

**Report to the Schools Forum**  
Meeting to be held on Wednesday 16 October 2024

**Item 7**

**High Needs Block Central Expenditure 2025/26**

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**Brief Summary**

This report provides a copies of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Commission Service and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Annual Reports for 2023/24.

**Recommendations**

The Forum is asked to:

- a) Note the report.
- b) Express any views on the annual reports.

**Detail**

The Forum will be aware that the funding for the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Commission Service and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was transferred to the High Needs Block in 2022/23, as the DfE were reducing the historic commitments costs included in the Central School Services Block (CSSB).

For 2024/25, £350k was included in the HNB budget. This is £200k for the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Commission Service and £150k to the MASH service. A similar allocation will be included in initial budget proposals for 2025/26 if formally approved by members. Members should consider this expenditure for 2025/26 due to the increasing demand on the high needs block.

The High Needs Block working group considered the reports on 24 September 2024 and a robust conversation took place. Overall, members value the services schools receive. Due to the financial pressures on the DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant), members of the working group took a vote on both services continuing to receive funding from the DSG annually. Whilst both services were valued, members recommended that this is removed from the DSG in 2025/26.



A summary of the vote is below;

<u>Services to continue to receive funding from the DSG</u>		
Yes	No	Abstain
Emotional Health and Wellbeing Commission Service		
0	4	7
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)		
1	8	2

Members wanted to allow the services make further representation at the Schools Forum prior to formally making a recommendation. Officers from the service will be attending Schools Forum to present the annual reports, these are provided at Appendix A and B.



## LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

**Name of Group:**

**Date of Meeting:**

**Item No:**

**Title of Item:**

### **Executive Summary**

This report seeks to provide Schools Forum members with an update on the progress of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing commissioned service.

### **Recommendations**

#### **The working group is asked to:**

- note and comment on the report.
- identify any further information they may wish to receive on these matters.
- consider funding to support 2025/26 service provision.

The demand for specialist Emotional, Health and Wellbeing Services has been on the rise nationally and locally for several years. Early identification and support are key in ensuring that children and young people have access to help as issues start to emerge to prevent escalation into statutory health services and it is critical to capitalise on all opportunities to improve the continuity and outcomes for children and their families across health, education, and social care.

The Schools Forum has supported the Early Support Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service for several years providing a funding contribution of £200k during the current financial year. Together with an annual LCC contribution of £1.1m the service provides a well-established pathway for children and young people at level 2, 3 and 4 on the Lancashire Continuum of Need who are experiencing escalating emotional health and wellbeing needs.

The service is delivered across the County by the Child Action North West Partnership within both an individual and family context and includes a range of approaches including specialist counselling provision.

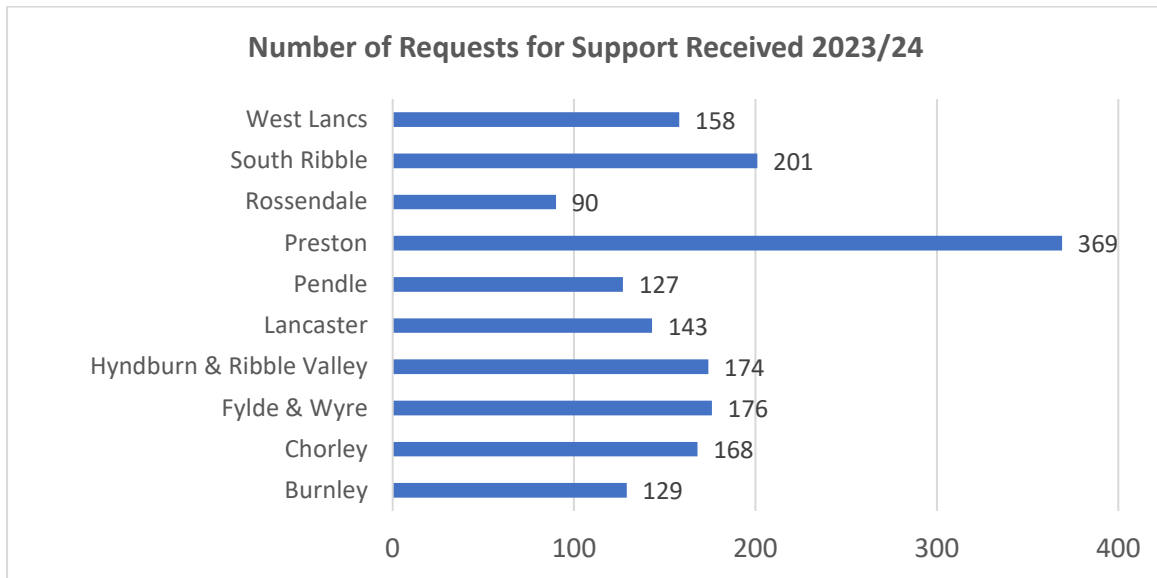
The contract is delivered partly on a payment by results basis to ensure that the authority receives optimum value for money with 60% of the annual contract value being paid up front with the remaining 40% paid based upon the achievement of agreed outcomes.

