

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**26<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2008**

**Implementation of the national Contact Point system and implications  
for North Yorkshire County Council**

**Report by the Integrated Processes Team – Performance & Outcomes,  
Children and Young People’s Service**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update Members on the implementation of the national ContactPoint system following the update provided on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2007
- 1.2 To provide up to date information on the data to be held on ContactPoint and proposed security measures
- 1.3 To inform Members about North Yorkshire County Council’s responsibilities in relation to ContactPoint including media handling and public enquiries
- 1.4 To inform Members of the current progress and our key challenges

**2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Section 12 of the Children Act 2004 provided the regulations for a national index of all children in England to be established, named ContactPoint. Its purpose is to help people that work with children and young people identify who else is working with the same child quickly in order to facilitate information sharing and coordinated service delivery.
- 2.2 The Government estimates that around £88 million a year can be saved nationally by reducing the time practitioners spend trying to identify other colleagues working with the same child. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) intends ContactPoint to be the primary tool in achieving these efficiencies gains.
- 2.3 ContactPoint is a core element of the ‘Every Child Matters; Change for Children’ agenda. It is one of a suite of ‘tools’ that are being introduced nationally to help practitioners work in partnership and deliver effective joint working. ContactPoint complements, and is linked to, other initiatives such as the Common Assessment Framework, improved Information Sharing Arrangements and the Children’s Services Directory.

- 2.4 The implementation of ContactPoint is grant funded paid under section 12(1)(b) of the Children Act 2004, quarterly in arrears. The grant has been calculated on the following basis:

£23.5 million will be provided to 133 local authorities with a flat rate of £110,000 and the balance calculated on the basis of child population (0-17 years)

Indicative sums for local authority funding in 2009-10 and 2010-11 have been set at £27million and £15million respectively.

### **3.0 Information held on ContactPoint<sup>1</sup>**

- 3.1 ContactPoint will hold basic information on all children 0-18 years, and up to 25 years for certain groups of young people, namely Care Leavers and young people with complex disability. The following information will be held on ContactPoint for each child:

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Address
- Unique Identifier
- Parents/ Carer contact details
- Primary Health contact details (GP/ Health Visitor/ School Nurse as appropriate)
- School or Educational Setting contact details (where the child is of school age)
  
- Where a child is receiving additional services, the contact details for that service, and
- Where a child has a Common Assessment, a flag will be shown to highlight that has taken place.

There is no case information held on ContactPoint.

- 3.2 The information for ContactPoint will come from linking existing systems to ContactPoint.

- a) Nationally, child information will be provided from:

- the DCSF
- the Department of Health
- the Department for Work and Pensions
- the Home Office
- the Office of National Statistics
- the Ministry of Justice
- the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCS)
- National Voluntary Organisations: Barnardos, NSPCC and the

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<sup>1</sup> Further information can be found at: [www.ecm.gov.uk/contactpoint](http://www.ecm.gov.uk/contactpoint)

Children's Society.

- b) Locally, the following services will be expected to link their systems to ContactPoint:
- Education (including FE Colleges, Independent Schools and non-maintained Special Schools)
  - Social Care
  - Health (Primary Care/ Acute Trusts/ Mental Health)
  - Early Years Providers
  - Connexions
  - Police
  - Fire and Rescue
- c) Locally, the following services may, but are not required, to link to ContactPoint
- Registered Social Landlords/ Housing Trusts
  - Housing Departments
  - Voluntary and Community Organisation

#### **4.0 Management of ContactPoint and Local Accountabilities**

- 4.1 The DCSF have established a 'National Implementation Team' for ContactPoint and are responsible for the overall project management and IT development and technical security of the system. ContactPoint Guidance was finalised in July 2008 and is issued under section (12) of the Children Act 2004, and sets out the key statutory requirements of section 12 and the Children Act 2004 Information Database (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations).

##### Local Accountabilities

- 4.2 The DCSF has divided the national system into 150 'Local Implementation Areas', one of which is North Yorkshire. To support Local Authorities, the DCSF have also employed Regional Coordinators to monitor progress and facilitate with any arising issues. The Regional Coordinator for Yorkshire and Humberside is David Robbins, [David.Robbins@atkinsglobal.com](mailto:David.Robbins@atkinsglobal.com).
- 4.3 The Local Authority is responsible, on behalf of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, for establishing a ContactPoint Management Team, meeting national deadlines and managing the North Yorkshire 'section' of ContactPoint. The content of the North Yorkshire 'section' is defined as the records for all children and young people normally resident in North Yorkshire. Each LA in England is responsible for child records of children and young people who are understood to be ordinarily resident in the LA's area. For looked after children, the council with social services responsibility will be responsible for the child record. ContactPoint will automatically allocate records to a LA based on available data, or by agreement with the LA which previously had responsibility for the child record

- 4.4 Specific responsibilities for North Yorkshire County Council include working with partners to:
- Ensure the relevant local systems can link to ContactPoint
  - Ensure that each child record for children normally resident in North Yorkshire has good quality data
  - Identify, authorise, train and set up Users and monitor for misuse of the system
  - Ensure adherence to security policies
  - Ensure all Users have enhanced CRB checks
  - Communicate with all relevant stakeholders, including children young people and families about ContactPoint
  - Manage the complaints processes in relation to ContactPoint
- 4.5 The regulations provide for Local Authorities to manage ContactPoint on behalf of all partners, including ensuring other agencies staff do not misuse the system and that other agencies maintain accurate case records.

