



Walsall Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Operating Principles

May 2024



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Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Operating Principles Document

1.0 Context

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership introduced the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in October 2015. The aim of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is to bring together key professionals from across the partnership to ensure timely and high quality information sharing, analysis and decision making to deliver appropriate and proportionate help and support, ensuring best outcomes for children, young people and families in Walsall.

The MASH comprises of a co-located team including Walsall Children's Social Care, Early Help, Police, Walsall Healthcare Trust, Black Country HealthCare NHS Foundation Trust, Education Welfare, The Probation Service, Black Country Women's Aid and the Missing and Exploitation Team.

The key objectives of the MASH are:

- To ensure that children, young people and their families receive the right help, at the right time in accordance with Walsall Safeguarding Partnership threshold guidance [Right Help Right Time - A Multi-Agency Guidance on the Continuum of Need \(walsallsp.co.uk\)](http://walsallsp.co.uk)
- To ensure that children, young people and families with identified support needs who are experiencing multiple and interconnected problems requiring a team around the family multi-agency approach of support and who meet at least 3 of the 10 Supporting Families priority needs, are supported through the Early Help Pathway. [Early Help Outcome Framework \(walsall.gov.uk\)](http://walsall.gov.uk)
- To improve the 'journey' for the child, young person and their families by having one central 'front door' to access appropriate and proportionate intervention through Multi-Agency Early Help, specialist intervention for disabled children and statutory intervention through Children's Social Care.
- To facilitate multi-agency discussions and screening of initial contacts received in MASH, to support a collaborative approach to understanding children's needs and possible risk of harm. This allows for timely information sharing and robust multi-agency decision making to ensure the right help and support, at the right time for children and young people in Walsall.

- To ensure safeguarding concerns for vulnerable children are responded to promptly, and there is a co-ordinated approach from the multi-agency team of practitioners, for the family.
- To work in an open and transparent way with families, gaining their consent and participation to enable thorough multi-agency screening and decision making within MASH ensuring best outcomes for children and young people in Walsall.

2.0 MASH Membership

The following agencies are physically located within the MASH:

- Walsall Children's Social Care
- Police
- Walsall Early Help
- Education Welfare
- The Probation Service/Youth Justice Service
- Black Country Women's Aid
- Walsall Healthcare Trust
- Black Country Health Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Missing and Exploitation Team

Other partners are actively supporting the MASH and will act as virtual members albeit not co-located within the MASH. These include:

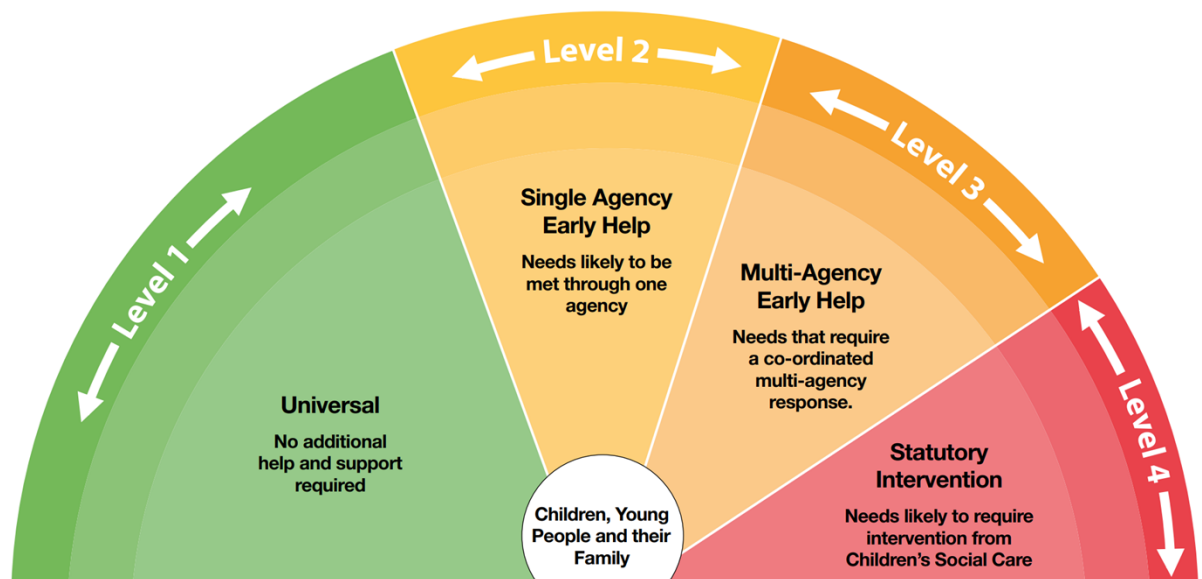
- General Practitioners - ICB
- The Beacon recovery Service
- Local Authority Designated Officer

3.0 Threshold Criteria

The Safeguarding Partnership 'Right Help, Right Time: Continuum of Need' threshold guidance relaunched in February 2024. Our shared ambition is to provide the right level of help at the right time by coordinating our efforts, sharing information where appropriate to do so, and putting the child and their experience at the centre of everything we do. Our aim is to promote positive working relationships with professionals and families alike and are committed to ensuring that all children have the best start in life and are safe from harm, happy and learning well. We firmly believe that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility,

and we should support each other in making decisions when identifying and providing an appropriate response to concerns.

The Right Help, Right Time Continuum of Need guidance is for all practitioners that work with children, young people, and their families in Walsall and it recognises that help and support is most effective when provided early on. Our aim is to deliver the right help at the right time from the most appropriate service (s) and at the right level. The guidance supports practitioners in identifying and responding to the needs of children and their families at the earliest opportunity, by having the right conversations, being professionally curious and being open and transparent with families about their worries. This helps us to gain a good understanding of the lived experience of the child, and how to best help and support to ensure best outcomes for the child, young person and family.



(Right Help, Right Time – Multi-Agency Guidance on the Continuum of Need, 2024)

Contact with MASH must meet level 3 or 4 threshold criteria, as outlined below.

Level 3 Multi-Agency Early Help

Needs that require a co-ordinated multi-agency response. Children, young people and families with identified support needs who are experiencing multiple and interconnected problems requiring a team around the family multi-agency

approach of support and who meet at least 3 of the 10 Supporting Families priority needs.

Level 4 Statutory Intervention

Needs likely to require intervention from Children's Social Care. Children, young people and their families who are experiencing very serious or complex needs that are having a major impact on their expected outcomes or there is serious concern for their safety, may require statutory intervention. This may be as children in need - CIN (Section 17 of the Children Act 1989) or as children in need of protection- CP (under section 47 of the Children Act 1989). A referral should be made to MASH via the electronic Multi-Agency Referral Form (eMARF).

4.0 MASH Contact Process

4.1 Overview

Where a professional or member of the public has concerns regarding the welfare of a child, they should contact the MASH via one of the following channels:

Telephone: 0300 555 2866

Email: MASH@walsall.gov.uk – EMARF only

Post: Walsall MASH, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, WS1 1XU

When contacting MASH, the caller will be required to self-select from

Option 1 – Early Help Query

Option 2 – Safeguarding Concern

The Early Help Advisors provide a dedicated Advice & Guidance Helpline Monday to Friday between 2pm and 4pm or you could email them on EHpathway@walsall.gov.uk

Walsall MASH operates between 8:45am and 5:15 pm Monday – Thursday and 8:45am – 4:45pm on a Friday.

Outside of these hours, a recorded message advises the caller of the opening hours and asks them to call back accordingly if they are seeking advice or guidance. Alternatively, if the caller is reporting a safeguarding concern for a child or young person, they are asked to re-dial 0300 555 2922 to speak to the Emergency Duty

Team (EDT) where they will be able to share their concern with an emergency duty social worker who will respond accordingly. EDT operate during evenings, weekends and bank holidays.

4.2 Anonymous contact with Walsall MASH

Members of the Public have the option of remaining anonymous when making contact with the MASH. If the caller wishes to remain anonymous, the Business Support Officer should encourage them to give their identity and contact details, explaining that their confidentiality will be respected in all instances. The Business Support Officer should obtain as much information as possible from the caller, to ensure that, even if the referrer terminates the call, gets cut off or chooses not to give a contact number, it should be possible to identify the child whom they are raising concerns about, and follow up accordingly. Where a caller wishes to remain anonymous, the call will be passed to a duty Social Worker.

If the caller requests general information or advice, they will be appropriately signposted to the appropriate service area or the call will be passed to an Early Help Advisor or duty social worker as required.

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4.3 Consent

At every stage of need, professionals should be open, honest and transparent with parents/main care givers about the concerns and worries they have for a child. Professionals must seek the consent of parents/main care givers, prior to making a referral to MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) requesting Multi-Agency Early Help Support or Statutory intervention from Children's Social Care, unless in doing so would significantly increase the risk of harm to a child.

In gaining parental consent, professionals should explain to parents/main care giver, that they are consenting to the sharing of information between partner agencies.

In the event that the parent/main care giver does not provide consent to a referral for Multi-Agency Early Help or Statutory Social Care Intervention, professionals are advised in line with the Right Help, Right Time guidance, to speak to their designated safeguarding lead or line manager for advice. If a referral is received

without parental consent, MASH will not be able to progress this unless there is clear indication of a possible safeguarding concern for the child.

Although in circumstances where a child is deemed to be at risk of significant harm and parental consent to share information is not required, it is always good practice to attempt to engage the family at the earliest opportunity, unless doing so would place the child or young person at greater risk of harm. It is recognised that parents' consent for statutory intervention and Early Help Support will inevitably impact upon their engagement with Children's Services and desired outcomes for the child. Professionals should work positively to engage parents and obtain consent where possible and record their decision-making and rationale where consent is not sought. In the absence of parental consent, a contact will not be progressed by MASH and the referrer will be informed. A letter will also be sent to the parents to advise of a contact received however in the absence of their consent, no action has been taken by MASH.

