



MASH/Children's Services Support Hub

Guidance for Practitioners
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Introduction to Lancashire's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

MASH is a social work triaging team structured on a locality footprint (North, Central, East) that screen Request for Support (RFS) that meet Level 4 on the CON.

Social workers on the MASH Screening Team use a virtual platform to make enquiries with professionals and family members to assist with informing their professional judgement and application of threshold (CON).

MASH is the first point of contact a person has with Children's Social Care – Lancashire's Strength based approach to engaging with families is paramount as our interaction with a family can hugely influence a person's initial perception and understanding of Children's Social Care

Members of the public can make a referral via telephone and can remain anonymous.

Professionals need to submit a Request For Support, usually with the EHA attached and cannot remain anonymous. If a professional has a concern about a child's immediate welfare (Level 4 s47 on the CON) they must make a referral over the telephone to ensure a prompt response.

Multi-agency partners contribute to MASH screening which means sharing relevant information about a child/ren's welfare ensuring timely, coordinated, and proportionate interventions.

Introduction to the Children's Services Support Hub:

Our data analysis between October 2020 - 2021 evidenced a consistently high number of referrals into Children's Services that did not meet the threshold for statutory intervention and support. Almost 85% of referrals stepped down to Early Help or Universal Services.

To achieve a consistent high standard of service for families in need of support and protection, demand management of the 'front vestibule' was essential. In November 2021 Lancashire launched the Children's Services Support Hub. A discreet team within the MASH function that processes all requests for service that do not meet threshold for statutory services.

Families are signposted to wider early help provisions accordingly and in line with the Continuum of Need and principles of the Working Well with Children and Families document.

For example: Families requiring support under Level 3 of the CON are processed through to the Family Intense Support Team within CFW.

Those that may benefit from support under Level 2 of the CON are re-directed to Lancashire's Early Help Offer. It is the responsibility of partner agencies involved with



such families to refer directly into specific need led services within the wider early help provision.

The changes above allow increased capacity for social workers within the MASH to undertake timely, informative enquiries on level 4 referrals and provide a swift response for those that are most in need of statutory services.

In line with the launch of 'one point of contact' into Children's Services, all referrals into MASH/ CSSH are made via a Request for Support E-Form. This document replaced the Multi Agency Referral Form.

The referral form encompasses all the provisions in Children's Services, inclusive of CFW and is incorporated into the EHM case recording system.

Team Structure MASH/ CSSH



MASH CSSH structure
2022docx.docx

CSC Team Structure MASH

Strategic and operational oversight continues to sit with Andrea Duerden and Rachael Pickup. The team consists of:

5 x Practice Managers: responsibilities include supervisory responsibility for the Social Workers and Education officers. Oversight, direction, and approval of work produced by their team. Contribution to effective team development, performance, and opportunities for learning.

17 x Social Workers (inclusive of Senior Social Workers who have additional responsibilities): responsibilities include supervisory responsibility for the Early Help Workers, provide support and advice to the staffing team and to lead on any cases that require escalation to statutory assessments. Liaising with the district CFW Team Managers on cases of concern

2 x Education Officers: responsibilities include managing the safeguarding advice line, quality and assurance of education referrals and offering feedback to educational establishments, operation encompass notifications, provide support and advice to the staffing team.

Team Structure CSSH

The Children's Services Support Hub sits within Lancashire's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub; strategic and operational oversight continues to sit with Andrea Duerden and Rachael Pickup. The team consists of:

3 x Practice Managers: responsibilities include supervisory responsibility for the Senior Social Workers and Early Help Officers. Oversight, direction, and approval of



work produced by their team. Contribution to effective team development, performance, and opportunities for learning.

3 x Senior Social Workers: responsibilities include supervisory responsibility for the Early Help Workers, provide support and advice to the staffing team and to lead on any cases that require escalation to statutory assessments. Liaising with the district CFW Team Managers on cases of concern.

9 x Early Help Officers: responsibilities include screening of requests for support under level 3 of the CON, progressing requests under the relevant pathways and application of threshold. Promoting collaborative working together with the Early Help Partnership Officers. Providing a duty telephone line for early help queries.

3 x Early Help Workers: responsibilities include screening of requests for support under level 2 of the CON, progressing requests under the relevant pathways into CFW and CANW as well as promoting access to wider early help services.

Please note: Roles and responsibilities may vary as the team develops

Timescales:

There are 3 Risk Assessment Grades (RAG) that Practice Managers identify at the point of initial screening within MASH. This determines the timescales for decision making and processing of referrals:

CON level 4 (Section 47) – 1 hour

CON level 4 (Section 17) - 24 hours

CON level 3 (FIS) – 72 hours

CON level 2 (Universal Plus) – 72 hours

CON level 1 (Universal services) – 72 hours

Consent

All requests for support received into MASH will be expected to have clear consent from a person with parental responsibility unless there is sufficient evidence to support the overriding of consent. This includes evidence that the child/ young person is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm without the input from statutory services.

Request for Support Pathways

The link here shows the pathway of requests for support received into MASH/CSSH



CSSH MASH
allocation map.pptx



Level 4 (screening undertaken by a qualified social worker) – consent can be overridden if there is sufficient evidence that a child/ young person is at risk of significant harm/ has suffered significant harm.

Level 4 requests for support will be automatically allocated to MASH for practice manager oversight. This will include a RAG rating and a rationale for initial threshold application. The practice manager progresses the case to a MASH assessment and reassigns to a social worker for screening.

Multiagency enquiries will take place whereby a social worker will gather information from the family and relevant professionals to inform the analysis and threshold application.

This is then re-assigned back to the practice manager for final oversight and approval.

