

Children & Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 January 2016



Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs

Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive, and Rachael Shimmin, Corporate Director of Children & Adult Services

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee with information in relation to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs. The Committee will receive a presentation from Helen Fergusson, Strategic Manager First Contact and Intervention.

Background

- 2 The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was launched in March 2015 and is made up of professionals from agencies including police, health , children's social care, education and Harbour (voluntary sector domestic abuse service). In addition there are virtual links to other key agencies including Tees, Esk and Wear valley Mental Health Trust (TEWV); Probation and LifeLine (voluntary sector drug and alcohol service). See appendix 3 for detail. The MASH provides a central point for the screening, gathering, sharing and analysing information about children in County Durham who may be at risk of harm or who may need support services. The MASH is co-located within the First Contact Service and the Police Central Referral Unit (CRU) and is managed by the manager at First Contact.

Rationale for Creating the MASH

- 3 Following the Horden Domestic Homicide Review, a recommendation was made for the creation of a MASH to improve information sharing between agencies.
- 4 The purpose of the MASH is:
 - To improve the quality of information sharing between agencies who know and work with children when they are referred into children's social care
 - To ensure that information can be shared quickly and easily so that timely decisions can be made
 - To ensure that risk and vulnerability issues are quickly identified so that the right support is offered to the child and family

- To improve the ability of agencies to see patterns of risk and harm for children over time and across services with a view to reducing child neglect
- To improve consistency of response for children and families in Durham
- To ensure that children and families receive help early and stop issues from escalating
- To reduce the numbers of children who are re-referred into children's services as the right support is offered at the right time

The MASH Process (see appendix 2)

- 5 The MASH will screen and share information relating to referrals that are made about children where there are concerns for their welfare or their safety. It is designed to ensure that all of the available information from key agencies about a child and their family is shared in a timely way at this critical decision making point. Referrals are rated as Red (significant and immediate concerns for the child; Amber Level 4 (significant concerns for the child but not immediate) and Amber Level 3 (concerns for the child who are in need of support services but not necessarily social work support).
- 6 MASH processes require red rated referrals to be processed within 4 working hours; and Amber rated referrals to be processed within one working day.
- 7 All agencies have access to their own IT systems within the MASH and so can quickly and easily share information that they hold about children and their families. Any new multi-agency information will then be stored centrally on the social services information database and be added to the original referral information.
- 8 The MASH will analyse the information and form a more accurate opinion about the level of risk that the child is experiencing based on fuller information gathering than is possible under current processes and will then make a decision about the most appropriate service or team to meet the needs of the child and their family and send the referral to them.
- 9 The receiving team will receive a set of summary reports and analysis from all key agencies who know the child and family with an overall level of need rating for the child. Clear recommendations for further action will be included.

The benefits of the MASH

- 10 Agencies can ensure that all available information is coordinated and shared at the point of referral in order to assist in making the right decision about which service is best placed to support the child.
- 11 The MASH can access and share information more quickly and so decisions can be made more quickly meaning the child and family will receive help in a timely way. Previously, this process relied on social workers ringing individual agencies and awaiting their responses.
- 12 The MASH can help to inform professionals about how quickly they need to respond to a child who may be at risk of harm.

- 13 Children and their families will receive help as soon as they need it as professionals will be able to identify potential risk and vulnerability earlier and prevent situations escalating.

The presentation will focus on

- Progress since Go Live in March 2015
- Activity and performance
- Examples of Success
- Challenges
- Future Development Plans

Recommendation

Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to receive the presentation and note its' content and comment accordingly.

Background Papers

None

Contact: Helen Fergusson, Strategic Manager First Contact & Interventions
Tel: 03000 266543

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing - None

Risk – This is a key statutory safeguarding function for the Council.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – The MASH is set up to provide a greater level of safeguarding to children and young people. Age is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act.

Accommodation – The current premises are no longer fit for purpose or large enough and the MASH team will move to Parsons Court in Newton Aycliffe in early 2016.