If it is felt that a child or young person's needs are so significant that they need immediate statutory intervention or highly specialist intervention to prevent significant harm or serious risk to their health or welfare, the MASH manager will request full screening with partners to take place to inform a decision regarding appropriate course of action. The decision to progress in the absence of parental consent is reflected in the manager's direction.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) highlights "In the context of a child-centred approach, all practitioners should work in partnership with parents and carers as far as possible. Parents and carers need to understand what is happening, what they can expect from the help and support provided, what is expected of them and be supported to say what they think. This is particularly important when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, whether the harm is from inside or outside the home including online. Working collaboratively will mean parents and carers have the best chance of making changes, and practitioners can make fair and accurate decisions about how to support children and keep them safe. While collaborative relationships between practitioners and, parents and carers are important, the wishes and feelings of the child and what is in their best interest remain central to decision-making". It is therefore important that the referrer is open and transparent with the parents or carers in discussing their worries/concerns, and seeks consent at the earliest opportunity to allow for timely multi-agency screening and decision making to take place, and the right level of

help and support be provided to the child, young person and their parents or carers.

4.4 Electronic Multi-Agency Referral Form

The Multi-Agency Referral Form (EMARF) is a pathway into the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for professionals when there has been an identified need for Level 4 Statutory support and intervention for a child or young person where there is evidence of serious, prolonged or complex needs that are having a major impact on their expected outcomes or there is serious concern for their safety. In line with the 'Right Help, Right Time: Continuum of Need' (2024), these acute needs identified under level 4, may require statutory intensive support for children and young people to be protected and in such circumstances, professionals would complete an eMARF and this would be electronically sent to MASH to screen.

The EMARF can be located here [West Midlands Regional Procedures](#)

In the event that an EMARF is submitted without parental consent, and it is not immediate child protection, it will not be accepted by the team. The EMARF will be uploaded onto the database but screening will not take place in the absence of parental consent. The MASH partner/member that represents the referring agency will make contact with the referrer and ask that they seek consent at the earliest opportunity. A letter will be sent directly to the parent/main caregiver notifying them that contact has been made with MASH by the referrer and advising them to speak to the referrer directly. The outcome of any attempted contact with the MASH will be sent in writing to the referrer.

Effective partnership working with parents and carers happens when practitioners build strong, positive, trusting, and co-operative relationships, it is therefore important for practitioners to be open and transparent with parents and carers about the worries they have and gain consent to work in partnership with them to ensure the right help and support is identified for their family.

4.5 Early Help Partnership Assessment of Need

Level 3 Early Help support is aligned with the Supporting Families Programme which has 10 key categories of support. For families to be supported by the multi-agency partnership there has to be evidence that the family need support with at least 3 of the 10 priority need categories. This is because it takes into consideration

that agency services are available for families where one or two needs are identified and able to support as part of the early intervention (level 2), preventing escalation, where possible.

Needs will generally be identified by nursery, school, health, police etc, who feel that together extra help and support is required. A planned package of multi-agency support may be required and a 'lead professional' to coordinate this. The Lead Professional will be identified by the Early Help Practitioner in MASH, this is usually a professional that is already working with the family and has an existing professional relationship, or it may be an Early Help Practitioner within the locality team in which the family live. Most children and young people will only need to be supported for a short period of time, if there is a robust multi-agency plan of support and intervention in place to reduce the level of need, until only minimal support is required through single agency intervention or universal services.

The Early Help Pathway can be located at [Early Help Outcome Framework \(walsall.gov.uk\)](http://walsall.gov.uk)

Referral outcome letters will be sent to referrers.

4.6 Disabled Children and Young Persons Team (DCYPT)

Walsall Disabled Children and Young People's Team is a specialist Social Work Team which works with children and young people aged 0-18 who have a complex disability and are permanent residents in Walsall. The team provides a service to children and young people requiring additional resources in respect of their disability, where the disability is permanent and substantial (Equality Act 2010) and has a profound impact on the child or young person's life. The child may have been born with a disability or become disabled as a result of an illness, accident or injury.

In order to meet the criteria for a service from the DCYPT for children and young people under the age of 18, the child must firstly meet the requirements of section 17(11) of the Children Act 1989 which defines disability as follows:

"A child is disabled if he is blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed".

Not all children who are defined as having a disability under Section 17 will meet threshold for a service from the DCYPT. The majority of children and young people in Walsall, including those who are disabled, will receive services through health, education and universal/targeted provision within their local community. It is recognised that in order to access community resources, families of disabled children and young people may require access to information and advice which can be obtained from SENDIASS – Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service and SEND Local Offer which can be accessed on Walsall Council website.

Where services are required that cannot be met through universal services and early intervention/targeted services, where there is a safeguarding concern regarding a disabled child or young person or they need specialist support, the MASH will consider whether children and their families meet the threshold criteria for a service from the Disabled Children and Young Persons Team (DCYPT) at level 4 threshold of the RHRT continuum of need. Any child or young person requiring statutory intervention at level 4 that does not meet the criteria for assessment by the Disabled children and Young People’s Team, could have their needs assessed by a social worker within the Locality Duty and Assessment Team or at level 3 threshold of the RHRT continuum of need via an Early Help assessment.

[\(add DCYPT criteria link\)](#)

5.0 Open Children

The MASH will only review and jointly assess new safeguarding concerns for children who aren’t already open to a social worker. All open or ongoing matters that require further information sharing, further exploration and assessment, or strategy meetings will be directed to the allocated social worker and Team Manager for them to review and make an appropriate decision regarding next action, based on their knowledge of the family situation and new information shared. Professionals should direct any information in relation to open children directly to the allocated social worker and in their absence the Team Manager, to ensure timely information sharing.

If a new referral is received for a child that is open to Early Help at Multi-agency level 3, this will be shared with the ‘lead practitioner’ to review as part of their existing help and support to the child and family, unless the new referral relates

to a safeguarding concerns, in which case a MASH contact will be progressed and will include discussion with the lead professional in addition to the referrer.

Children that require 'step up' from level 3 Multi-Agency Early Help to Social care level 4 intervention, will be discussed within their locality in line with ['step up/step down' guidance](#). These discussions will take place between the Early Help Lead practitioner and team manager and the duty and assessment team manager or senior practitioner. If it is agreed that social care intervention is required, MASH will be notified to progress a referral to the appropriate locality duty and assessment team.

Any information requests received for children open to Multi-Agency Early Help or to Social Care, will be directed to the allocated practitioner to progress and respond to within the specified timeframe.

6.0 Grading, Assessment, Response - RAG Rating

A MASH contact record will reflect the referrer's details, an overview of their worries and concerns, what impact they feel this is having on the child, it will capture the voice of the child and the parents/carers and will identify what help and support has already been received. The MASH contact will capture whether the contact is a request for information, a request for Multi-Agency Early Help (level 3), request for Social Care intervention (level 4), Young Carers assessment request or Domestic Abuse Triage. In order to meet our objectives of improving both the quality and timeliness of our response to concerns and support needs of children and young people in Walsall, the MASH managers will review the contact record, add management direction and apply an initial RAG, as below:

RAG	RESPONSE	TIMEFRAME
GREEN	Multi-Agency Level 3 requests, Young Carers assessments, Information Requests. This also includes social care requests where threshold is not met but may require Early Help support, advice, guidance or signposting.	5 working days
AMBER	Requires a Social Care Response in line with Right Help Right Time Threshold Guidance.	1 working day

RED	Child Protection. Requires an immediate response from agencies. A formal strategy discussion will be held between Children Social Care, Health and Police as a minimum; however, other partner agencies will also be asked to attend and contribute to decision-making and the safety plan. The strategy discussion will take place within the MASH.	4 hours
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There will be oversight from the Senior Early Help Practitioner of all contact records where a **green** RAG has been applied. Early Help Assessments received will be assigned to an Early Help Practitioner in order to screen and identify appropriate help and support. If 3 of the 10 supporting families needs are identified and Multi-Agency Early Help is required, the Early Help Practitioner will identify and broker a Lead Professional either within the wider partnership or forward to the relevant locality for Multi-Agency Early Help. Any contact records that identify level 2 Single Agency Early Help support being required, the Early Help Practitioner will provide appropriate advice, guidance or signpost the referrer or family to appropriate service provision within the community.

For contact records where a **red** or **amber** RAG has been applied, there will be oversight from a MASH Manager who will apply the initial RAG rating and provide management direction. The contact record will be assigned to a Social Worker and the screening process will commence. MASH screening will consider the presenting information within the referral; information held by respective agencies including professional discussions, conversations with parents/carers and with children where appropriate and multi-disciplinary analysis and decision-making. The family's previous involvement with early help or social care will be considered and where there has been 3 or more contacts within 12 months this will be further explored to ensure that any escalation of risk or need is fully considered and that the previous contacts are referenced within the analysis and decision making. Where a **red** RAG rating has been applied, the screening social worker will make MASH partners aware and screening will take place within 4 hours, and a strategy meeting will be convened in that time frame if required.

Any **strategy meeting** convened within MASH will include the relevant MASH practitioners and partners, the locality Duty and Assessment Team Manager or Senior Practitioner, and relevant external partners such as school, consultant paediatrician, SARC etc, including professionals who know the child and family well. A strategy meeting must be quorate in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance (2023) and as a minimum should include children's social care, police, and health, in addition to school for school aged children. ([add link to strategy meeting practice guidance](#))

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) highlights "no single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances so effective sharing of information between practitioners, local organisations and agencies is essential for early identification of need, assessment, and service provision to keep children safe. Rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews have highlighted that missed opportunities to record, understand the significance of, and share information in a timely manner can have severe consequences for children'. This emphasises the importance of thorough and timely information sharing between MASH partners to support decision making and to ensure the most appropriate help and support is identified for a child, young person and their family, at the most appropriate level.

