

Referrers will continue to follow existing processes for making a referral to Children's Services.

The Customer Service Centre will filter all contacts and forward appropriate cases to the MASH or directly to the relevant teams e.g. Early Help/Targeted Teams, Joint Child Protection Investigation Team etc.

The Hertfordshire MASH is in its infancy, and went live in July 2015. The team is based at Farnham House in Stevenage.

Agencies currently included in the MASH are Health, Police, National Probation Service, BeNCH (Bedfordshire, Norfolk, Cambridge and Hertfordshire Probation Service dealing with medium to low risk cases) and Children's Services. MASH team members also work closely with partners who are not based in the MASH such as Housing/Schools/Education Providers/GPs etc..

The Early Help Services, such as Targeted Youth Support, Thriving Families, eCAF co-ordinators, and Child Protection Schools Liaison Officers sit alongside the MASH

### About the MASH

The MASH brings together key agencies to work together as a team, to share information, assess risk and make decisions jointly about the best way to safeguard and meet the needs of vulnerable children ensuring that they:

*'receive the right response at the right time with the right service'*

The Hertfordshire MASH will deal with contacts and referrals sent by members of the public and professionals to Children's Services for a safeguarding response. Where the MASH team consider that the child's welfare will be better met by Early Help services, they will ensure referrals get to the most appropriate teams and will inform referrers of the outcome of their request for a safeguarding assessment.

### Before you make a referral please consider the points below:

- Have you shared your concerns with the family (if appropriate). If not, why?
- Consider whether the family would benefit from a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) or Graded Care Profile. Do your concerns meet safeguarding threshold (refer to Meeting the Needs) <http://tinyurl.com/z8k3r5s>
- If your concerns meet safeguarding thresholds and you are making a referral, check the quality of your referral and ensure it has as much detail as possible about the concerns you have, what actions (if any) have previously been taken.
- Have you got consent from the family/those with parental responsibility? Having consent makes it much easier for partners in the MASH to gather and share information and prevents delay. **However lack of consent should not be a barrier to referring if you have concerns about a child's welfare**

### What happens to my referral?

The Children's Services Managers within the team will rate the contacts as High (RED), Medium (AMBER) or Low (GREEN) to signify the level of risk.

For these contacts the multi-agency team will undertake checks within their own agency and share relevant and proportionate information to inform their risk assessment and decision making.

Once the information is received a final risk rating will be given; this may increase or lower the risk according to the information shared.

A multi-agency decision will then be made about what service will best meet the child's needs.

The referrer will be informed of the outcome.

### What the MASH needs from you.

#### Information Sharing

Information sharing is vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Consent to share must ideally be gained. Where this is not possible, consent is refused or where seeking it may undermine the prevention, detection, or prosecution of a crime, the practitioner must judge from the facts whether there is enough public interest for a justification to share; this must be decided on a case by case basis. It is important to note that a lack of information sharing is a consistent theme within Serious Case Reviews.

**All partner agencies in the MASH have signed an information sharing agreement in line with Section 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004.**

You may be contacted by a Children's Information and Advice Officer (CIAO) or your agency representative in the MASH. Depending on the rating of the case, information will have to be returned within a specified time frame and you will be told the rating of the referral when you are contacted.

**Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose. If you decide not to share, then record why. If you are unsure about what to share speak with your agency representative in the MASH.

**Timescales** The MASH uses a **RAG** rating system to signify the level of risk. The level of risk denotes the time that the MASH has to process the case.



## MASH IN HERTFORDSHIRE Safeguarding Children

### Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

In Hertfordshire's MASH, Children's Services and partner agencies work side by side to safeguard children, prevent delay for families and ensure they receive the right response and service at the right time.

