



What is ContactPoint?

All children and young people should get the best possible start in life. ContactPoint aims to make services better for children and young people. It is a contacts list for people who work with children and young people. It will provide them with a quick way to find out who else is working with the same child, making it easier for them to work as a team and deliver more coordinated support.

Why it is needed

Many children and young people need extra help or support. If the people who are helping a child can find each other quickly they can find the right support at the right time. See [Kelly's Story](#) below.

It can take a long time for a professional to find out who else is working with the same child. ContactPoint means they won't waste time trying to find out this simple information, or duplicating work already being done by other services. This means practitioners can spend more time delivering services to children and families. Children, young people and their families should be at the centre of what is happening, and have a say in the services and support they get.

Some key facts

- ContactPoint will hold name and contact details for:
- all children in England up to their 18th birthday;
- their parents and carers; and
services working with a child (school, doctor, plus other services such as a health visitor).

You can ask to see the information held about you, and can ask to have it corrected if something needs changing.

ContactPoint will only be used by people whose job it is to help children and young people – such as a headteacher, a GP or a social worker. They will all have been trained and security cleared before they can use it.

ContactPoint uses the latest technology to keep it safe and up-to-date.

ContactPoint is part of the Department for Children, Schools and Families' Every Child Matters plan, which all councils follow. It will be introduced across England from early 2009.

For further information and examples of how ContactPoint will help improve services go to: www.essex.gov.uk or contact the Essex ContactPoint team:

ContactPoint Team, Schools, Children & Families Directorate,
Essex County Council, PO Box 297,
County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1YS
Tel: 01245 436057

Email: ContactPoint@essex.gov.uk Or visit www.ecm.gov.uk/contactpoint

Kelly's Story

Kelly is 15. She has 3 younger brothers and sisters. She has to look after her family because her mum is sick (her dad left a few years ago and she doesn't see him any more). A few adults have been asking her questions but she doesn't want to tell anyone she can't cope. She's also hiding things from her mum (like letters from school) because she doesn't want to worry her. She's scared of what might happen. She doesn't want her family to be split up.

Learning mentor

Jane helps Kelly with her schoolwork. Kelly's been falling behind and not doing her homework. She's also missing lessons. She gets upset sometimes and then teachers call her rude and aggressive. Jane wants to help but doesn't know what's wrong.

Social worker

Paul started helping Kelly and her family when her mum got sick. After a while Kelly told Paul her mum's much better and everything is fine. They agreed he didn't need to help them anymore. Paul didn't know how much work Kelly is doing at home or about problems at school.

Housing officer

Tim's noticed the family haven't been paying their rent for a while. He's worried about them. If they miss too many payments they might have to move out. He doesn't know that Kelly's mum is ill.

With ContactPoint

Jane looks on ContactPoint. She sees Paul and Tim's names and job titles. She asks Kelly if it's ok if she contacts them. She explains that there's nothing to worry about, but that there might be things that they could help her together on, and that they won't do anything without telling Kelly. Kelly says it's ok.

Even though **Paul** has stopped supporting Kelly, his name is still listed on ContactPoint (it will stay on for a year). Paul gets a call from Jane. After checking it is ok with Kelly, Paul tells Jane about how he was helping the family.

Tim gets a call from Jane. After checking it is ok with Kelly, Tim talks to Jane.

Kelly is a bit nervous when Jane asks her if she can talk to the others, but Jane explains really clearly how they could help her, and that they wouldn't do anything without talking to her first and letting her know what's happening. Kelly knows that she needs help so she agrees.

After talking to Tim and Paul, they agree that they should all meet, and that Kelly and her mum should be at the meeting. Kelly and her mum agree.

Jane has been able to come up with a plan to help Kelly with her schoolwork. Now she knows about Kelly's situation at home, they've been able to set different homework deadlines and better times to meet up. Also, because Kelly is getting more help at home, she's a lot happier at school and her behaviour has got better.

Paul was able to get a young carers group involved. He's also arranged for extra help with housework so Kelly doesn't have to do everything.

Libby works for the **Young Carers Group**. She is now part of the team that is helping Kelly and her family. Her name and phone number is now listed on ContactPoint. **Tim** has been able to get help for the family to pay the bills until Kelly's mum is well enough to go back to work. They also came up with a plan about how to catch up with the rent payments they've missed.

Kelly now understands better what everyone's job is in helping her and about the kind of help and support they can offer her.

Kelly is now part of a young carer's group. It's helped her a lot to get to know other young people in her situation. She's also getting a lot more help around the house, so she has time to spend with her friends and is getting back on track with her schoolwork. She's much happier as she's not worrying about everything.

Without ContactPoint, it might have taken these professionals a long time to find each other, or some of them might never have got in touch. This meant that it would have taken much longer to get Kelly and her family the help and support they needed. Kelly's problems could have got a lot more serious by the time they got help.