A RAG decision can be reviewed at any point during the screening process, for example, there may be a need to escalate a **green** RAG to an **amber** RAG and vice versa. Any review of the RAG rating would be reflected on the contact record with rationale from the MASH manager for change in RAG rating and management direction as to what further actions are required.

All children and families that are assessed as not requiring any response from Children's Social Care and/or Early Help will be provided with advice and guidance, signposted to other services where appropriate and the contact closed. The outcome of contacts will be shared with the referring professional and with the child's parents in the form of an outcome letter.

MASH offer a consultation service to professionals whereby information and advice is provided.

6.1 Decision and Analysis

Practitioners based in the MASH will provide an analysis and summary of the information their agency holds which considers the impact on and risk to the child or young person in relation to the presenting issue. Practitioners will consider cumulative harm drawing on their agency's historical information as well as the immediate presenting concern. It should be recognised that this information will form part of the decision making process for children and their families and as such may be visible to staff sitting in other areas of Children's Services.

All staff located within the MASH will have access to Walsall Children's Services database, Mosaic. This will enable them to input their information, including historical information as relevant in relation to apparent patterns of concerns, and provide an analysis of the importance of this information in relation to the referral.

Safeguarding Named Nurses within MASH collate health information proportionate to the concerns from a range of NHS providers locally including the GP if appropriate, and Black Country Partnership Foundation Trust.

The MASH Health Team are responsible for screening and sharing relevant health information in order to contribute to decision making to safeguard children. Health information must be submitted within agreed timescales and be accurate and relevant. Information must be analysed, and a specialist health professional view provided on resulting risk to the child(ren)'s health, development and welfare. This can be using a proforma and sharing via an electronic system/email or verbally, as appropriate. The named nurse will utilise the 'One Health and Care Record' to ensure a wide range of health information is accessible as part of the MASH screening. Please refer to the Black Country Health Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for further information and Guidance. [\(add link\)](#)

MASH practitioners have access to MAST, which is a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Tracker. MAST is a data driven, information sharing forum in which key statutory partners, WM Police, WM Fire Service, Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and Walsall Healthcare Trust, provide daily headline data feeds into MAST. This enables practitioners to see 'contact' points over a 12 months period with one of the statutory agencies mentioned. Whilst this is headline data and shows 'touch points' with services, such as a 999 call to an address, a period of intervention with children's social care etc, it does not provide any detail around this, it supports professional curiosity of practitioners, supports multi-agency chronology and supports in identifying multiple contact points which may indicate a need for wider help and support for a family.

MASH practitioners and partners will have reflective conversations as part of the decision making, to support in reaching an appropriate and timely decision that ensures the right help and support is provided to the child and their family, in line with the RHRT guidance. Screening should draw upon the families strengths and identify areas in which help and support is required to meet the needs or reduce the risks for children and their families. History should be considered and reflected in decision making. If there have been 3 or more contacts within 12 months for the child, this should be further considered to explore the nature of the contacts and whether there is any escalation of need, involving MASH partners in reviewing these where required. If during MASH screening, it is unclear what the appropriate type of help and support is required, there will be partnership discussions to consider appropriate next steps for the family, which will be reflected in the contact.

Robust multi-agency safeguarding arrangements help to ensure that information about a child and their family is shared effectively, risk of harm is correctly identified and understood, and that children and families receive targeted services that meet their needs in a co-ordinated way.

6.2 Outcomes

The Early Help/MASH Process Map located in *Appendix A* outlines the outcomes in MASH.

7.0 Responding to Domestic Abuse

7.1 Definition

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, defines domestic abuse as;

1) The behaviour of a person (A) towards another person (B) is 'domestic abuse' if:

- a) (A) and (B) are each aged 16 or over and are 'personally connected' to each other, and,
- b) The behaviour is 'abusive'.

- 2) Behaviour is 'abusive' if it consists of any of the following;
- a) Physical or sexual abuse
 - b) Violent or threatening behaviour
 - c) Controlling or coercive behaviour
 - d) Economic abuse – any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to – acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtains goods or services.
 - e) Psychological, emotional, or other abuse;

The behaviour can consist of a single incident or a course of conduct.

- 3) Two people are 'personally connected' to each other if any of the following applies;
- a) They are, or have been, married to each other,
 - b) They are, or have been, civil partners of each other,
 - c) They agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated).
 - d) They have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
 - e) They are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
 - f) They each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
 - g) They are relatives

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, section 38 recognises that a child is a victim of domestic abuse in their own right if;

- a) They see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse, and
- b) Are related to either person (A) or person (B). A child is 'related' if, person (A) or person (B) is a parent of the child, has parental responsibility for the child, or is a relative of the child.

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

7.2 Information sharing

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) sets out what professionals and organisations need to do, individually and in partnership with other agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This remains core guidance on supporting children who are victims of domestic abuse. Working Together also highlights that everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe and that multi-agency working and information sharing is essential to ensure that children and families receive the right help at the right time. The importance of early help in promoting the welfare of children is emphasised.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory guidance was introduced in 2022 to increase awareness, inform the response to domestic abuse and promote best practice. The statutory guidance can be found here; [Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106247/domestic-abuse-statutory-guidance.pdf)

The Management of Police Information (MOPI) Code of Practice requires the police to obtain specific information when attending at domestic incidents. Personal data shared must be proportionate, necessary but not excessive, and must be balanced with the consideration of privacy rights under the Human Rights Act. It must take into account any duty of confidentiality owed. A public interest in disclosure must outweigh an individual's right to privacy.

The governance for domestic abuse in Walsall, sits under the Community Safety Partnership. The chair of MASH Management Group, the Children's Social Care Head of Service, is a member of the Domestic Abuse Governance Group, ensuring that MASH are kept up to date with strategic priorities relating to Domestic abuse and ensuring best practice.

7.3 Domestic Abuse Triage

The purpose of Domestic Abuse Triage (DA Triage) is to provide a multi-agency approach to ensuring the right help and support is provided to children, young people and their families, where there is evidence or indication of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse triage ensures timely sharing of information between partners to consider the most appropriate help and support required to meet the needs and reduce the risk to children exposed to domestic abuse, whilst also considering appropriate help and support for the victim of domestic abuse, such as the child's

parent, in line with the RHRT guidance. The key objectives of the domestic abuse triage are outlined in the terms of reference in appendix B.

There is representation from across the partnership at DA Triage, as below:

- West Midlands Police – Police Constable
- Black Country Women’s Aid – Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
- Education Welfare Officer
- Black Country Health Care NHS Foundation Trust – Named Nurse
- The Probation Service (PS)/Youth Justice Service (YJS) Representative
- Walsall Healthcare Trust - Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children
- Early Help – Senior Family Support Advisor
- Children’s Social Care - MASH Social Worker

West Midlands Police send a daily list (Public Protection Unit Agenda) of crime reports for domestic abuse from the last 24-hour period via a secure email account by 6.30am each morning. Incidents that occur over a weekend or bank holiday will be received on a Monday morning or next working day. The list will only feature incidents where children reside in the household. Each member of the Domestic Abuse Triage will receive the daily list.

Business Support check all children on the list against the social care Mosaic system to identify if they are currently open and have an allocated Social Worker. If a child is open, a notification (via email and on Children’s Services database) will be sent directly to the Social Worker and their Line Manager to alert them that there has been a domestic abuse incident. Information will be reviewed by the social worker and team manager and any required action taken. These children will not be discussed at Triage.

The Probation Service (PS) representative will conduct checks on all the named victims and suspects prior to Triage and alert the PS or YJS Offender Manager (if they are currently managed).

DA Triage commences every morning at 10am and each crime report will be heard. The Police Constable will share the full circumstances of each incident with the group. The MASH Social Worker will have sight of Social Care database and share only relevant history pertaining to domestic abuse in order to aid decision-making. Collectively, the Triage members will apply threshold and contribute to the RAG decision. If any agency has information recorded on their respective database that may be a cause for concern, they highlight this and recommend a

RAG according to risk. Full information will only be disclosed when the MASH contact has been created and consent is obtained for screening. Domestic abuse triage should consider any previous history when triaging, in particular if there has been 3 or more contacts and consider the appropriate help and support that is required. This should be reflected in the notes taken from Domestic Abuse triage to support MASH practitioner in any wider screening.

The Domestic Abuse Triage Flowchart can be found at *Appendix B*.

7.4 Domestic Abuse Triage Outcomes

Police logs that are deemed very low level, where a child has not been on the premises or witness to the domestic abuse incident and there is no history, will not be progressed by MASH, and no action will be taken.

Green RAG - Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) support (level 2) - a MASH contact will be created following DA Triage and will be assigned to the IDVA. These contacts are deemed low level, where it is agreed that the named victim may benefit from Black Country Women's Aid support. The IDVA will make contact with the victim and offer appropriate support, advice and guidance. Domestic Abuse Practitioners (DAP) are based within the localities and if it is felt appropriate that the victim would benefit from the support of a DAP, this will be appropriately progressed and assigned to a DAP in the locality in which the family resides. DAP support can also be considered where there is indication of parental conflict. If there are any concerns that arise during screening, the IDVA will alert MASH managers so the RAG decision can be reviewed.

Green RAG - Multi-Agency Early Help Support (Level 3) - if it is identified by DA Triage members that there are a number of needs for the family and threshold is applied at level 3, a contact record will be progressed by a Early Help Practitioner who will make contact with the family and explore support from Early help.

Amber RAG - Social Care Response (Level 4) - any incidents that indicate a statutory response is required will be sent to the MASH and assigned to a Social Worker. Screening will commence when parental consent has been obtained by the screening social worker.

Red RAG - Social Care Response (Level 4) - Any incidents where there is a safeguarding concern for the child, such as if the child has intervened in the incident, been used as a shield or been injured during an incident, would be

progressed as a child protection concern and received a **Red RAG** for full MASH screening and preparation for strategy meeting. If this information is clear at point of police notification being received that there is a safeguarding concern for the child or young person, the MASH contact would be created immediately and would not await discussion at DA triage, to ensure that timely information sharing and decisions can be made in MASH to ensure the child's safety.