Professionals making a referral please use the details below:

**E mail referrals -**

[protectedreferrals.cs@hertscc.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:protectedreferrals.cs@hertscc.gcsx.gov.uk) or  
[protectedreferrals.cs@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:protectedreferrals.cs@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

Phone number 0300 123 4043



Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust



NHS Trust

Green	Amber	Red
Children/family that require support that can be offered via Universal Services or targeted Support. MASH Must make a decision within 24 hours	Cases where the Child/family Requires targeted Support. MASH Must make a decision within 72 hours	Urgent child Protection cases where the child appears to be at risk of imminent danger requiring urgent action – MASH must make a decision within four hours

### The Police and the MASH

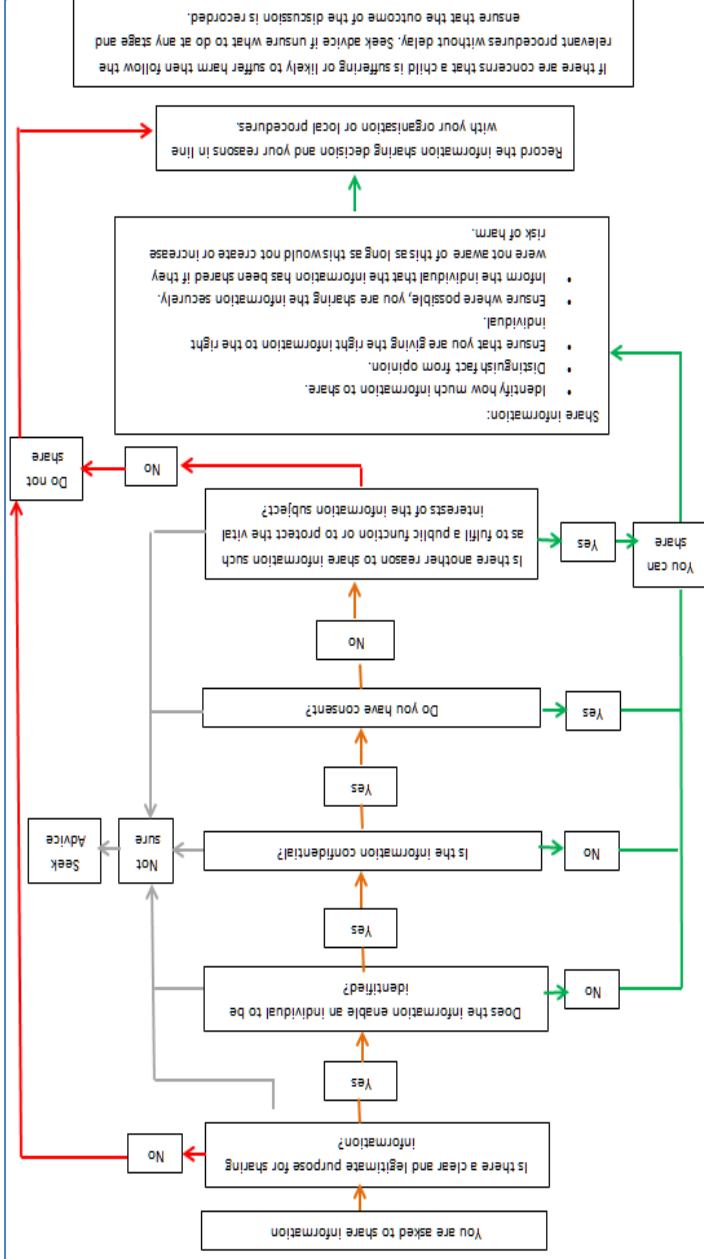
Police referrals are created when a child or young person comes to the notice of the police with concerns about that child/young person's welfare.

The Joint Child Protection investigation Team (JCPIT) based at Police HQ in Welwyn Garden City will respond to the following: Referrals which involve reports of physical abuse on children under 16 or sexual assaults where the offender is a family member, a professional who works with children or someone in a position of trust. Fabricated or Induced illness, Female Genital Mutilation and Child on Child sexual offences where the victim is under 13-years-old cases are also referred to JCPIT.

All child or young person police referrals which fall outside of the above are referred to Children's Services for further consideration and information sharing, which may include the MASH.

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### Information Sharing for Practitioners



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Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people and carers (2015) supports frontline practitioners, working in child or adult services, who have to make decisions about sharing personal information on a case by case basis. <https://tinyurl.com/8sqg2vm>

If there are concerns that a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm then follow the relevant procedures without delay. Seek advice if unsure what to do at any stage and ensure that the outcome of the discussion is recorded.

Record the information sharing decision and your reasons in line with your organisation or local procedures.

Share information:

- Identify how much information to share.
- Distinguish fact from opinion.
- Ensure that you are giving the right information to the right individual.
- Ensure where possible, you are sharing the information securely.
- Inform the individual that the information has been shared if they were not aware of this as long as this would not create or increase risk of harm.