If the practice manager agrees that threshold is met for a statutory assessment, a C&F assessment will be initiated and re-assigned to the district duty teams for allocation.

If the referrer is a professional, they will be notified of the outcome of the request for support – either by telephone, email, or written correspondence.

Please note: If the practice manager considers the referral to be level 2/3 upon initial screening, this will be redirected to the CSSH for further enquiries.

Level 3 (screening undertaken by Early Help Officer) – consent led service

Level 3 requests for support will be allocated to CSSH for practice manager oversight. This will include a RAG rating and a rationale for initial threshold application. The practice manager will assign the contact record to the early help officer for screening using the assessment template.

Multi agency enquiries will take place whereby the early help officer will gather information from family and relevant professionals to inform the analysis and threshold application.

The contact record is then re-assigned back to the practice manager for final oversight and approval.

If the practice manager agrees that threshold is met for Family Intense Support (level 3) an early help episode will be initiated and re-assigned to the locality CFW tray for allocation.

If the referrer is a professional, they will be notified of the outcome of the request for support – either by telephone, email, or written correspondence

Please note: If following enquiries, the practice manager agrees threshold for level 4 is met, the case will progress to a MASH assessment and allocated to a Senior Social Worker within the CSSH.



If during enquiries contact with the family has not been established within the 72 - hour timeframe, and the early help officer and senior social worker agree that a home visit would be beneficial, the senior social worker will liaise with the locality CFW Team Manager to review the case and explore whether a duty home visit is required. This will be recorded on the contact record by the senior social worker.

Level 2 (screening undertaken by early help workers) – consent led service

Level 2 requests for support into CFW and Child Action North West will be allocated to CSSH for senior social worker oversight. This will include a RAG rating and a rationale for initial threshold application. The senior social worker will assign the contact record to the early help worker for enquiries.

Multi agency enquiries may take place if clarity is required of the family/ individual needs to identify the most appropriate provision of support under the wider early help offer. Contact may also be made with a person or persons with parental responsibility to obtain consent.

This is then re-assigned back to the senior social worker for final oversight and approval.

If the referrer is a professional, they will be notified of the outcome of the request for support – **either by telephone, email, or written correspondence**
Please note: It is in the best interests of the family for an Early Help Assessment to have been undertaken/ commenced prior to a request for support into CFW or CANW being completed.

Requests for Information/ sharing of information

Requests for information must be submitted using the 'request for support' e-form. There will be a specific section for information requests/ sharing that will be a mandatory field.

Please do not select this option if you are requesting a service as it may result in your Request for Support being rejected.

Once received, requests for information will be assigned to MASH and screened by a practice manager before a response is prepared.

Referral Responses

Referral responses must be sent to all professionals who have submitted a request for service into MASH. The referral response will include the outcome of the enquiries, threshold rationale and identified plan of support the family/ individual can be referred to (should this not meet threshold for statutory services).



The referrer may be informed of the outcome of the request for support via telephone, email, or written correspondence.

We aim to send referral responses within 24 hours

Call Backs for children not known/ not open to CSC

Professional callers: 0300 123 6720
0300 123 6722 (Emergency Duty Team)
Online E-Form

In addition to accepting e-form requests for support, our MASH service also provide a telephone advice line for professionals who require urgent safeguarding advice. The advice line operates on a call back system, our customer access advisors will request your contact details, and a summary of your concerns/ reason for the call. This information will be passed to a member of staff within the MASH who will provide a response.

Professionals can also complete a request for a call back using the online E-form. This information will be passed to a member of staff within the Mash who will provide a response.

Changes to Lancashire's MASH & CSSH Telephony Service

From 19/04/2022 changes were made to the telephony service for Lancashire's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Children's Services Support Hub (CSSH) to assist with the early identification of calls that require an immediate response from Children's Social Care, and to prevent the misapplication of non-urgent enquiries.

Below is a summary of the changes in respect of children/ young people either closed/ or not known to Children's Services. When contacting the service on 0300 123 6720;

- The interactive Voice Response (IVR) has been split into professional callers and members of the public.
- The telephony template used by Customer Access to direct **professional** callers has changed in the following ways:
 1. Professional callers will be asked if the child/ young person is at risk of immediate harm and in need of assistance from Children's Social care in the next 24 hours?
 2. Professional callers will be asked if the Police have been contacted, and for a copy of the Log Number (This is not mandatory but could assist should a multi-agency strategy discussion be required).



Children's Social Care will only accept telephony referrals if the child/ young person is deemed to be at immediate risk of harm. All other requests for support will require an electronic Request for Support Form which can be accessed via the following link <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/safeguarding-children/requesting-support-from-childrens-services/>

3. If you are specifically requesting advice only you will be asked to provide details regarding the nature of your enquiry with reference to Lancashire's Continuum of need. This is to ensure your call is directed to the MASH Social Work Team, or Children's Services Support Hub. If a Request for Support is required following the receipt of advice – you will be advised to complete an electronic Request for Support Form using the web link above.

Calls from members of the Public

The advice line for members of the public operates on the same call back system. Our customer access advisors will request contact details, and a summary of the concerns/ reason for the call. This information will be passed to a member of staff within the MASH who will provide a response.

Calls for families open to CSC

Our Customer Access Advisors will continue to take calls for families open to Children's Social Care. These calls will be re-directed to the relevant teams and workers.

Calls for families open CFW

Our Customer Access Advisors will continue to take calls for families open to children and family's wellbeing service (CFW). These calls will be re-directed to the relevant teams and workers. If you are calling to raise a Level 4 Section 47 concern for a family open to CFW, your call back request will be assigned to a social worker in the MASH.