7.5 Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information sharing partnership, enabling schools to offer immediate support to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse.

The school will receive a confidential communication from the Operation Encompass Administrator before 10am on the morning after any domestic incident where a child at their school has been involved in, present or witness to domestic abuse. This will allow the school to provide appropriate early intervention and support in a timely manner. There will be designated key adults within the school whom have received training on what action should be taken following a notification. They can offer the child support silently or overtly and the key adult can use the information received to reach out to the parent about what support they feel they may need, which applies to all levels of harm relating to domestic abuse.

8.0 Missing and Exploitation

The Missing and Exploitation Daily Triage is a process that runs parallel to MASH activity and brings together a range of practitioners who work in partnership to provide a clear, consistent and coordinated response to preventing, identifying and responding to children, young people and adults at risk of exploitation, trafficking and missing episodes in Walsall. See *Appendix C* for the Exploitation Pathway.

9.0 Persons in a Position of Trust (POT)

A contact record will be created in MASH where there has been an allegation of harm raised against a Person in a Position of Trust (POT). The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be alerted to the concern via their own referral

process and communicate with the MASH Screening Social Worker. The LADO will be invited to attend all Strategy Meetings when the threshold for 'significant harm' has been established and this will inform decision making within any subsequent POT meetings.

The LADO will provide information, advice and guidance on safeguarding matters relating to a child or children, which may result in a POT meeting if the LADO threshold is met or signpost settings to their own policy and procedures. The referral process for LADO can be located on [Walsall Safeguarding Partnership](#) website.

10.0 Governance Structures

The MASH is a multi – agency team working together to ensure children and their families receive the right help and support at the right time to meet their identified needs and ensure a timely and coordinated multi-agency response to any identified risk of harm for children and young people. Whilst there will be a strong culture of one team working together and individual agencies supporting each other when demand for managing calls / undertaking initial screening and assessments requires, it is important that team members continue to professionally challenge where appropriate perceived risk and response to referrals are based on healthy debate.

On those occasions when an assessment perceived risk does not receive unanimous agreement following MASH discussion, the final decision maker will be the Children's Social Care Team Manager located within the MASH who will provide clear rationale for decision making within the contact.

Should any partner or team member feel that the decision determined by the team manager is not appropriate for the needs of the family, the [Finding a Solution Together](#) (FaST) should be utilised. In line with this, the group manager can be spoken to and request made to review the decision making.

Respective agencies retain responsibility for ensuring their staff receive supervision, training and appraisal in accordance with the policies and procedures of their organisation. It is the responsibility of individual partner agencies to ensure quality and assurance activities and ensure continued professional development of their MASH practitioners.

To support the operational effectiveness of the MASH, there is a Bi Monthly MASH Management Group meeting which is chaired by the Children's Social Care Head of Service for MASH and attended by the senior managers from all agencies represented in or virtually connected to the MASH.

MASH Management Group reports directly to the Walsall safeguarding Partnership Safeguarding Leadership Group (SLG) on a quarterly basis, and to other partnership meetings as requested such as the Performance, Quality and Assurance Sub Group (PQA). Practice themes identified through MASH Management Group will be shared with the Practice, Learning & Development subgroup to follow through on themes arising and influence the learning and development offer through Right Help Right Time.

Using the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Performance and Quality Assurance framework, MASH Management Group ensures that it meets these requirements to assure itself of the quality and impact of services and enable continuous improvement.

The MASH Management Group will:

- Hold partner agencies to account through the WSP Quality Assurance Framework.
- Alert the Safeguarding Leadership Group (SLG) members of any emerging threats, risks or trends as appropriate.
- Members of the MASH Management will be active in assessing front line practice.
- Ensure opportunities to hear the voice of children, young people and all professionals are incorporated into the work of the group. This will then feed into performance reports which will be supported by data and other intelligence.
- Monitor performance of the MASH against the agreed performance indicators developed from MASH data and agencies located within or virtually connected to the MASH including:
 - contacts and referrals including conversion rate from contact to referral
 - presenting issues
 - category of risk
 - timeliness
 - outcome indicators
 - repeat referrals
 - feedback activity

- Quality Measures:
 - quality of referrals by agency ~ auditing of MARF's by MASH Management Group with outcomes shared by partners in their own agency as part of learning and as part of the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership audit activity
 - decision making by MASH ~ as part of the MASH Management auditing activity
- Ensure opportunities to hear the voice of children, young people and all professionals are incorporated into the work of the group..
- Alert Senior Leadership Group of any emerging threats, risks or trends as appropriate.
- Continue to develop the MASH best practice
- Link between different partnership activities
- Review the MASH Operating Principles on an annual basis as a minimum

MASH Team Members attend a 6 weekly Unit Meeting. This meeting will include Social Care and MASH partner agencies. The Unit Meeting is chaired by the MASH Team Manager, or in their absence, the MASH Assistant Team Manager.

11.0 Information Sharing

Information is shared amongst key partners within the MASH in line with the Safeguarding Partnership [Information Sharing Agreement](#) (ISA).

12.0 Review of Operating Principals

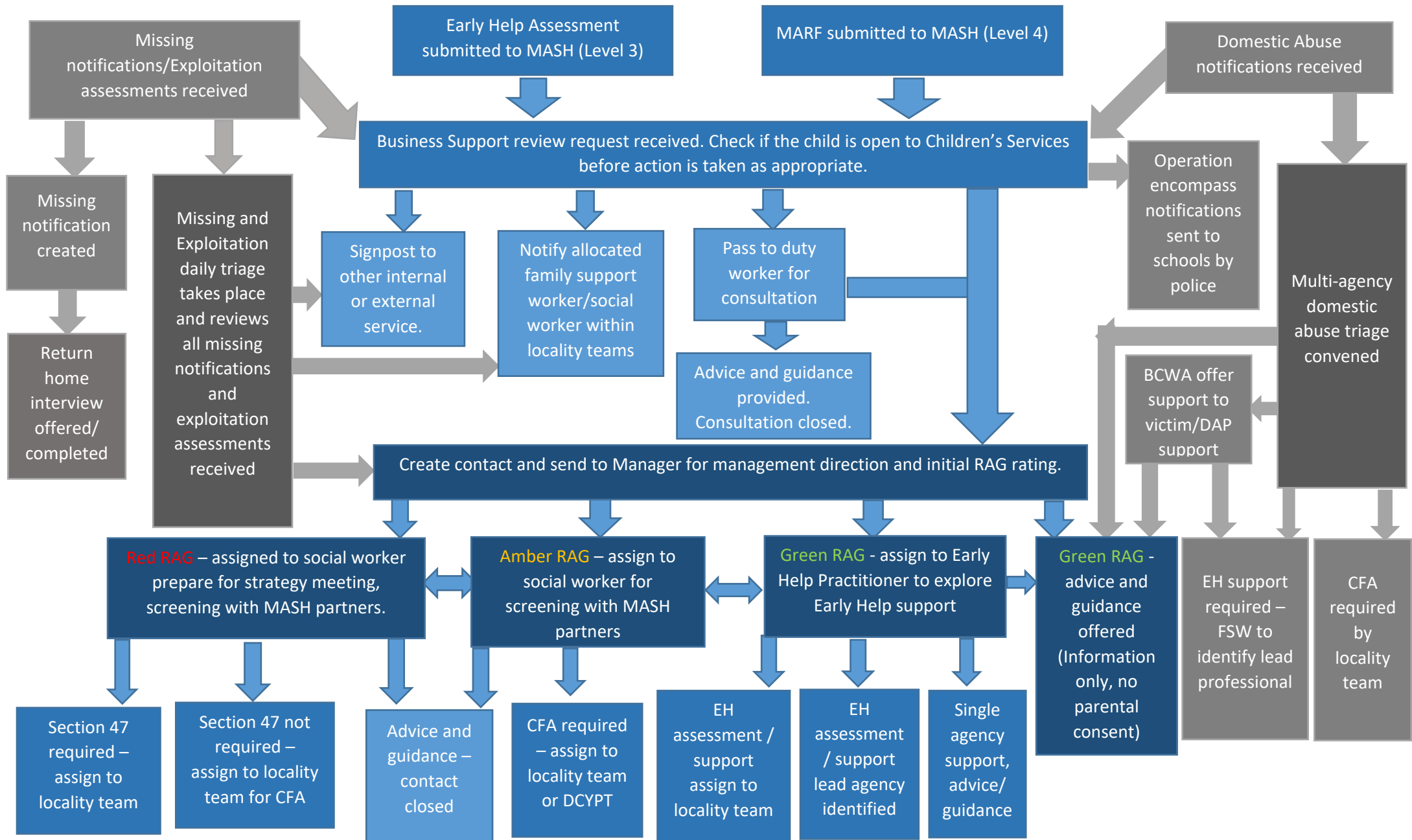
These operating principles will be reviewed each time the core agencies located within the MASH change and on an annual basis.



