

Consent and disclosure

Proactive Disclosure

There are circumstances where information can be disclosed where it is clear that a claimant with complex needs ([link is external](#)) or a child faces clear and significant risks to their welfare or safety. DWP staff are explicitly empowered to take any reasonable steps felt necessary in order to address these risks. This includes concerns about the:

- risk of injury
- ill treatment
- neglect
- physical abuse or sexual abuse
- exploitation

These are examples and not a full list.

It is expected that staff will take action to volunteer to disclose information without any undue delay. When making the disclosure the decision and reason for it must be fully documented. This is essential in case of any challenge or dispute over information that has been disclosed. It protects both staff and the Department.

Only information that is directly relevant to the issue of concern should be volunteered to the relevant body without the claimant's consent.

On contacting the relevant body the information disclosed should be the minimum required to ensure the claimant can be supported to take the required steps. This is absolutely vital to demonstrate compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

In the case of a child, such information may be provided without the consent of the parents or guardian if a child's welfare is at risk. The parents or guardian do not need to be informed about the disclosure.

There is no obligation for DWP staff to:

- inform the claimant that they have approached Social Services or relevant body
- give permission for the relevant body to disclose the source of the allegations made to them - this is particularly important where it may be obvious to the claimant where information has come from, for example a face to face meeting with their work coach or a home visit