**Making an Information Request to Birmingham Children’s Trust**

 **– Partner Agencies only**

This process outlines the different levels of information that can be shared by the Children’s Advice and Support Service (CASS) with partner agencies and the procedure by which agencies can access this information

**Information Request Level 1.**

Level 1 information requests are appropriate where an agency is seeking information as to whether a child is or was known to Children’s Social Care and if a child has an allocated Social Worker or Family Support Worker. CASS will be able to tell agencies the worker’s name, contact telephone number and email address. CASS will also be able to tell agencies if as child is known to Children’s Social Care, but the case has been closed. CASS will also share the date that the case was closed. CASS will also be able to tell agencies if there is no record of the child or their family on the system. If an agency is enquiring about one child they can ring CASS on 0121 303 1888 option 2 option 2 and make a level 1 information request. For data protection purposes the CASS worker on the phone will ask the professional caller to send an email direct to the Referral and Advice Officer whist they are still on the phone to verify the identity of the caller. The CASS worker will then provide this information over the phone.

**Information Request Level 2.**

For all level 2 requests partner agencies will need to complete the Request for Information Form that is located on the Birmingham Children’s Trust website and email this form into CASS. Agencies can request level 2 information when they are seeking more detailed information on a child/family known to Children’s Social Care, but the family have been closed. In processing these requests CASS will search the child’s records to identify the length and nature of this involvement with Birmingham Children’s Social Care. CASS will only be able to disclosure limited information e.g. dates of involvement, reasons for involvement and whether the child was on a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need plan or whether a section 47 investigation has taken place. CASS would also be able to disclose if the child/family has received family or Early Help support or whether a child has been in care.

To access this more detailed information, evidence of consent from the child or young person or their parents/carers is generally needed. This should be provided with the request. Evidence of consent will usually be on a signed letter/email from a parent/carer who has parental responsibility. However, CASS will accept confirmation from the requesting agency that verbal consent has been obtained. Consent is not needed where a local authority or an agency such as CAFCASS is actively involved in a Child Protection enquiry (S.47) or care proceedings. Consent is also not required in instances where a local authority or an agency such as CAFCASS is writing S7 or S37 reports or being in PLO. These are all formal processes either in court or on the pathway to court involvement.

The Probation Service, due to the nature of their work have a specific role in assessment and intervention. CASS will be unable to give a blanket response without consent to Level 2 requests from Probation. However, in instances where a child is known to Children’s Social Care, but the case is closed Probation will need to set out what their concerns are in their request to CASS i.e., what offences the person has committed e.g., anything to do with DA, violence to children, animals etc. Offences such as driving without due care and attention, or theft would not be sufficient alone for CASS to release information. Where possible Probation should also include details of other wider family members who the offender may come into contact with when released if the nature of the offence raises concerns e.g., nieces, nephews, grandchildren or addresses where the ex- offender is staying where a child may live.

Probation would also need to state why this information is needed e.g, compiling a report for court, for Parole Board; risk assessing the man/woman for release into community, working with person during licence period and a cause for concern has arisen. Probation would also have to state whether consent has been sought and if not why not. They would need to confirm that their concerns are of a safeguarding nature and that Probation is of the opinion consent can be overridden as failure to share the information could result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. CASS would not make a judgment about this but would need a record of why consent is being dispensed with. Requests that have consent or those where consent is not required will be processed by CASS and this information provided to the requestor.

**Information Request Level 3**

In some instances, an agency will require more detailed information held on an individual child or young person’s record if they are involved in court proceedings or Section 47 investigations i.e., need to view whole case assessments. In these instances, the agency can make a request to the Disclosure Team disclosureteam@birmingham.gov.uk