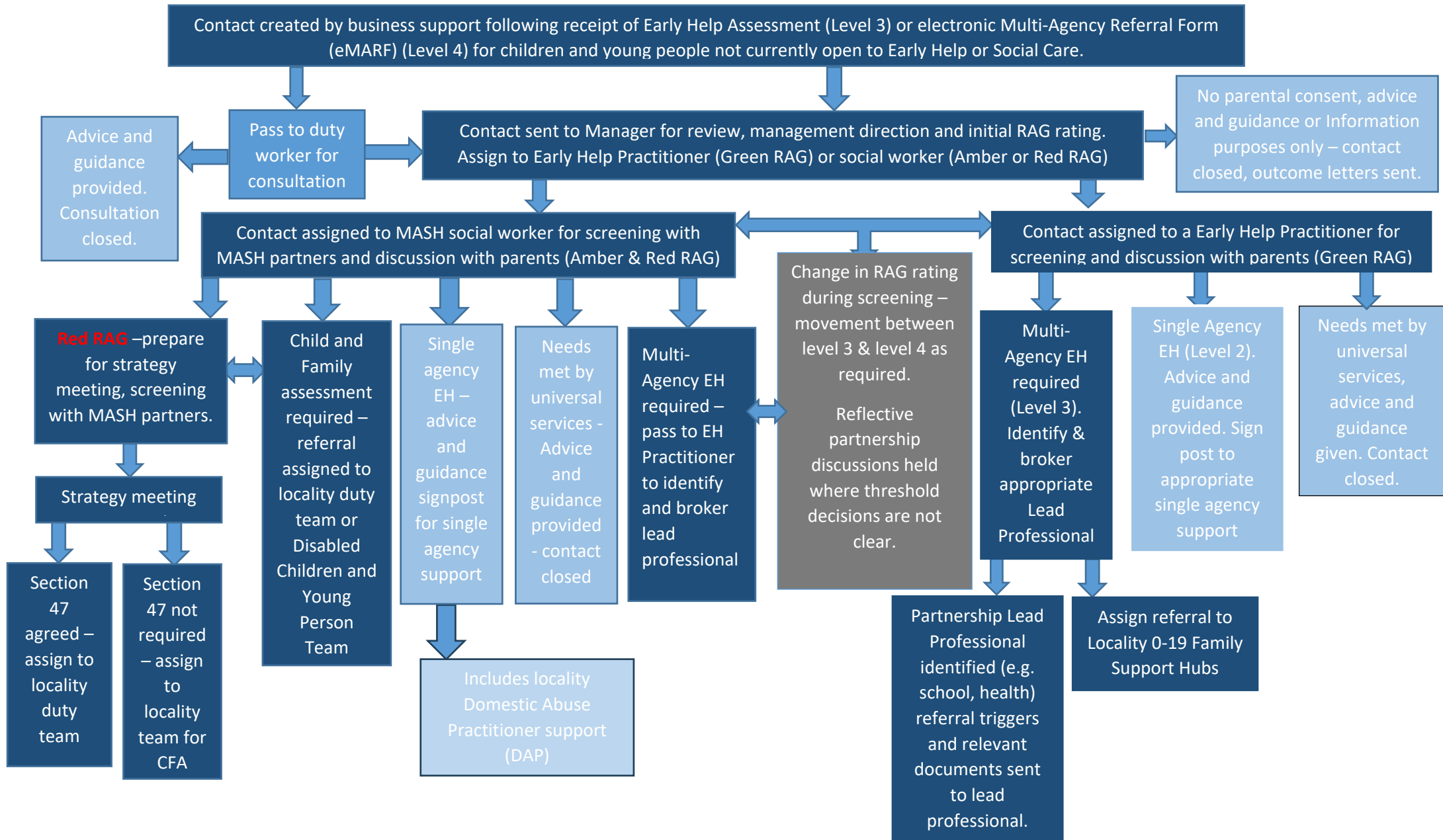
Walsall Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

APPENDIX A - PROCESS MAPS

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Pathway



Multi-Agency Screening Process





Serving our communities, protecting them from harm
www.west-midlands.police.uk

Find us on:



WEST MIDLANDS POLICE MASH REPRESENTATIVE PROCESS MAP

Notification received for a request for information.

RED

AMBER

MASH:

Review report, record as crime/non crime, complete intelligence checks (will send to CRU for PND/PNC if required). and forward to Walsall MASH for information sharing, assessment and agreed response within **4 hours**.

MASH:

Review report, record as crime/non crime, complete intelligence checks (will send to CRU for PND/PNC if required). and forward to Walsall MASH for information sharing, assessment and agreed response within **24 hours**.

Attend Strategy Meeting

Joint screening/MASH discussions

Criminal threshold met – **Joint Agency S47 Enquiry** between Walsall Social Care and Public Protection Unit

Single Agency Police investigation – no action for Walsall Social Care

Single Agency S47 Enquiry to Walsall Social Care – no action for Walsall PPU

MAET officers allocated low-level investigations. Walsall Child Abuse Investigation Team allocated more protracted investigations

Police investigation / Criminal Justice proceedings completed

Revised Named Nurse MASH ADMIN Process

MASH Admin

- Admin to review the Safeguarding Children NHS inbox daily and move RED or AMBER checks over to MASH Admin Folder one at a time.
- All checks are to be completed in date and time order – except **RED checks which are to be prioritised and completed within the hour.**
- Open a subfolder in the relevant date within the MASH folder for each **RED** check to place any proforma, strat liaison forms or any other correspondence. Save as RED *surname*.
- Admin to create a MASH PROFORMA for each check (amber and red). This proforma can be found in MASH – MASH Admin paperwork – Mash Proforma.
- Proforma to be saved as rag rating i.e Red or Amber and surname i.e. Amber Williams/Red Jones.

Nurse Covering MASH

- Nurse covering MASH to liaise regularly with MASH Admin regarding pending checks or any other requirements via MS teams chat.
- MASH Admin to communicate regularly with MASH nurse regarding any urgent checks or queries via MS teams chat.



MASH Admin

Completing the Proforma:

- To complete admin date, start and finish times on proforma.
- All demographic details are to be completed including name, dob, NHS, address, flags, school attended, GP and SHA/HV.
- Telephone number of GP (and email address), and health visitor/school nurse to be provided on all checks
- To insert the email from Social Worker under the section “Information Received from Social Worker” on the proforma including the SW email address.
- If more than one family are included in the check, then a separate form should be completed for each family.
- Once the above information has been completed on the form then change the name of the file to i.e. “Red Jones – admin complete”.



MASH Nurse

- To check folder and complete nurse checks on the proforma initially set up by Admin

MASH Nurse

Completing Checks

- Medi-viewer for HV & SN information for all under 18yrs and females who may have had HV antenatal check.
- Badgernet Maternity records (check up to 6 months after birth, partner details, health conditions, engagement, social updates, issues during pregnancy, midwife contact details)
- Careflow (recent ED attendances, 0-19 contact, recent appointments)
- Care plus (ASQ, vaccinations, alerts)
- Care Centric GP records prescribed medication, diagnosis, alerts, mental health referrals, attendances at other hospitals.
- Fusion (discharge letters, clinic letter, referrals, DNA/WMB's, inpatient status, A&E attendances).
- Summary care record (address changes, name changes, next of kin/children)
- Good information sharing should be relevant to the concerns raised, recent (last 3 years) unless relevant and concise. Analysis should include relevance of health information in relation to concern and your recommendation for threshold (EH, CAFA, L4 strat) and any actions to consider ie CP medical, SARC medical, medical review/attention, referral to specialist team (TPT, CAMHS).
- Once checks and analysis completed, mark NNSC complete and email to the requesting SW.
- NNSC to place sent email into subfolder on nhs.net titled "MASH checks completed"

Strategy Meeting Process

MASH Admin

Strategy Liaison forms:

- MASH admin to open a Strategy Liaison Form for **ALL Red checks**. This document can be found in MASH - MASH Admin Paperwork – Strategy Meeting Liaison Form. The form to be saved as "**Strategy Meeting Liaison form Surname**" within the subfolder created for the red check.
- For Reds that **DO NOT** go for a strat – then the strategy liaison form to be re saved as "**Strategy Meeting Liaison form Surname – STRAT DID NOT TAKE PLACE**" for the purpose of updating the MASH spreadsheet'.



MASH Nurse

- Once strat has taken place, Nurse to email admin and let them then know the strat form has been complete ready for distribution.



MASH Admin

For ALL RED

- MASH Admin to send all completed Strategy Liaison form to the relevant GP, Health visiting team and School health nurse teams once this has been completed by the Nurse.



MASH Admin

Spreadsheet

- To update “**MASH data**” spreadsheet which can be found in the relevant MASH year.
- To delete the email from MASH Admin inbox.



MASH Admin

- At the end of each day, admin to count and move over any checks that are not completed into the next day folder, to also check if any out of timescales and inform NN



Probation Service/YJS MASH Representative

Complete initial safeguarding checks on new allocations where not completed at court.

Daily PPU domestic abuse agenda is circulated via email and will be received by 6.30am each morning.

The names of victims and suspects that feature on the agenda will be checked against Probation database nDelius and YJS database Childview.

PREVIOUSLY KNOWN

Make note of previous flags, risk assessments and history of offending

CURRENT

Make note of previous flags, risk assessments and history of offending

NO MATCHES

Attend Domestic Abuse Triage

Update Probation Practitioner via nDelius. For high risk incidents – verbal and email communication with Probation Practitioner. Update YJS.

Request for information under AMBER/RED Rag from a MASH Social Worker – via email, outlining the synopsis of the reason for contact, who has consented and RAG.

The names of all persons of concern are checked against nDelius and Childview.

AMBER

Information returned to the social worker via email (who then updates MOSAIC).

Update database systems.

RED

Information returned to the Social Worker via email (who then updates MOSAIC).

Invite Probation Practitioner to the Strategy Meeting if parent/significant other is current.

Attend Strategy Meeting. Share information from nDelius and Childview. Contribute to application of threshold and child safety plan.



MASH EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE OFFICER SCREENING PROCESS

Attend daily Domestic Abuse Triage

Receive AMBER/RED checks for information and joint screening purposes

Capita One checked in order to complete screening and contact other professionals, mainly Designated Safeguarding Leads, for further information.

SCHOOL HISTORY

Identify educational setting and communicate directly with the DSL to obtain information and invite to Strategy Meeting if a RED
Managed moves – dates and schools
Movement between schools – dates and schools
CME – length of time and status
Exclusions – details required / sessions and reasons
EHE – length of time registered, last contact

ATTENDANCE

% Attendance – % unauthorised and % authorised absences (codes) and lates
Reduced hours – reasons why
EWS involvement – obtain update from named EWS Officer or involvement log if Officer not available

SEND STATUS

(Where required obtain an update on current situation)
SEND category
EP involvement – named EP
Advisory Team – named Officer

AMBER - Record information on the MASH Contact and verbally share with Social Worker for the purposes of joint screening. Update demographic information with UPN numbers, ethnicity, religion where needed.