The contract is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Children and Family Wellbeing Service. Systems and processes are in place providing robust reporting, at a family, service, district, and county level. Quarterly performance reports are produced and shared through established governance arrangements. Also supplied are case

studies to provide examples of the type of work that has been undertaken and the impact that has had on improving outcomes for children, young people, and families.

### Performance 2023/24

Demand for the specialist Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service during 2023/24 remained high with 1,735 requests for support received.



**Table 1: Number of requests for support received per District (2023/24)**

Demand exceeded the district budget allocated in several districts. This was managed effectively with transfers between districts to ensure all appropriate referrals could be accepted. Overall, 93% of available capacity was used over the course of the year. The remaining 7% accounts for referrals that were received and 'in process' at the end of the financial year but, for a variety of reasons, the work completed did not qualify for a payment by results payment. This is predominantly due to disengagement or closure before the interventions are complete.

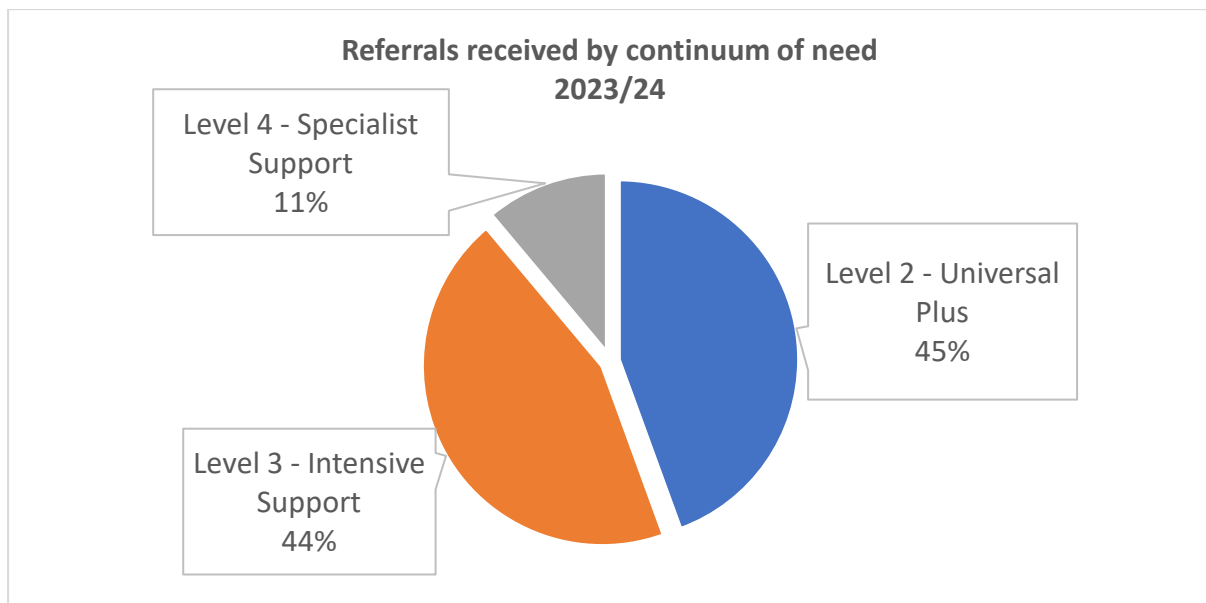
District	Capacity used (%)
Burnley	60%
Chorley	118%
Fylde & Wyre	79%
Hyndburn & Ribble Valley	101%
Lancaster	89%
Pendle	77%
Preston	115%
Rossendale	73%

