



Guidance for the Step-Up Process from Universal/CAF to MASH

If Early Help practitioner has immediate safeguarding concerns, they must follow safeguarding procedures.

Concerns immediately shared with team leader and manager. If agreed that referral into MASH or advice is needed from a social worker, then consent from parents to be sought where appropriate.

Contact to be made with MASH on 01254 666400 or the Emergency Duty Team 01254 587547.

Discussion will take place between practitioner and the social worker in MASH to consider the presenting information, any relevant historical information and previous offer of early help. Practitioner submits a request for service.

A contact is made with MASH when anyone is worried about a child or wants to consider any support a child or family may need. There are experienced family support workers and social workers sat in MASH to review referrals and contacts, alongside our partners – police, health, housing, probation, education, and our domestic abuse advisor.

Upon receipt of referrals, MASH partners will consider the best way to understand the needs of the child and how these could be further understood (assessment) and responded to by relevant agencies.

Initial screening

MASH will ensure:

- All practitioners have discussed their concerns with their safeguarding lead, in line with single agency procedures. The lead agency decision maker will respond within a maximum of 4 hours if following the referral details being shared it is agreed an immediate response is required.
- Will always ask if the consent of the parent/s and child (where age appropriate) has been obtained before the sharing of information. Where consent cannot or has not been obtained and the need to share information is required for the safety of the child, consent will be overridden, and this will be clearly recorded in the MASH management oversight.
- All previous involvement of social care and other services is considered to fully inform the decision making.
- For those children ages 16 and 17, unless not in their best interests to do so, their views will be ascertained directly to inform MASH decision making.
- MASH oversight will proportionately consider the multi-agency information and views to inform decision making.
- Following social worker oversight, levels 2 and 3 will step across to the Early Help service and contact will be made with the referrer and offer of Early Help services made.

Potential outcomes of reviewing referrals are:

- Advice is given to the person making the contact, letting them know about supports and services in the community and / or any further action they should take. This could include the need to progress a CAF or ask for consent before any further discussion can take place.
- CAF Link Workers will offer advice and guidance regarding the CAF process, early help offer and “what goods looks like”.
- Support from Early Help service is offered and progressed.
- Allocation of a social worker to undertake an assessment through Child in Need (Section 17) or Child Protection (Section 47) the CAF will close at the 10-day assessment checkpoint.

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