



The Wandsworth Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Information for professionals



Introduction

The Wandsworth MASH is a new model for managing and responding to contacts and referrals to children's social care. The MASH is a multi-agency team of professionals who work together to share information within a secure environment to support better decision-making on cases.

By bringing representatives of different agencies together, more information is available in relation to each case meaning a more sound assessment of risk can be made. This will ultimately result in better decisions being made leading to better outcomes for children and young people.



Who is in the MASH

At the launch of the Wandsworth MASH in April 2014, the following agencies and services are represented:

- Children's Social Care
- Community Health
- Education Welfare
- Police
- Probation
- Housing

In addition the Wandsworth Family Information Service is co-located with the MASH in order to support the relationship between Early Help and the MASH. It is envisaged that over time more partners will join the MASH as its remit expands and it becomes clearer what additional support is required.

How does it work?

The MASH is the new front door for access to children's social care in Wandsworth. Although the MASH is multi-agency, ultimate responsibility for decision-making rests with the MASH Manager (a Principal Social Worker). The high level process is as follows:

1. All contacts and referrals to Wandsworth children's social care are received by the MASH and based on the information available an initial decision is made on action. This may be provision of information and advice, a referral or signposting to early help services, allocation for a child and family assessment or to conduct a strategy meeting/discussion.
2. If the MASH Manager feels further multi-agency information is needed to support the initial decision or to support an assessment or strategy discussion/meeting, the case can be referred to the MASH team for agency checks to be carried out.
3. MASH team members carry out agency checks on the case within a set timeframe in order to identify previous involvement with services and highlight risks. This information is then compiled into a comprehensive risk assessment and analysis of the case from each agency's perspective.
4. Using the risk assessment, the MASH Manager reviews the case and makes a decision on action. Again, this may be provision of information and advice, signposting or referral to early help services, allocation for assessment or to conduct a strategy meeting/discussion. If an assessment is already being undertaken or a strategy discussion/meeting has been arranged, the MASH information will support those processes.

Benefits

Secure information sharing

The MASH provides a secure environment for agencies to share information and intelligence about cases – meaning a full picture of the child or young person's life can be built to support decision making.

Comprehensive risk analysis

Information and analysis in the MASH is risk-focused and structured around the Signs of Safety approach. This means a detailed understanding of the case is built up and a comprehensive assessment of risk can be undertaken.

Better decision making

Improved information sharing and a comprehensive understanding of risk provides the environment for better working between agencies, better application of thresholds and ultimately, better decision-making.

What does it mean for me?

From 1 April 2014 referrals to Wandsworth children's social care should be made to the MASH.

All referrals to the MASH should be supported by a completed Early Help Assessment. The MASH will be phasing out the use of the inter-agency referral form and Early Help Assessments will be used instead. A completed Early Help Assessment is required by the MASH in order to provide a comprehensive summary of the case which can be used to inform decision-making and, if required, the agency checks process.

If you have serious child protection concerns, contact the MASH immediately – an Early Help Assessment is not initially required but should be provided within 48 hours.

Referrals to the MASH can be made in the following ways:

Email: MASH@wandsworth.gov.uk

Phone: 020 8871 6622

Via the Early Help IT System

The MASH is in operation Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm, outside of these hours please contact the Out of Hours Service on 020 8871 6000.

Information-sharing and consent

Consent to share information is central to the MASH model and will be a key consideration of each case. Before sharing information on a case, parental consent to do so will be sought unless:

- The child will be placed at increased risk of significant harm
- The adult will be placed at risk of serious harm
- Prevention or detection of a serious crime will be prejudiced
- It results in an unjustified delay in making enquires about allegations of significant harm.

Each MASH team member is the custodian of their agency's information and will ultimately be responsible for what information is shared and who it is shared with.



The Wandsworth MASH

2nd Floor
Town Hall Extension
Wandsworth High Street
London
SW18 2PU

Tel: 020 8871 6622

email: MASH@wandsworth.gov.uk