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights - None

Consultation – None

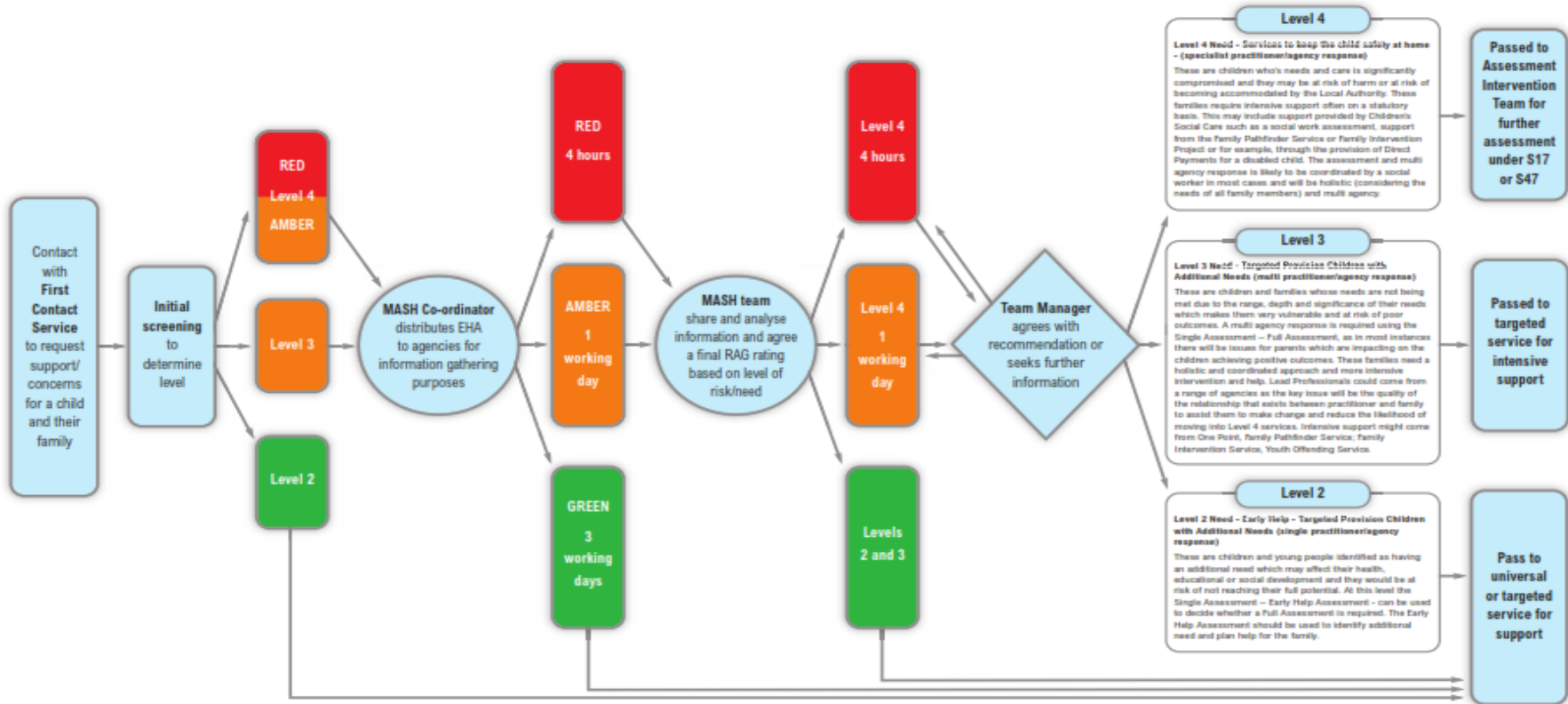
Procurement – None

Disability Issues – None

Legal Implications – None

Appendix 2

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Process Pathway



Appendix 3