The Regulations place particular duties on local authorities relating to:

- The information to be held on ContactPoint;
- Those required or permitted to supply information;
- What information can be disclosed from ContactPoint;
- How long information can be held on ContactPoint;
- Ensuring the accuracy of the information;
- How to “participate” in the operation of ContactPoint.

The Regulations also place duties on local authorities and national partners relating to:

- Who can be given access to ContactPoint and
- The conditions on which access is granted.

## **5.0 Timeframe for Implementation**

- 5.1 ContactPoint deployment for early adopter authorities<sup>2</sup> is now planned to begin in January 2009. This is following a decision to postpone deployment announced on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2008. North Yorkshire, as part of deployment slot 2, will gain access to the national system in June/July 2009.
- 5.2 The decision to postpone deployment is not due to security concerns. ContactPoint security has been audited and approved at all stages. The deployment timetable has been reviewed as a result of issues

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<sup>2</sup> For further information on ContactPoint legislation see:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/delivering/services/contactpoint/legislation/>

identified in system testing. The purpose of testing is to uncover issues and deal with them before deployment. Further testing, including testing with users, will take place before the system is deployed.

## **6.0 Media Coverage & Public Communications**

- 6.1 A national communications team provides a range of support and guidance to assist delivery partners and their communications/press office colleagues with media management and activities. A PR helpline, Team and the DCSF Press Office are available to offer advice on handling any related media issue<sup>3</sup>.
- 6.2 Although media relations, by nature, are often reactive, where possible we aim to use the local media to enhance public understanding through proactive, planned media relations. Links have been established with the corporate Communications department within North Yorkshire County Council in order to ensure they are fully briefed on the possible media coverage and feel equipped to handle enquiries from the local and national press regarding ContactPoint and the wider agenda. The central communications team will also provide assistance with any local media coverage in which we choose to engage.
- 6.3 We continue to communicate with our stakeholders through the 'Integrated Processes Update' newsletter (an amalgamation of the pre-existing Child Index and CAF newsletters), which is distributed both electronically and in paper form to practitioners across the partnership. Through this tool we address negative press coverage of ContactPoint by providing clear and factual responses accusations of the project linking to the misuse of national data through a frequently asked question section.
- 6.4 The key points at which the public are likely to come across ContactPoint are through Fair Processing Notices, through interaction with services (where consent is required) and when they read about it in the media. We recognize that it is in these instances when the public may seek out reassurance from practitioners within the children's workforce or Members and it is essential that people feel able to deliver, or at least direct the public to, a satisfactory answer. By ensuring that our website has up-to-date and accessible information regarding ContactPoint and the related agendas, we are providing instant access to information which the public may require in reaction to negative media coverage. Specialist pages are available on the website on the Integrated Processes Agenda; Information for Parents, Information for Practitioners, Information for Children and Information for Young People.

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<sup>3</sup> Red IISaM Communications team: **020 7025 6663**,  
**[iisamteam@redconsultancy.com](mailto:iisamteam@redconsultancy.com)**

## 7.0 Current Progress

- 7.1 The Integrated Processes Team<sup>4</sup>, monitor the implementation of ContactPoint through a ContactPoint project plan and risk register, monthly submissions from which are sent to the DCSF to track our progress. Our progress is currently and has consistently been rated as 'green' indicating that we are on target to implement ContactPoint as specified through our project plan.
- 7.2 In addition to monthly submissions each Local Authority area has to submit a 'Local Authority Readiness Assessment' (LARA). The last submission was in April 2008. North Yorkshire was assessed as being ahead of expected targets and sits within the top 3 rated authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber region for ContactPoint readiness.
- 7.3 To date we have achieved the following key milestones:
- Completed a partnership-wide workforce analysis to understanding which roles will be 'users' of ContactPoint, their training requirements and whether they have the relevant security clearance required e.g. enhanced CRB checks/ secure IT access etc. This was completed in September 2007 and reviewed in May 2008.
  - Completed a ContactPoint Training Strategy, agreed through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Workforce Development Group.
  - Identifying the systems that will be required to link to ContactPoint, assessing their data quality and their ability to integrate with the ContactPoint system.
  - Completed and revised a ContactPoint Communications Strategy and Action Plan.

### Key milestones in progress:

- To ensure all processes and procedures that will be affected by the implementation of the national system are prepared and fully supported, we are completing a baseline review of existing processes. This review will act as a catalyst to examine current processes and align them for use with ContactPoint in order for the Local Authority to achieve ContactPoint organisational accreditation in due course.
- We are supporting the Systems Team within Children and Young People's Service as they prepare and train to become the ContactPoint Management Team when the system is fully deployed.

In addition to these milestones through the multi-agency Information Governance Group we are delivering the ContactPoint Data Quality

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<sup>4</sup> The Local Implementation Team for North Yorkshire comprises of the Integrated Children's Systems Manager, Integrated Processes Project Leader and Integrated Processes Officer

Strategy which focuses on improving data quality across our systems and a multi-agency ContactPoint Data Group are focusing on achieving accreditation of our data systems to enable local data feeds to ContactPoint.

These tasks will be completed over the summer period, and next focus will be improving data quality and establishing the roll out plan for North Yorkshire, including a comprehensive training strategy.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

- 8.1 That Members are briefed on progress and any arising issues as appropriate.
- 8.2 Public enquiries are directed to the Integrated Processes Team.