RED – Record information on MASH Contact and feedback to partner agencies within the Strategy Meeting

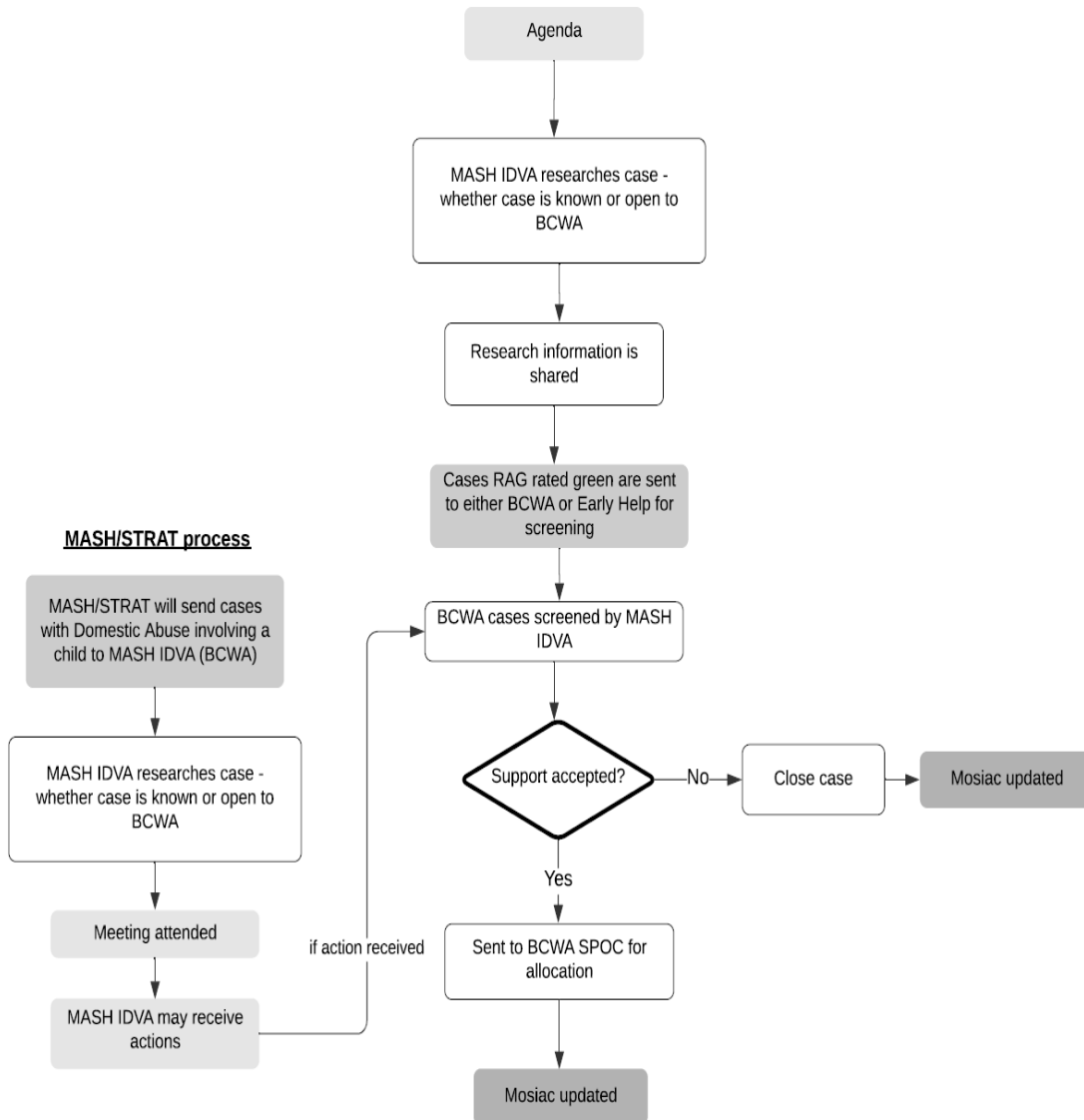
Update CAPITA One with message to reflect there has been a concern raised via MASH.

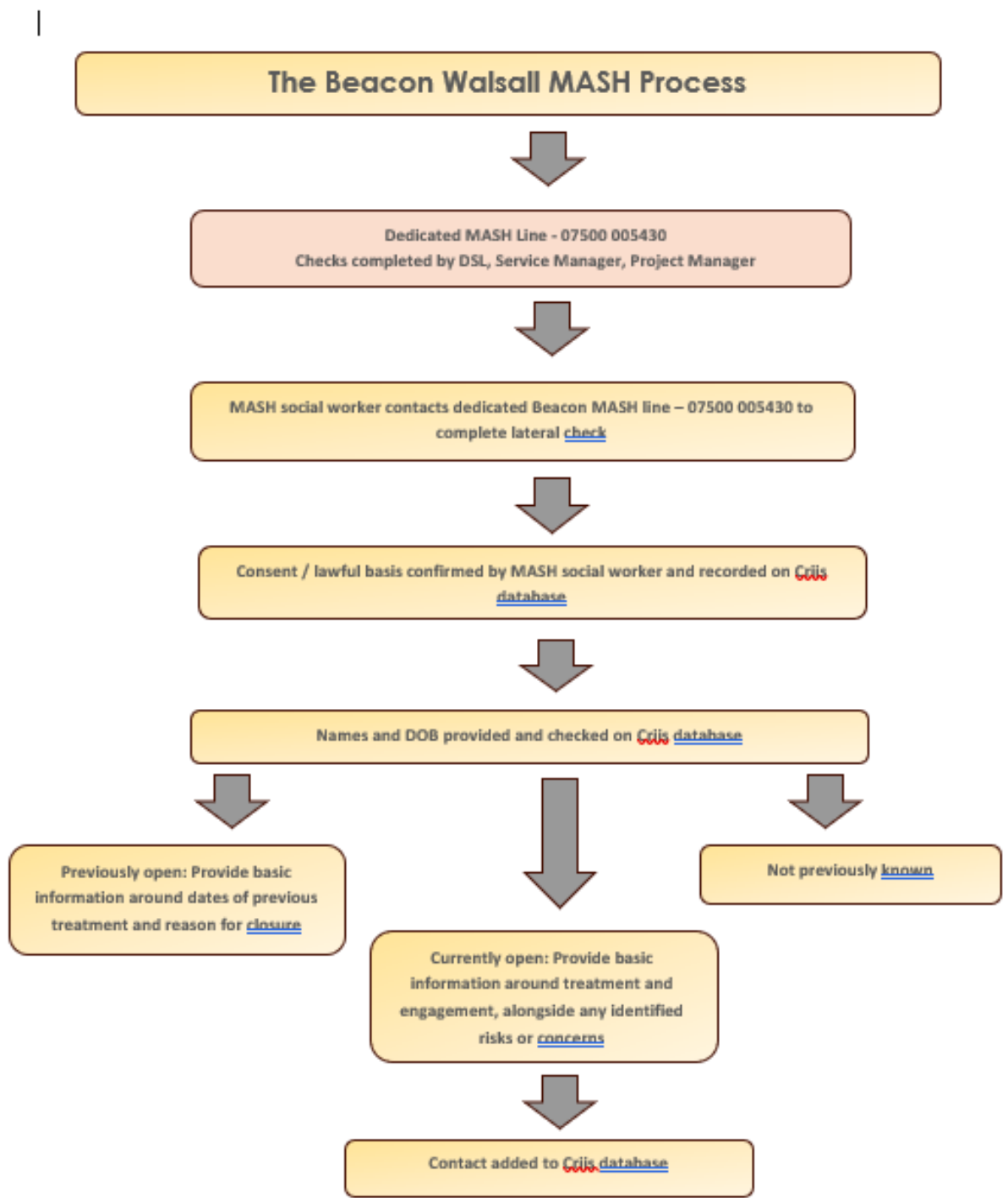


Black Country Women's Aid

we listen, we support, we care

BCWA Walsall MASH processes







Walsall Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

APPENDIX B - DOMESTIC ABUSE TRIAGE

WALSALL DOMESTIC ABUSE TRIAGE

Domestic Abuse notifications of reported DA to police from last 24 hour period (longer over weekend period) received by MASH partners

Initial checks on Mosaic completed by Business Support and 'Open' children/young people to Social Care are removed from the Triage agenda

Operation Encompass – Business Support checks Capita system to identify child's school

Allocated SW and Team Manager notified via email and Mosaic and notification attached

List/Agenda is circulated to all MASH partners in preparation for daily DA Triage

NPU Police send Operation Encompass notifications to appropriate schools

Information is reviewed by locality TM and allocated SW and any required action is determined

Daily Triage with all MASH partners is convened

Police crime report shared with triage members. Social Care have sight of any relevant history pertaining to DA and consider this in decision making. Partner agencies highlight if they hold any information of concern from their systems and consider this in their decision making and RAG rating – in line with RHRT Threshold and DVRIM. Full information to only be shared by partners if level 4 threshold reached and a MASH contact actioned for full screening with parental consent obtained or strategy meeting triggered. Business support create MASH contact for all children discussed at DA Triage and add notes/decision agreed before sending to MASH manager for approval/action.

Level 4

MASH contact sent to MASH manager to assign for screening. SW to gain parental consent for full screening with MASH partners where required

Level 3

MASH Contact record sent for screening by Early Help Practitioner to discuss with parents and explore multi-agency EH with parental consent.

Level 2 – IDVA/DAP support

Agreed in DA Triage that support can be offered to the victim by the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor in MASH or Domestic Abuse Practitioners within Locality. Advice and Guidance provided.