South Ribble	101%
West Lancs	100%

**Table 2: Capacity utilised per district (2023/24).**

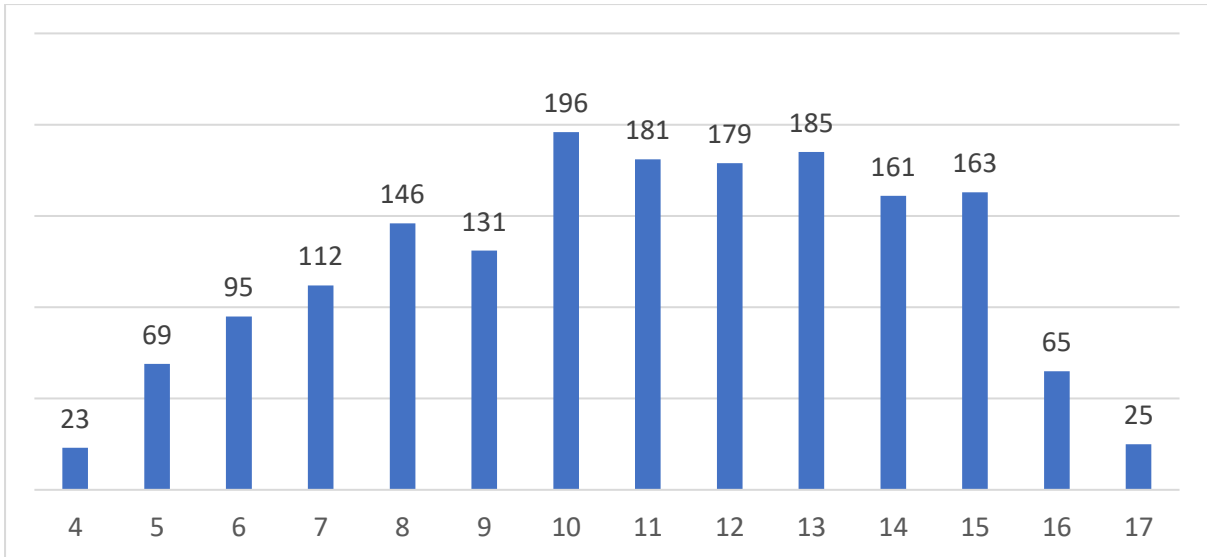
The service is available to children and young people open to services across levels two to four of Lancashire's Continuum of Need via a referral into the Children's Services Support Hub together with completion of an early help assessment that identifies the appropriate emotional health and wellbeing needs.

Referrals from statutory services at level 4 accounts for 11% of all referrals. A further 44% of referrals into the service are received for children and young people receiving intensive family support from the Children and Family Wellbeing Service with 45% submitted by Universal Plus early help partners, predominantly schools. This is a shift from previous years where a significantly higher proportion of referrals have been received at level 2.



**Table 3: Referrals received by Lancashire Continuum of Need level (2023/24)**

Referrals were received across the age ranges with many referrals received for children aged 10 to 13 as illustrated in Table 4. Historically, most referrals were received for teenagers across the 14 to 15 age brackets. Recent trends have shown this age gradually reduce with a greater number of referrals received for children earlier on within their school years.



**Table 4: Referrals received by age group (2023/24).**

Over the last twelve months the provider has identified a general increase in complexity of referrals with self-harm and suicidal ideation referrals on the rise. Most children and young people receive 6 to 10 weeks of 1:1 face to face counselling. In addition, the provider delivers a range of therapies including Family Systemic Practice, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), specialist autism support and therapeutic play.

Outcomes for the service are measured monthly as part of the contract requirements with 83% of all children and young people supported throughout 2023/24 reporting that their needs were met by the support delivered.

### **Feedback from professionals, children, young people, and families**

Providers are expected to gather feedback from service users and professionals on an ongoing basis. Feedback received to date has been positive and some examples of feedback collected is outlined below.

