

The Importance of Sharing Information

Sharing information in the interests of children and families is an essential element of both early intervention and safeguarding. Information sharing and data protection is the responsibility of everyone who works with children and families in Croydon. A common factor in inquiries into a child's death/serious injury is often that key information was not shared.

All Croydon practitioners should understand how to share information legally and professionally. Understanding how to share information safely and securely provides support for practitioners and helps build their confidence in making decisions about those they are working with.

As a frontline practitioner and/or senior manager with safeguarding responsibilities, it is imperative that decisions about sharing personal information is done on a case-by-case basis. Practitioners working with adults who are responsible for children who may be in need, should evaluate the wider impact not sharing information could case.

In essence, if you are a professional sharing information with other professionals for the purpose of better outcomes for a child or their family, then you have lawful consent, even if you don't have consent from the families to do so. However, it is preferable to try to obtain consent unless it is deemed unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

Information Sharing

Necessary.
Proportionate.
Relevant.
Accurate.
Timely.
Secure.



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The Seven Golden Rules to Sharing Information

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing Information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living people is shared appropriately.

6. Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is **accurate** and **up-to-date**, is shared in a **timely** fashion, and is shared **securely**.

5. Sharing information should take into consideration the safety and well-being of the person you are sharing information about. This includes others who may be affected by what happens next.



2. Be Open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

3. If you are worried about sharing information seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Caldiott Guardian or Senior Leadership Team.

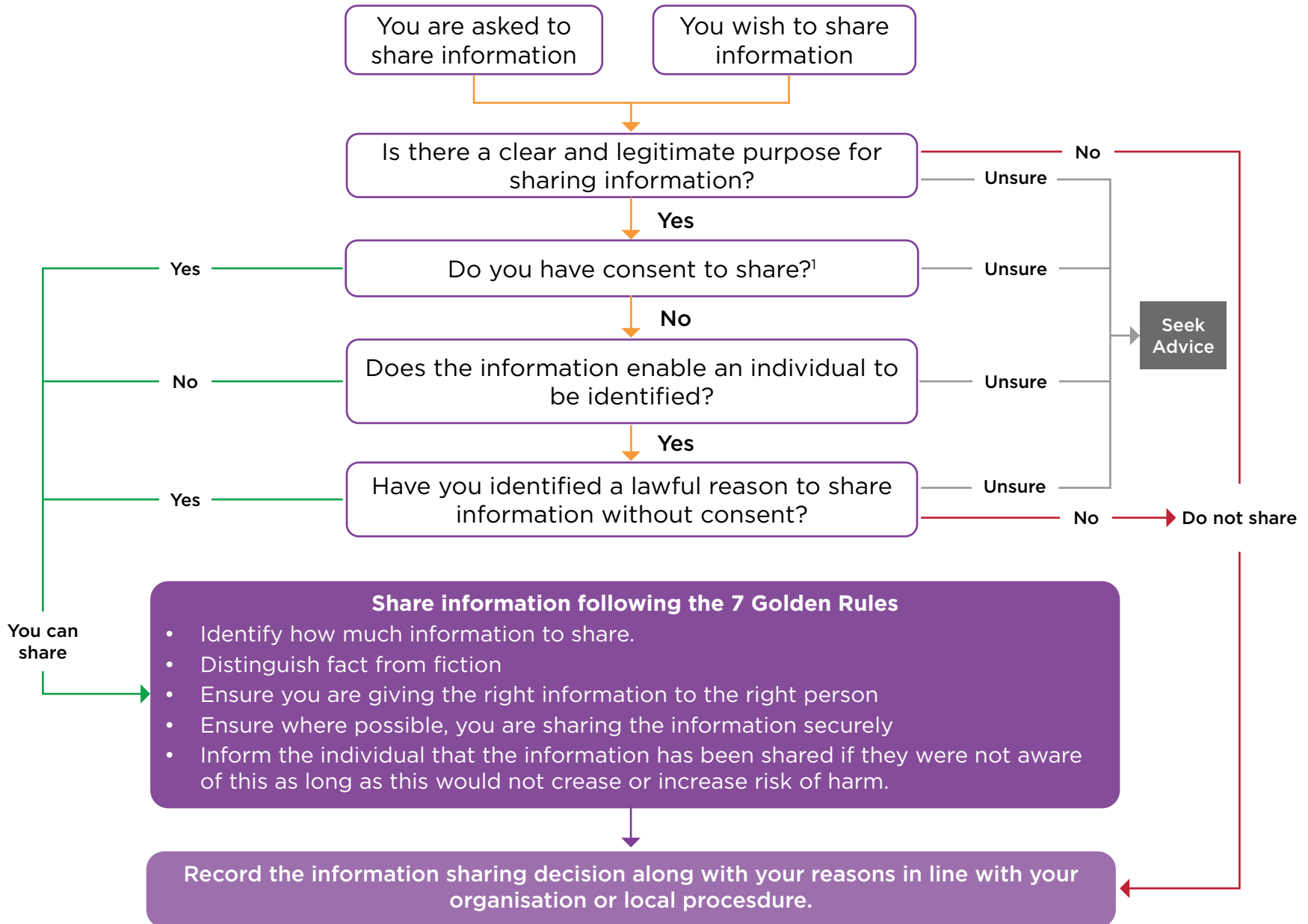
4. Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden depending on the facts of the case.

7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.



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The Seven Golden Rules in Action



If there are concerns that a child is in need, suffering or likely to suffer harm, then follow the relevant procedures without delay. Seek advice if unsure what to do at any stage and ensure that the outcome of the discussion is recorded.

This resource has been adapted from Information Sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers. July, 2024
[Read the full document here.](#)

¹Consent must be unambiguous, freely given and may be withdrawn at any time.