) Education Health services Local authority Voluntary/not for profit organisation
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2023
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults Children and young people Families Victims Women

Aim

The aims of the training session are to:

- explain how the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) can be used to safeguard vulnerable individuals
- explain Clare's Law and Sarah's Law and their limitations
- encourage partners to share information appropriately without consent when there is a clear safeguarding concern

- explain the latest guidance from the government on information sharing from the information commissioners office
- provide confidence to partners to share information with those at risk in a lawful and appropriate manner without using the “right to ask” process

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the training session are to:

- improve the knowledge of the law and guidance on information sharing
- reduce the number of inappropriate “right to ask” applications

Description

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary conducted a review and identified two areas where partner agencies would benefit from information sharing training. The first was the sharing of intelligence using community partnership information (CPI) forms. The second was sharing information with the public using Clare's Law and Sarah's Law.

“Right to ask” is a component of the domestic violence disclosure scheme (DVDS), which allows an individual or concerned third party to ask the police to check if a current or former partner has a history of domestic abuse or violence.

Clare's Law, (DVDS), allows the public to request information about a partner's or ex-partner's history of domestic abuse.

Sarah's Law (child sex offender disclosure scheme), allows parents, carers, or guardians to ask the police for information about whether a specific individual has a record for child sexual offences.

The force had a concern that partners were being made aware of risk to members of the public around domestic abuse or child abuse, however instead of notifying the potential victim(s) directly, they would advise individuals to complete a “right to ask” application. The applications would often not be completed or processed, leaving the potential victim(s) at risk of harm.

The force worked with local children safeguarding partnerships and adult safeguarding boards to offer a training package.

The CPI training was developed by a sergeant using material available online, such as:

- data protection 2018
- Department of Education's working together to safeguard children
- Department of Education's information sharing advice for practitioners
- Information Commissioner's Office ten-step guide to information sharing

The session starts with two scenarios where partners have incorrectly used the "right to ask" process when information should have been shared directly. The session then covers freely available information and how to safeguard vulnerable individuals. At the end of the session the delegates revisit the scenarios to incorporate their learning and there is a question-and-answer (Q&A) section.

Since January 2023, the force have delivered over 30 sessions with an average attendance of 30-50 delegates. The 90-minute training session is hosted on Microsoft Teams and is available to local children safeguarding partnerships and adult safeguarding boards.

In addition to the general training offer, the force have received requests to deliver tailored session to:

- local adult social care teams
- national health service trusts
- local multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH)
- Ministry of Defence police
- out of area social services

There is no cost involved for planning or delivery the training session, except for the time offered by the police sergeant.

Overall impact

- to date, over 1,500 people have received the training
- anecdotal evidence has reported a reduction in the number of partner-prompted inappropriate "right to ask" applications
- positive feedback has been received in relation to the training sessions, with other forces attending and recommending attendance to their partners

- the force have been provided with examples of where the training has had a real-world impact, for example, an attendee used their knowledge gathered from the training to challenge a failure to share information for a vulnerable child with a partner agency
- the training has been cited innovative practice by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) in the 2023-2025 PEEL inspection report

Learning

- One local authority declined the training offer, as they believed the information sharing training should be delivered in-house. This local authority did allow the force to deliver the CPI training as a singular input. The other three local authority areas accepted the full training package offered.

Recommendations

- It is essential that there is flexibility in the availability of the delivery of the training. Some partners, such as General Practitioners (GPs) are not available to attend a training session during work hours. To resolve this, evening training sessions are also offered.
- Safeguarding training is more impactful if delivered by subject matter experts. It is essential to have a trainer who has a robust knowledge of the subject. The Q&A section of the training is useful for delegates to receive information on specific examples.

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