*C voluntarily told me about a time where he felt angry at school and after some discussion, we were able to identify the trigger together. C has never done this before and is a huge step for him! - Parent*

*Kirsty has been brilliant and genuinely helped me so much I wouldn't be where I am now without her help, I'm so grateful and my mental health has improved so much, thank you - Child*

## **Recommendations**

- the Forum is asked to note the progress made to date regarding the Children and Family Wellbeing service commissioning arrangements.
- that Schools Forum consider the request to maintain the current level of funding for 2025/26 at 200k to support the needs of school age children, young people and their families who are vulnerable to poor outcomes.

# MASH Education Narrative Summary 2024





## Introduction

Matt Chipchase and Martine Blokland are the current Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Education Officers. These posts were created in December 2014 and have ensured that educational establishments have effective information sharing, support, and guidance in all MASH matters.

Martine was a DSL (designated safeguarding lead) for over 10 years in a local primary school, before starting on MASH in March 2023, she is also an ex-police officer. Matt has been in post since 2014 and was previously a senior family support worker and an experienced primary teacher. They have an excellent understanding of the pressures faced by DSLs and pastoral staff and provide year-round support to all Lancashire Schools and Colleges.

These posts are School Forum funded - in addition to two Business Support Officers (BSO) who provide efficient information sharing for schools. Contact details of the MASH education officers are on the school portal, the LEA school safeguarding policy template and shared via LCC DSL training.

## Lancashire MASH and Multi-Agency working

The MASH model followed the [Munro review of child protection](#) and is a robust and proven process. Lancashire MASH brings key agencies together for timely and effective information sharing, with the purpose of making decisions to safeguard children. It means MASH professionals can quickly gather and process information to assess risk.

Effective MASH teams have education professionals working alongside the safeguarding partners and other key agencies. MASH Education Officers act as a link between the local authority's education establishments and MASH Partner agencies for information sharing.

Education Officers can scrutinise systems for information. In Lancashire these include Impulse (LEA school pupil data), EHM (Early Help Module – Children and Family Wellbeing team) and LCS (Liquid Logic Childrens Services – Children's Social Care).

The MASH Education Officers represent education at MASH Operational meetings, and MASH Multi-agency audit meetings. They are also active on the Children Missing Education Multi-Agency Panel, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Panel (for exploitation), the revised Neglect Strategy, the Missing from Home Protocol review, and the Operation Encompass steering group.

In 2024 the MASH senior manager has begun working with a core group of DSLs to develop professional relationships and improve working practices. Mash Education Officers have been supporting this by delivering training to DSLs, attending DSL drop ins, being part of audit activities, producing newsletters and promoting shadowing opportunities for DSLs within MASH.

To promote better working together, MASH Education Officers often liaise directly with DSLs, Childrens Social Care (CSC), Childrens Social Services Support Hub (CSSH), Police, Probation, Health, Children Family Wellbeing (CFW), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Children with Disabilities (CWD), Elective Home Education (EHE), Children and Pupils Missing Education teams (CME), School Attendance Support, School Improvement, Children's Champions, Contextual Safeguarding and Extra Familial Harm Teams, Post Adoption support, CAMHS and Primary MH, LADO, and other agencies, as required.

They also work very closely with LCC School Safeguarding Officers (Victoria Wallace, Mechelle Lewis and Sarah Holyhead).



### **Direct Point of Contact for all Schools, Colleges and Nurseries.**

DSLs often request advice and guidance, directly from MASH Education Officers, who provide a direct point of contact to DSLs via phone and email.

In 2023, January through to December, there were 1846 direct enquiries with an average 197 direct enquiries each month, which equates to 47 enquires per week.

### **Safeguarding Advice Line (SAL)**

The SAL is part of the Traded Service, providing schools, colleges and maintained nurseries with written safeguarding advice. The SAL is managed by the School Safeguarding Officers (SSO) but covered by MASH Education Officers whilst SSOs deliver DSL training, safeguarding audits, and other safeguarding tasks.

Calls responded to by MASH Education Officers have increased over the years.

In 2023 MASH Education Officers managed 959 SAL calls, around 13 calls per day covered.