Level 1

No action required
Very low-level incidents where no action is required. Contact

Strategy meeting required

CFA required – pass to Locality Duty & Assessment Team

Partnership Lead Professional identified i.e. School, Health and referral/documents sent or referral sent to locality 0-19 Family Support Hubs.

S47 agreed – pass to Locality Duty & Assessment Team

Domestic Abuse Daily Triage

Terms of Reference

Purpose:

The purpose of Domestic Abuse Daily Triage (DA Triage) is to provide a co-ordinated multi-agency response to domestic abuse ensuring that the right help, support and intervention, is provided at the right time and appropriate level, to children, young people, their parents and carers, where domestic abuse is a feature.

Key Objectives:

- To provide a coordinated multi-agency response to domestic abuse concerns for children, young people and their parents or carers.
- To reduce risk of domestic abuse within families through early identification and intervention i.e. low level domestic abuse concerns, signposting to community and voluntary provisions for support and preventative intervention, including referral to locality Domestic Abuse Practitioners.
- To review and discuss new domestic abuse notifications within 24 hours of MASH receiving them for children, young people and their parents and carers, collectively agreeing level of risk/harm in line with the Barnardo's Domestic Violence Risk Identification Matrix (DVRIM) and Right Help, Right Time Threshold guidance (RHRT).
- To share information and intelligence to support appropriate decision making and identification of risk level in relation to children, young people and adults where domestic abuse is a feature or concern.
- Collectively agree appropriate actions/interventions required to respond to and to reduce harm in relation to children, young people and their parents or carers identified as experiencing and/or witnessing domestic abuse.
- To ensure information discussed and actions agreed are appropriately recorded within the MASH contact and where appropriate (with consent at level 3/4 screening) are disseminated within own agency/department/team and with partners as relevant.
- To work closely together as a partnership to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people who are experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse, seeking maximum impact from the shared resources available.

Governance:

The Domestic Abuse Daily Triage is underpinned by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Operating Principles. This is governed by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Management Group that meets Bi Monthly and reports to Walsall Safeguarding Partnership quarterly.

Membership:

- West Midlands Police – Police Constable
- Children’s Social Care - MASH Social Worker
- Black Country Women’s Aid – Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
- Walsall Healthcare Trust - Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children
- Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust – Named Nurse
- Early Help – Senior Early Help Practitioner
- Education Welfare Officer
- The Probation Service (PS)/Youth Justice Service (YJS) Representative
- MASH Business Support – Note Taker

Roles and responsibilities of members:

- Complete any required pre-meeting checks and attend triage prepared.
- Active participation in agenda and discussions.
- Personal data shared must be proportionate, necessary but not excessive, and must be balanced with the consideration of privacy rights under the Human Rights Act.
- Consider history and repeat contacts particularly where there are 3 or more contacts within 12 months, and consider any escalating worries.
- Business Support Officer to create a MASH contact for all children residing in Walsall, discussed at DA Triage and will ensure information or actions are recorded on the MASH contact as appropriate and sent to the MASH managers for approval/further action.
- Level 3 and 4 contacts to be screened in MASH (with parental consent obtained by the screening Early Help Advisor or Social Worker) where appropriate following DA triage if additional information/discussions are required, including preparation for strategy meeting where this is applicable.
- Information/actions are disseminated within own agency/department/team and with partners as relevant – where there is parental consent to do so (level 3 and 4).
- Undertake actions as agreed within the meeting.
- Where a member is unable to attend, a nominated delegate should attend the meeting in their place from their agency.
- Raise and escalate any concerns or threshold discrepancies from an agencies perspective as required via the MASH Team Manager.
- Abide by the information governance guidelines for each agency and Data Protection Act.

Information sharing

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) sets out what professionals and organisations need to do, individually and in partnership with other agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This remains core guidance on supporting children who are victims of domestic abuse. Working Together also highlights that everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe and that multi-agency working and information sharing is essential to ensure that children and families receive the right help at the right time. The importance of early help in promoting the welfare of children is emphasised.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory guidance was introduced in 2022 to increase awareness, inform the response to domestic abuse and promote best practice. The statutory guidance can be found here; [Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114111/domestic-abuse-act-2021-statutory-guidance.pdf)

The Management of Police Information (MOPI) Code of Practice requires the police to obtain specific information when attending at domestic incidents. Personal data shared must be proportionate, necessary but not excessive, and must be balanced with the consideration of privacy rights under the Human Rights Act. It must take into account any duty of confidentiality owed. A public interest in disclosure must outweigh an individual's right to privacy.

Information is shared amongst key partners within the domestic abuse triage in line with the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Information Sharing Agreement (ISA).

Frequency of the Meetings.

The Domestic Abuse Daily Triage will take place each weekday morning at 10am and will last no longer than 1 hour, Mondays are likely to be longer meetings following weekend notifications being received.

Review

The TOR will be reviewed annually to consider any changes to membership / reporting / process. Review due June 2025.

Version Control

V.1 draft completed on 30/04/21	Rebecca Warren, Group Manager MASH.
V.2 final copy completed on 14/06/21	Rebecca Warren, Group Manager MASH.
V.3 draft 05/02/2024	Rebecca Warren, Head of Service MASH



Walsall Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

APPENDIX C - EXPLOITATION PATHWAY

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Exploitation Pathway

Concerns identified that a Child, Young Person or Adult is being exploited or at risk of exploitation.

Professional identifying concern completes Exploitation Assessment. (see the Exploitation Assessment guidance)

Child, young person or adult is being exploited and in need of immediate protection?

No

Send the completed Exploitation Assessment to Walsall Exploitation Team –
missingexploitedchildren@walsall.gov.uk (this email address is used for children and adults where there are exploitation concerns)

Yes

Contact the police by calling '999', and notify MASH 0300 555 2866 (Children) or Initial Intake 0300 555 2922 (Adults) and send completed Exploitation Assessment to the Exploitation Team.

Basic checks completed by the Exploitation Co-ordinator. If the child, YP or adult is open to Social Care, the allocated worker is notified. If not, Exploitation Assessment sent to MASH or Initial Intake. **Exploitation Co-ordinator sends Exploitation Assessment to Partners (i.e. Police: PPU, Locate, FCID, Partnerships, Health, Street Teams) in preparation for next days daily triage.**

Strategy discussion/Information sharing takes place by MASH/Initial Intake where there is a concern of significant harm identified for the victim at point of contact. Immediate safeguarding actions planned and any disruption activity is considered. Assessments completed i.e CFA, S.47, adult plans (see pathway guidance).

Multi-Agency Daily triage takes place coordinated by the Exploitation Team.
 The Exploitation Assessment is reviewed and discussed. Initial checks completed and level of risk agreed (this is sometimes different to the initial level of risk indicated by the referrer). Appropriate course of action agreed (**see below possible outcomes**) based on risk level and information shared and safety planning considered. Key information/intel/themes identified to share at Exploitation Panel. Missing action plans considered where required.

Police referrals can be made at any time during this process via calling 101 or submission of intelligence forms (add link). Social workers should refer to police upon receipt of new or escalating exploitation concerns.

Where common **themes** are identified, **perpetrators** and evidence of **concern** within community is established – these are noted and added to the next Exploitation Panel agenda.

Exploitation Coordinator liaises with allocated worker for the Victim **if medium/high risk** – initiates safety planning in line with existing plans, i.e. Child in need, Child protection Plans, Children in Care, missing intervention meetings, adult safety plans. Mapping and intelligence gathering ongoing.

Low risk/No risk victims – appropriate intervention identified at daily triage. This could be Single agency support, voluntary organisations including Street Teams, Single agency Early Help, targeted Early Help

Exploitation Panel takes place monthly and is a strategic multi-agency panel where information and Intel is shared across the partnership who look at themes and commonalities relating to the most vulnerable victims in the borough to aid disruption of exploitation, manage resources based on key locations of concern and support formal criminal and civil actions taking place to reduce exploration risk in the Borough. Discussion is disruption and location focused informed by themes from high risk/most vulnerable victims of Exploitation. Exploitation Panel is chaired by a social care Head of Service.

Review: Each victim is reviewed in accordance with their existing plan i.e. CIN, CP, LAC, Adult safety plan, or as new exploitation concerns are identified. Actions are reviewed and amended or ended as required. Exploitation Assessment is updated by allocated worker following any change in exploitation concerns. The Exploitation Team capture detail of Victims reducing in risk but also increase of risk and identify any key themes/locations.

Exit Plan/Step Down: This would take place when there are no longer any exploitation risks evident for the victim or the risk has reduced to Low and can be managed via Early Help intervention for children and equivalent for Adults.



Walsall Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

APPENDIX D – MASH MANAGEMENT GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

MASH Management Group Terms of Reference

1. Background

The Walsall Safeguarding Partnership (WSP) is an organisation that is committed to continuous learning and improvement through its statutory functions and reviews as defined within [Working Together 2018](#) and [Sections 43\(3\) of the Care Act 2014](#).

The MASH Management Group is a multi-agency senior officer group that has delegated responsibility from Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Executive Group to deliver our shared leadership responsibilities for children, young people, and adults with care and support needs in the borough.

Using the WSP Performance and Quality Assurance framework it meets these requirements to assure itself of the quality and impact of services and enable their continuous improvement.

2. Purpose

The Walsall Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Management Group is a multi-agency group which meets to oversee the effective operation of and adherence to the MASH Operating Principles.

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership introduced the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in October 2015. The aim of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is to bring together key professionals from across the partnership to ensure timely and high-quality information sharing, analysis and decision making to deliver appropriate and proportionate intervention and quality outcomes for children, young people and families in Walsall.

The MASH comprises a co-located team including Walsall Children's Social Care, Early Help Team, Police, Walsall Healthcare Trust, Black Country Mental Health Trust, Education Welfare, the Probation Service, Black Country Women's Aid and the Missing and Exploitation Team, in addition to a virtual link to The Beacon Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service.

