



Knowsley

ContactPoint will be the quick way to find out who else is working with the same child or young person, making it easier to deliver more coordinated support.

The development of ContactPoint continues to draw heavily on the experiences of local authority trailblazer pilots. Knowsley developed a basic online directory (known as an index) to enable more efficient communication across agencies. The index holds basic identifying information on children in their area, and contact details for practitioners working with a child.

Joann Clarke, the Information Sharing and Assessment (ISA) Manager in Knowsley, explains:

"Having an index has enabled us to pull the right practitioners together with minimal delay when decisions need to be made about the needs of vulnerable children and young people. It has also facilitated multi-agency working which impacts positively upon the outcomes for these groups."

Helping schools address the needs of the family to help vulnerable pupils

Three siblings regularly absent from school due to 'sickness' were brought to the attention of Mary, the school nurse. After making a series of home visits, she was able to rule out any underlying medical causes for their absences from school. But it was noted that they came from a large family, in which drug addiction, anti-social behaviour and teenage pregnancy were present.

Mary felt that there were a lot of needs to be addressed and contacted the local multi-agency panel, known as the Joint Agency Group, for advice. An authorised practitioner accessed the index and identified eight different agencies that had some involvement with the family. With the parents' consent a meeting was set up to develop a coordinated support plan for the children.

By developing a clear picture of the whole family's needs a package of support was developed which resulted in a significant improvement in the children's school attendance.

Without the index, it would have been difficult and time consuming to identify the range of agencies that had been involved with the family. It enabled a fuller picture to be built up of the family circumstances and a more targeted and coordinated support plan developed.

Reducing the time spent locating other practitioners and helping a mother care better for her child

Karen, a Learning Mentor at a primary school was worried about a child she was working with. Peter's physical appearance had deteriorated and he was very tired throughout the school day. His behaviour had also changed; he had become very withdrawn and on occasions aggressive towards his peers.

Trailblazer case study

After talking to the child Karen contacted the ISA team who, upon verifying her identity and the reason for her information request, logged onto the index for her. Involvement from a number of services was identified and after obtaining the mother's consent, Karen was able to convene a multi-agency meeting which provided a more holistic picture of Peter's needs and also identified some support needs for his mother who was finding being a single parent difficult.

The support plan included helping the mother with her parenting skills and developing bedtime routines for Peter. Both his concentration levels and behaviour improved.

Without the index Karen would not have been able to address the problems so promptly and efficiently.

Supporting multi-agency working and improved service delivery

A practitioner from the School Attendance service was concerned about a pupil's attendance. Efforts to work with the parents had failed to make an impact and his behaviour was also becoming unruly.

The authorised School Attendance practitioner logged onto the index to establish if any other services were involved and discovered that the family were receiving support from the Children/Youth First Service and Social Services. Once parental consent was obtained the agencies met to discuss the child's needs. It was agreed that the child would benefit from the support of the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service, the Educational Psychology Service and the Behaviour Support Service.

The coordinated support package resulted in the boy improving his behaviour and his school attendance, which reached 98%.

Without the index, service provision can take place in isolation instead of being coordinated through multi-agency working.

For more information

Contact Joann Clarke for more information about this case study and the work of the Knowsley ISA team on 0151 443 3535.