

Briefing No.62

01 February 2017

Launch of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for children and young people on Monday 6 February 2017.

What is the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub or 'MASH'?

The MASH consists of representatives from Health, Social Work and Police Scotland. These representatives are co-located in Police Scotland's Divisional Headquarters at Cornwall Mount, Dumfries.

Why has the 'MASH' been developed?

Following the Joint Inspection of Children's Services in 2014, there was an improvement plan put in place which contained a number of actions about improving our child protection arrangements. One of these actions was about investigating multi-agency safeguarding hubs and considering how we could introduce one in Dumfries and Galloway.

To do this, we carried out a scoping exercise where we looked at a range of approaches followed in other parts of Scotland and the UK. The scoping exercise enabled us to identify the purpose of the MASH; the principles that underpin it and what it would do.

A multi-agency steering group of Council, NHS and Police managers led on the development of the Dumfries and Galloway MASH. The steering group developed proposals for how the MASH would be staffed and how it would operate.

These proposals were agreed by the Children's Services Executive Group and staff for the MASH were identified from Social Work, NHS and the Police.

The children and young people's MASH will be launched on **Monday 6 February 2017**.

What is the purpose of the MASH?

The purpose of the MASH is to protect and safeguard children through effective information-sharing and rapid decision-making. The staff in the MASH will screen child protection referrals. They will gather and share information enabling them to have an initial referral discussion (IRD). This means decisions can be made quickly and any immediate action can be taken to keep children safe.

What will the MASH do?

- It will provide a single point of entry for all child protection referrals.
- It will provide a screening function for the majority of child protection referrals.
- It will ensure that information about agreed actions and decisions is passed onto the relevant locality and/or agency within timescales.
- It will carry out monitoring and checking as part of quality assurance processes.

What are the benefits of the MASH?

Co-location of the team enables:

- Screening of referrals
- A shared understanding of risk
- Faster effective joint decision-making
- Effective information-sharing
- Co-ordinated intervention
- Commitment to continuous improvement
- Effective use of resources
- A shared understanding of thresholds

What will this mean for me?

If you work with children or families and you have a child protection concern you should continue to follow your existing procedures. However instead of contacting the Duty Social Worker you should **contact the Child MASH on 030 33 33 3000** and/or email ChildMASH@dumgal.gov.uk

From 6 February 2017 **all** Initial Referral Discussions will take place within the MASH. This means that you will only take part in an IRD if you are working within the MASH.

What happens if members of the public have a child protection concern?

Currently, if members of the public ring the Council with a child protection concern, the call-centre staff put them through to the Duty Social Worker. From 6 February the call-centre staff will put these calls through to the MASH instead.

Where can I find out more about the MASH?

- If you work in Social Work speak to your line manager.
- If you work in schools/education you can contact the Education GIRFEC and Child Protection Development Officer
- If you work in the NHS you can contact the Child Protection Advisers.
- If you work in Police Scotland you can contact the DS or DI in the Public Protection Unit.
- If you work in other services please email GIRFEC@Dumgal.gov.uk.

This approach to fast, effective decision-making in response to concerns has also been adopted in adult services with the development of a MASH for adults. The adult MASH began with a soft launch in September 2016. They currently process referrals from the east of the region but will begin the process of taking on referrals from the Stewartry in February moving on shortly afterwards to screening across the whole of Dumfries and Galloway.

Children's Services Executive Group:

Colin Grant, Director Children, Young People and Lifelong Learning (Chair)

Lindsay Abrines, Locality Reporter Manager

Lillian Cringles, CSWO/Head of Children, Families and Criminal Justice Services

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For more information about anything in this briefing please email GIRFEC@Dumgal.gov.uk