3. Overall Aims

The group will:

- Hold partner agencies to account through the WSP Quality Assurance Framework.
- Alert the Safeguarding Leadership Group (SLG) members of any emerging threats, risks or trends as appropriate.
- Members of the MASH Management will be active in assessing front line practice.

- Ensure opportunities to hear the voice of children, young people and all professionals are incorporated into the work of the group. This will then feed into performance reports which will be supported by data and other intelligence.
- Monitor performance of the MASH against the agreed performance indicators developed from MASH data and agencies located within or virtually connected to the MASH including:
 - contacts and referrals including conversion rate from contact to referral
 - presenting issues
 - category of risk
 - timeliness
 - outcome indicators
 - repeat referrals
 - feedback activity
- Quality Measures:
 - quality of referrals by agency ~ auditing of MARF's by MASH Management Group with outcomes shared by partners in their own agency as part of learning and as part of the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership audit activity
 - decision making by MASH ~ as part of the MASH Management auditing activity
- Ensure opportunities to hear the voice of children, young people and all professionals are incorporated into the work of the group.
- Alert Senior Leadership Group of any emerging threats, risks or trends as appropriate.
- Continue to develop the MASH best practice.
- Link between different partnership activities
- Review the MASH Operating Principles on an annual basis as a minimum

4. Analyse, Plan, Do, Review

A Performance and Quality Assurance (PQA) Framework consists of a structured programme of activity, assessment and reporting into the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and practice. WSP's Performance and Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is used by all the subgroups in the partnership to provide a consistent, systematic, evidence-based and intelligence informed approach to our work. It is also used as a leadership tool to deliver our responsibilities as strategic managers across the partnership.



5. Governance and Reporting

- The MASH Management is chaired by Head of service for Help & Protection, who is also a member of exploitation Subgroup.
- The Chair will provide a written report quarterly to both the SLG and PQA when required on the work of MASH Management Group and as part of this reporting by exception escalate issues to the Executive Group.
- MASH Management Group will also receive updates, feedback, and guidance from the Executive Group /SLG to direct and steer the work of the subgroup.
- Practice themes identified through MASH Management will be shared with the Practice, Learning & Development subgroup to follow through on themes arising and influence the learning and development offer through Right Help Right Time.

6. Membership

This should include an identified person of the right designation from each agency with a nominated deputy.

- Walsall Children's Service: Social Care
- Walsall Children's Services: Early Help
- Walsall Children's Services: Education Welfare
- West Midlands Police Public Protection Unit (Children)
- Integrated Care Board
- Walsall Healthcare Trust (WHT – Manor Hospital)
- The Probation Service
- Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Business Unit
- Black Country Women's Aid
- Beacon Recovery Service
- And other agencies/individual staff by exception at the discretion of the Chair

6.1 Support officers for the PQA will include the WSP Business Unit and Support Officers for Performance and Quality Assurance.

7. Quoracy

The group is quorate if there is a representative present from each of the following: The relevant social care (children and adults), police and health (ICB and provider Trust adult and Children). This is in line with Working Together 2018 and the Care Act 2014.

In the event of a meeting being non-quorate the Chair will need to decide based upon the meeting's agenda as to whether the meeting will need to be rescheduled, continue as planned and/or whether any key decisions will need to be virtually ratified by any missing quorate members.

The attendance of core members will be monitored throughout the year, any concerns around attendance will be escalated to the relevant senior officer and Executive Group.

8. Frequency of Meetings

Meetings will be held bi-monthly. Frequency of meetings will be reviewed after 12 months

Task and Finish Groups will be established as and when required by the MASH Management Chair. Such groups will be requested to undertake specific, focused pieces of work with clear direction set by the Chairs of PQA and expected to report back to the wider group within a specified timescale.

9. Responsibilities of group and members

Each Partner agency are expected to nominate a suitable person(s) to represent their organisation at MASH Management.

The MASH Management Group will provide updates to Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Executive Group via the Safeguarding Leadership Group.

The Chair of this group will be agreed by the Executive Group and remain in role for a period of 12 months. It is anticipated that each Partner organisation will nominate prospective Chair members as required.

To see the requirements of members please see the *Scheme of Delegation Section 5.11*

10. Administrative support

It is agreed that the Safeguarding Business Unit will provide administrative support to this subgroup. They will:

- a. Maintain an annual schedule of meetings including arranging meeting dates, times, and venues where applicable and cascade to Chair and Members.

- b. Arrange pre-agenda meetings with Chairs, ensuring minutes of the meeting are sent out to all participants within 2 weeks of the meeting being held.
- c. Coordinate work for and on behalf of the Chair(s) to ensure group members receive information in a timely fashion.
- d. The Business Unit will circulate single agency action plans 3 weeks prior to each meeting for progress updates to be completed and returned to the Business Unit in advance of the meeting.

11. Risk Management

Identified risks need to be recorded on subgroup risk register and then be escalated to the SLG, with a request that unresolved risks are escalated to the Executive Group as necessary. The Safeguarding Leadership Group will be responsible for recording and managing these.

12. Agenda Items

Agenda items should be submitted 10 days in advance of the meeting to the designated officer providing support from the Safeguarding Business Unit who will subsequently ratify the next agenda with the Chair. The papers for the meeting will be circulated to members five working days before the meeting. Meetings are to be two hours in length.

13. Record of the Meeting

MASH Management Group will be supported by the staff from the Business Unit. Record of the meeting will be distributed no later than two weeks after the meeting.

Papers may not be copied or distributed further without the written permission of the Chair.

A record of attendance will be logged through an agency activity tracker and reported to the SLG. Where agency non-attendance is recurring, this will be escalated to the WSP Executive Group.

14. Conflicts of Interest

If any member becomes aware of a conflict of interest which has, is likely to have or could be perceived to have an adverse effect on any decision, this shall be declared, and the Chair will determine whether the member concerned should withdraw from the meeting whilst the relevant discussion or decision related to the agenda item is in progress. All declarations and conflicts of interest and the action to manage the interest shall be set out in the record of the meeting.

15. Confidentiality

Papers that are marked 'in confidence, not for publication or dissemination' shall remain confidential to the members of the panel unless the Chair indicates otherwise. Members, representative or any persons in attendance shall not reveal or disclose the contents of these papers without express permission of the Chair. This prohibition shall apply equally to the content of any discussion during the meeting which may take place on such papers.

16. Disagreements

Matters of ongoing concern to the subgroup e.g., non completion of action plans, lack of agency engagement or attendance at meetings would in the first instance be addressed by the Subgroup Chair. If there is no satisfactory resolution this will be escalated to the Safeguarding Leadership Group and if necessary, the Executive Group.

It is the responsibility of the MASH Management Chair to escalate. **See appendix 3: Walsall Escalation Process.**

17. Data Protection Act 2018

WSP Executive members will give due regard to their responsibilities to comply with Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation Principles (GDPR)

18. Freedom of Information Act 2000

Single agency papers are subject to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. All papers that are exempt from public release under the FOI Act must be clearly marked 'in confidence, not for publication'. These papers may not be copied or distributed outside of the Group membership without the expressed permission of the Chair. FOI exemption 41 (duty of confidence) applies.

19. Review

After initial endorsement the WSP Executive Group will review the Terms of Reference in September 2024 and annually thereafter.



Walsall Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

APPENDIX E - PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Performance Framework

Baseline data:

There is a requirement that every agency working in and with the MASH consider their own baseline of data. This baseline will provide the detail on which to measure the contribution to safeguarding through a measure of volumes in relation to children requiring a safeguarding response.

1. Contacts and referrals ~ the number of referrals submitted by agency provides an overall assessment of how much each agency puts forward in terms of safeguarding. Conversion rate from contact to referral
2. Presenting issue ~ a measure of the type of referral made which will help map key areas of demand
3. Category of Risk ~ referrals by Red, Amber & Green will map the level of severity being dealt with and help understanding of the added value of information sharing in relation to these risk issues.

An additional measurement of the change of rating

- from Red to Amber
 - from Red to Green
 - from Amber to Red
 - from Amber to Green
4. Timeliness ~ measures of the timeliness within which referrals are dealt with to include partner feedback to the MASH. Targets have been agreed as Red within 4 hours; Amber within 1 working day; Green within 5 working days:
 - % of agency feedback to MASH within 4hrs
 - % of agency feedback to MASH within 5hrs ~7hrs
 - % of agency feedback to MASH within 7hrs ~ 15hrs
 5. Outcome Indicators ~ the outcome of each contact and referral
 6. Repeat referral rate into MASH will help support understanding of effectiveness of outcomes applied to presenting risks and a measure of escalating risk
 7. Feedback activity

Quality Measures

8. Quality of referrals by agency including whether consent has been sought
9. Decision making by MASH ~ as part of the MASH audit activity

10. Outcome from audits ~ as part of the agreed MASH audit cycle
11. Outcome of feedback from referrers

These actions will be undertaken by the MASH Management Group with outcomes shared by partners in their own agency as part of learning and as part of the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership audit cycle.

Early Help

1. Contacts and referrals ~ the number of referrals submitted by agency provides an overall assessment of how much each agency puts forward in terms of safeguarding. Conversion rate from contact to referral
2. Presenting issue ~ a measure of the type of referral made which will help map key areas of demand
3. Category of request ~ will map the range of activity being dealt with and help understanding of the added value of information sharing to support the delivery of early help.
4. Outcome Indicators ~ will add understanding to how each agency is engaged and provide information on the number of requests that should have been routed through MASH for statutory intervention.

Quality Measures

5. Quality of referrals by agency including whether consent has been sought

Version Control

V.1 draft completed on 30/04/21	Rebecca Warren, Group Manager MASH.
V.2 final copy completed on 14/06/21	Rebecca Warren, Group Manager MASH.
V.6 draft completed 04/05/24	Rebecca Warren, Group Manager MASH.