Making a MASH contact (Devon)

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

A MASH contact (previously known as a MASH enquiry) is the name given to professionals contacting MASH about safeguarding concerns that they have for a child, where they think that they may require Children's Social Care involvement.

Before submitting a MASH contact

You should first consider if the needs of the child or young person could be met by your own agency or other professionals working with the family. You may want to contact your early help locality officer for support and guidance around Devon's early help offer.

Ensure that any early help plan in place has been given sufficient time and support to enable the family to make any changes required.

You should discuss your concerns, in full, with all parents/carers and then seek their consent for a MASH contact. You should not seek consent if you believe that to do so would increase the risk of harm to the child.

You should discuss your concerns and seek advice from your line manager and/or the safeguarding lead within your agency.

Consider requesting a consultation with a MASH social worker to enable you to talk through concerns and consider if a MASH contact is appropriate.

MASH contacts only need to be completed where the situation presents as an acute or chronic risk to the child (significant risk of harm). If in doubt, or this is an urgent child protection enquiry, please ring the MASH consultation line.

Things to consider

What are the risks and impacts on the child(ren)?

What action have you taken to address the risk?

Have you considered if any of the voluntary or community resources can help to reduce the risk?

Outline resilience and protective factors.

What changes would you need to see in the family to be assured that the risk of harm has reduced?

Views of the child

Views of the parent

Did you have anything else you wanted to share?

For help assessing the safeguarding risk to children, read and download our Level of Need tool.

Submitting a MASH contact

Complete the MASH contact form. Please:

- be succinct and use bullet points where possible
- include a summary of current and historical concerns alongside outlining what support has been put in place to address these
- record why you feel that Children's Social Care intervention is now needed and what that will add to the current support in place

If you believe that the concerns require an urgent response, for example, because the child is in immediate danger please telephone MASH on 0345 155 1071. You will also be required to follow this up promptly with a written contact form.

Read our quick tips for making a MASH contact.

After submitting a MASH contact

Please continue to work with other agencies to support the family with any needs/concerns.

You should expect to initially hear from a MASH social worker within 1 working day to let you know if the contact has been accepted. If the contact is accepted then you should be kept informed of the outcome within a week of it being accepted.

You can get in touch with MASH to ask about the progress of the contact or obtain the name of the social worker who is allocated.

Emergency duty service

Out of hours contact number: 0345 6000 388

Opening hours:

- Monday to Thursday, 5.00pm – 9.00am
- Friday to Monday, 4.00pm – 9.00am
- Bank Holidays, 24 hours

The Emergency duty service provides emergency social care response in Devon for vulnerable Adults, Children and young people outside of normal office hours.

The team is comprised of experienced social care professionals and support staff who have a vast range of skills and knowledge to support individuals and their families experiencing crisis.

Data protection

Devon County Council (DCC) will act as the data controller for any personal data that you provide. DCC will ensure that the data is processed under the Data Protection Act 2018. More information about how this is done is available here.

For Cornwall Concerns

You can contact us using the following methods:

Complete an online referral

- Complete an inter agency referral - NB you will need to save this and email it to us
- Email us at multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk
- Tel: 0300 123 1116

What happens next

The MARU provides a multi-disciplinary response to concerns about the welfare or safety of a child or young person. This is in line with Statutory Guidance from Our Safeguarding Children Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Our Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU) will try to help you by signposting you to the service that can best help meet your child's needs. Sometimes they will recommend you speak to the Early Help Hub and they will complete an Early Help assessment.

If you, or someone else, is concerned about the safety or welfare of your child(ren), the Children and Families Service will carry out an assessment to consider the most appropriate help. The allows us to talk to you and your child(ren) about any problems and, if appropriate, to plan the right help for you to solve these problems.

Child Protection Conferences

A child protection conference is a meeting to discuss concerns which have been raised about the safety and well being of your child(ren). It is set up by social care. The social worker will explain the reasons for the meeting in your case.

For immediate concerns during evenings and weekends

Our Out of Hours Social Work Service is for:

- children, young people or families experiencing immediate difficulties
- people who have an immediate concern for the safety of a child / young person

You can contact us at: **01208 251300**

If there is an immediate issue of safety then the Police should be called

You will be asked for your:

- telephone number
- location
- which specialist Out of Hours Service you think you need

Hours available:

- Weekdays from 5.15pm (4.45pm Fridays) until 8.45am
- Weekends from 4.45pm on Friday until 8.45am the following Monday
- All public holidays

Who will help me?

Children's Social Care emergencies are dealt with by a Children's Social Worker and their Manager.

Emergency needs relating to children's social work will be assessed with other agencies where appropriate. Our teams work with colleagues in police and health. This is to assess the needs of children and young people. Information will be shared for the safety of children and young people.

The Out of Hours Service does not deal with routine requests

Non urgent requests should be referred to the Multi Agency Referral Unit at 0300 123 1116.

For Somerset Referrals

If you are worried about a child or young person who could be in danger, please contact:

Children's Social Care on **0300 123 2224**Email: **childrens@somerset.gov.uk**Police: **101 or in an emergency 999**

The Family Front Door Consultation Line

Contact the Family Front Door if you are a Designated Safeguarding Lead or GP and you require real time advice about a child/ren/family you are supporting, or if you are considering making a referral to Children Services but are unsure and want guidance, or to sound out your thinking in a safe space.

To contact the Family Front Door call: **0300 123 3078**

Give us information about a suspected vulnerable or exploited person

If you come across any information to suggest a young person is at risk of exploitation, please submit intelligence through the Avon & Somerset Police portal.

https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul

Please note – this is not a referral form or early help notification form and does not replace any pre-existing referral or notification mechanism.

Allegations Reporting Form

To notify the LADO of an allegation, an **Allegations Reporting Form** (ARF) will need to be completed and forwarded to Somerset Direct: **sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk**

Alternatively, you can phone Somerset Direct on **0300 123 2224** and request an ARF.

Allegations Reporting Form

Prevent

If you are concerned that a child, young person, or adult might be at risk of radicalisation due to their ideology, membership, or affiliation with extremist groups (including online or social media activity), you should (1) Share your concerns with your Designated Safeguarding Lead; and (2) Follow your organisation's due process.

For guidance visit **Making a referral to Prevent.**

For Referrals: *please note, Prevent referrals cannot be made with an EHA.*

If a prevent referral is appropriate, you will need to complete the National Prevent referral form which should be sent to the Regional Police Prevent Team: PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk

You can phone **01278 647466**, Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm. For out of hours advice, phone **101**

For general enquiries and guidance: Contact Somerset Council at Prevent@somerset.gov.uk or visit Prevent in Somerset.

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