

Friday 21 November 2008

ICO statement on the Baby P case

Richard Thomas, Information Commissioner, said:

"I need to correct any impression that I have ruled or advised that the serious case review report into the death of Baby P cannot in any way be disclosed. My Office (ICO) has not been consulted in relation to this report and we are not even aware of its content.

"Our 2006 decision which has been mentioned in this context was a Freedom of Information ruling on a completely separate case which considered whether that particular report should be published to the world at large.

"The Data Protection Act is not a barrier to passing on personal information to the right people where that is necessary. It would not, for example, prevent disclosure to the appropriate authorities, or to an inquiry, to ensure that important lessons are learned. But this is not the same as immediate and completely unedited disclosure into the public domain. This is not a matter of cover up or shielding professionals. Case review files are likely to contain sensitive personal information about the subject of the review and also third parties such as friends, relatives and neighbours. Where a case is generating emotive debate there may also be safety issues for those involved.

"The ICO stands ready to provide advice on what may be disclosed on a case by case basis."

For more details please contact the ICO press office on 0207 025 7580.