

What to tell?

Scenario one

Simon is twelve years old and is currently living in a small residential unit with five other young people. One of the other children, David aged nine, has disclosed to his key worker that on a number of occasions in the past, Simon has tried to get into bed with him and fondle his genitals. The staff at the unit, in conjunction with Simon and David's social workers and the child protection team, are in the process of making an assessment, and will be developing a plan of action which includes support and management.

- Should either Simon or David's school be made aware of this situation at this stage?
- If the information is not to be shared at this point – when might it be?
- Should Simon be consulted about what information is shared or be told when information has been shared?
- Should David be consulted about what information is shared or be told when information has been shared?

Scenario two

Diane is nine years old. She is currently living with foster carers having been accommodated because her mother had been severely injured by her partner, Diane's stepfather. The assault came at the end of a lengthy period of domestic violence. It is believed that Diane may have witnessed some of this, she has certainly seen her mother badly bruised. The most recent assault left Diane's mother unconscious and she is still in hospital after six weeks. Diane's foster carer has told the social worker that Diane's behaviour makes her think that as well as domestic violence, there has also been sexual abuse involving Diane. At this stage however, no statement has been made by Diane. The stepfather is currently in custody.

- Should Diane's school be made aware of the situation at this stage?
- If the information is not to be shared at this point – when might it be?
- Should Diane be consulted about what information is shared or be told that information has been shared?

Scenario three

Steven is fifteen years old and currently living in a residential unit. Over the last few months he has been talking with his key worker about his identity, and in particular his sexuality. He has stated that he would define himself as 'gay' although, as far as his key worker is aware, Steven is not sexually active. The key worker has made the other members of the staff team, and Steven's social worker, aware of the issues which he has been discussing with Steven.

- Should Steven's school be made aware of the situation at this stage?
- If the information is not to be shared at this point – when might it be?
- Should Steven be consulted about what information is shared and with whom or be told that information has been shared?

Scenario four

Suzie is seven years old and living with foster carers who have applied to adopt her. Suzie has lived with the McFarlane's since she was a baby and thinks of them as her parents. She uses their surname. As part of the process towards the adoption, Suzie's social worker is undertaking life story work with her. This involves talking about her birth family and why she is in care. This has led Suzie to being somewhat unsettled and reverting to younger child behaviour. She is enuretic at night and occasionally during the day. She also will not be separated from a rather grubby piece of blanket.

- Should Suzie's school be made aware of the situation at this stage?
- If the information is not to be shared at this point - when might it be?
- Should Suzie be consulted about what information will be shared or be told that information has been shared?