



The Vision

To improve Safeguarding by

- Early identification
- Early Intervention
- Improved communication between agencies

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What Is MASH?

Devon's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will provide information sharing across all organisations involved in safeguarding – encompassing statutory, nonstatutory and third sector sources. Essentially the hub will analyse information that is already known within separate organisations in a coherent format to inform all safeguarding decisions.

All partners will work together to provide the highest level of knowledge and analysis to make sure that all safeguarding activity and intervention is timely, proportionate and necessary.

MASH focuses on three key functions:

1. **Victim identification and early intervention** - working with the Early Response Service to support children and young people whose needs do not meet the threshold for children's social care.
2. **Harm identification and reduction** - this will be done by identifying children and young people experiencing the highest levels of harm and making sure partners work together to support them with harm reduction strategies and services.
3. **Co-ordinating partner agencies** - working with vulnerable adults and vulnerable children.

How will it work?

All information within the MASH will be collected and decision-making will take place in a timely manner within agreed timescales depending on the priority criteria when a MASH enquiry is made to a Hub.

The MASH will:

- Manage contacts and referrals received from any source.
- Develop a document recording the concern information and all other available information in the Hubs within agreed timescales. A children's social care Manager will make an informed decision using all of the available information.
- Develop concern information into a children's social care referral if services are required under Section 17 or 47 of The Children Act 1989.
- Liaise with the Early Response Service for children and young people who need services but do not meet The Children Act 1989 threshold.
- Provide consultation to agency referrers about thresholds, appropriate action to be undertaken and services.

The hub will contribute to improved outcomes for safeguarding children because it has the ability to swiftly collate and share information held by various organisations and to provide a multi-agency risk assessment of each case for 'actual or likely harm'.

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility

Case Study 1

MASH enquiry made by a GP regarding a 12 year old child presenting to medical services over 50 times in a year with no medical reason. The enquiry was based on medical advice following a fall.

Through the MASH process it became apparent that the school also had concerns regarding the child's attendance, and on meeting the father of the child, it had been disclosed that the child's mother had been preventing the child from attending school by fabricating medical reasons.

The multi-agency approach enable children's social care to immediately address the safeguarding issues.

Case Study 2

A 121a referral regarding a domestic violence within a family home was received in the MASH.

Due to the Police and Probation information gathered a social worker arranged to do a joint visit with a colleague to ensure her safety following information about the violent nature of the male involved – information that was only highlighted through the MASH.

Case Study 3

MASH enquiry received regarding a 3 year old with burns to the soles of both feet due to walking across a cooker. NHS Devon were concerned regarding the explanation and the fact that the father had not called an ambulance.

The enquiry was risk assessed as Red. The Health link to the MASH contacted the consultant paediatrician who stated that he had no concerns and had assessed the injury as accidental.

The MASH were able to ascertain within a hour of the enquiry that there were no immediate safeguarding concerns. The enquiry was downgraded to Green.

Where are we now?

April 2010 saw Devon launch the first Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. Within the hub are a range of representatives including: Police, children's social care, Probation, Health, Education, Adult and Community Services, Mental Health Services, Early Years, CAMHS, plus the Ambulance Service.

The role out of the MASH has been implemented in stages across Devon focusing on the safeguarding of children and young people.

What will happen in the future?

Once all the processes concerning safeguarding children are refined, Devon MASH will embed the same protocols in the safeguarding of adults.

Devon MASH contact details:

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If you would like more information contact:

MASH team managers or operations manager
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MASH police sergeant

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For professional consultation enquiries please contact:

A MASH social worker

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