### **MASH Call Back Requests**

DSLs often phone CSC via 0300 123 6720 when they are worried about a child's welfare. Since September 2021 MASH Social Workers have dealt with all CON Level 4 call backs and MASH Education Officers have managed call back requests from schools at Level 2 and 3 (Early Help level). This was due to the change in [Threshold Guidance](#) and the inception of the Children Services Support Hub (CSSH).

In 2023 401 call backs were managed with an average of 36 per month.

### **Quality Assurance of Education Requests for Support (RFS)**

Mash Education Officers quality assure *all* level 4 RFS made to Children's Social Care from schools, colleges and maintained nurseries. This helps identify trends, reasons why schools have referred to CSC and their outcomes.

In 2023, January – December, there was an average of 59 RFS per month.

Education Officers ascertain whether an [Early Help Assessment](#) (EHA) and support has already been implemented, the reason for request, if parental consent has been gained, and whether a MASH Assessment has been completed. In 2023, 79% of RFS did not meet the threshold for a statutory assessment to be completed, this could have been due to no consent being obtained, or that support needs could be met more appropriately by Family Intensive Support (FIS) at CON level 3, or other Early Help services at level 1 or 2 – and not because they were all inappropriate RFS. 57% of RFS were graded as outstanding or good.

Mash Education Officers support DSLs to work in partnership with parents, look for strengths, and be open, honest, and transparent. They encourage DSLs to initiate Early Help or school-action or multi-agency support when it is required.

To do this: DSLs are encouraged to use the Early Help Assessment when needed, and also consider the [Graded Care Profile](#) - this identifies strengths and unmet needs, and outlines the support required to meet these needs. The linked Community Senior Family Support Workers have proved themselves effective at supporting schools in this area and use information and advice from MASH Education to identify and support schools that need assistance with EH processes.

Schools are also signposted to other services within the authority. Frequently advising or liaising with - the Elective Home Education, School Attendance Support, School Attendance Legal, Crime and Youth Justice Services, School Health, Health Safeguarding, Health Visitors, Midwifery,



School Champions, Child Advocacy, Targeted Youth Service, Post Adoption, Senior Family Support Workers, Schools HR, School Legal team, School Premises, School Transport, SEND, SEND IAS, NEST, Child Action North West, We Are With You - and other community support.

### **Operation Encompass**

In May 2019 [Operation Encompass](#) was launched through Lancashire's [Violence Reduction Network](#) (VRN). The MASH Education Team help maintain protocol compliance between Schools / Colleges and the Police to ensure the smooth running of the operation. They also maintain the establishment data of Operation Encompass mailbox addresses to facilitate the police sharing the Encompass referrals directly with Key Adults in schools and colleges.

When the attending Police Officer is unable to clearly identify the school or college attended by the pupil, they are shared with MASH Education. They are forwarded to the correct the establishment by the start of the school day. In 2023 an average of 274\* notifications were being forwarded per month.

(\*The total number of Operation Encompass notifications shared solely by Lancashire Police to Lancashire schools in 2023 was 21,980)

DSLs contact the MASH Education Officers if they have any have queries regarding Operation Encompass or the information received (they will return any notifications which have been sent incorrectly). MASH Education Officers managed 415 OE queries in 2023, an average of 38 queries per month. This has reduced year-on-year as the operation has become embedded into practice, and schools are having less challenges. The recent [Operation Encompass survey](#) has been extremely positive.

### **Police Safeguarding Reports (PSRs)**

2023 saw 7264 police reports being shared via MASH Education. These are unabridged and shared only with the named lead DSL – this facilitates timely and effective information sharing. MASH Education Officers support and reassure DSLs with appropriate Information Governance advice.

In 2023 an average of 657 PSRs were shared each month. Sharing Police notifications with lead DSLs enables them to be aware of an incident which may have had a negative impact on the children and allows DSLs to monitor and support pupils, as necessary. Should DSLs require further information or an update as to support offered by Children's Social Care or Family Intervention Services, they may contact the MASH Education Officers for advice.

The MASH Education Officers provide ongoing support and guidance to the BSOs around the sharing of police information and the MASH Education Team maintain an up-to-date database with all School DSL's contact details to facilitate accurate and timely information sharing.

