



## **Practice Guidance**

### **Outcome from MASH to CAF Early Help offer**

The interface between Early Help services and MASH is an essential component of a robust service for children and families ensuring they receive the right help and support at the right time.

The pathways between these two approaches are key to ensuring all children are safe, wherever they are within the levels of need.

Effective sharing of information between professionals is essential for effective identification, assessment and service provision at the right level to best support the child and family.

Social Worker undertakes MASH assessments, and it is identified that this does not meet level 4 threshold for statutory intervention. However, the family would benefit from a co-ordinated multi-agency Early Help offer via a CAF.

### **Possible outcomes to CAF/Early Help following referral/contact into MASH**

1. Social worker to update the family, referrer and lead professional on the outcome from MASH and advises to continue to support the child/YP via CAF that is already in place and strengthen the family plan to reflect any additional support required (Link to Existing CAF Episode).
2. Social worker to update family and the referrer of the outcome from MASH and recommends that a CAF is initiated to support child/YP and recommendation for the referrer or the professional that the family have the best relationship with to be the Lead Professional, and co-ordinate the plan of support. The CAF link workers will then be notified who will offer support to the lead professional and follow up that a CAF has been put in place for child/YP. If no lead professional has been identified, the social worker to contact the CAF link workers to support in identifying a lead professional who can undertake assessment and co-ordinate plan of support. (progress to CAF Episode).
3. Social Worker to update the family and referrer on the outcome from MASH and recommends that the child/YP would benefit from an Early Help offer. This will be progressed to the Early Help Team Leader for allocation to Family Support Worker and initiation of CAF if required. (signpost to Early Help).

### **Parent/Carer consent**

The social worker gains informed consent from parent/carers for the CAF and will be specific about how their information will be shared and why. If the social worker has been unable to gain this consent, then the lead professional will do so prior to initiating the CAF.

If a professional is only seeking advice from MASH and the social worker's advice is for the referrer to initiate a CAF to provide an Early Help offer of support to the family, then it will be the responsibility of the referring professional to seek informed consent from parents/carers.

### **Decision made for CAF/Early Help offer**

To ensure that the decision made that the referral does not meet level 4 threshold for statutory intervention and that the offer of CAF/Early Help is the right decision at the right time for the child and family, the social worker will share their recommendation with their team manager prior to notifying referrer of the outcome. The team manager will have oversight of their recommendation and strengthen this if required and ensure this is documented.

### **Challenge and support to identify a Lead Professional**

If no lead professional is identified or no agency agrees to take on this role, the CAF link worker will support to contact the team around the family to discuss the benefits of someone the family already knows, or the family has chosen themselves to take on the lead professional role.

If still no lead professional has been identified, the family help team manager will take to Transforming Lives Panel to see if any agency could offer support as lead professional to enable the family to continue to make the positive progress with their family plan.

If at this point there is still no lead professional identified, then family help team manager will add a case note informing that no agency will agree to take LP role. Social worker, family and all agencies will be informed, and the child will step down to universal services.

### **Initial Family Planning Meeting**

The initial family planning meeting is held within 4 weeks of the CAF being completed and the progress against the family plan is evidenced. The child's voice and experience are captured to inform how the plan is improving outcomes for them. The lead professional will then document the Family Planning meeting which is recorded on EHM and copies shared with the family and key agencies.

### **Recommendation for CAF/Early Help offer following MASH screening/Role and Responsibilities**

When a child does not meet Level 4 threshold for statutory intervention and recommendation of Early Help offer or CAF with a team around the family approach, the professionals and family members involved with the child/YP need to be clear on their roles and responsibilities to ensure change and progress is sustained and when a referral back into social care may be necessary.

### **Role of the Social Worker**

The social worker will undertake the MASH assessment following referral into MASH and share their recommendation with their team manager and their decision making for why the threshold is not met and case appropriate for CAF/Early Help offer.

The social worker must ensure they update the family, referrer and lead professional if CAF is the recommended outcome and document this. If any agency does not agree with the decision that threshold is not met, this should be documented with reason why and raised with the social workers team manager for resolution.

Informed consent sought from parents/carers and documented.

The SW will send an alert via general case note to "CLW EHM" to inform of the recommendation to CAF so the CLW can support the lead professional.

### **Role of the Social Work Team Manager**

The social work team manager will review the social worker's outcome and recommendation, and quality assure this prior to referrer being notified of outcome.

The team manager will offer support to social worker if any agency does not agree with this outcome.

### **Role of the CAF Link Worker**

The CLW will offer support to the lead professional when recommendation is for CAF to be initiated.

The CLW will support the social worker with identifying a lead professional if required and will continue to offer support and guidance to the LP and ensure that the first Family Plan meeting has taken place within the first 4 weeks of the CAF being completed.

### **Role of the Lead Professional**

Informed consent sought from parents/carers and documented if not already done so by the Social Worker.

The LP will ensure the first family planning meeting takes place within 4 weeks of the CAF being completed and that meetings are held within timescale every 6 - 8 weeks and documented on EHM.

Once all actions on the family plan have been met, the LP will submit a final family planning meeting and CAF closure to evidence the progress and impact of the multi-agency support for the child and family.

If all actions on the family plan have not been met within 12 months and the CAF is still required to provide support to the family, then the LP will complete a reassessment with contribution from all team around the family members.