

Family violence information sharing

for family violence agencies and social services practitioners

The Family Violence Act 2018 introduced new laws that allow the family violence sector to share information.

Family violence agencies and social services practitioners can collect, use, request and share personal information for purposes related to family violence.

Safe and appropriate information sharing will allow better coordinated responses to assess and manage family violence risk. Together, the law encourages the family violence sector to collaborate to identify, stop, prevent and otherwise respond to family violence.

Who is covered by the new law?

Two groups of people can share personal information under the Family Violence Act: family violence agencies, and social services practitioners.

Family violence agencies include:

- Specified government agencies
- Non-governmental organisations funded by government to provide family violence-related services
- School boards
- Licensed early childhood services

Social services practitioners include:

- Teacher's with current practising certificates
- Registered health practitioners
- Registered social workers

Guidance has been created to support implementation.

Operational guidance has been developed to support family violence agencies and social services practitioners to apply and use the new laws. The Ministry of Justice sought feedback during the development of the guidance to ensure it meets the needs of the sector.

The guidance is based on eight principles:

- People's safety comes first
- You should obtain consent to share information when it's safe to do so
- You must consider sharing information if you think it will protect a victim or if you receive a request
- You can share information for specific purposes
- You must only share relevant information
- You should check that the information is accurate
- You should record reasons for your decisions
- You have legal protection from liability when you share information, unless you share in bad faith

The guidance contains information on each of the principles, as well as a decision-tree and case studies to support the family violence sector.

You can find the guidance on the Ministry of Justice website here: www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/key-initiatives/reducing-family-and-sexual-violence/a-new-family-violence-act/information-sharing-guidance

If you have questions, please contact
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