



# **HARINGEY MULTI AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB OPERATING PROTOCOL**

Developed by: The MASH Operational Group  
Agreed by: The MASH Strategic Board 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018  
Approved by: Haringey Local Safeguarding Children's Board 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
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## Introduction

### What is a MASH?

“A MASH is a team of co-located safeguarding partners, with access to their agency’s electronic data, who will research, interpret and determine appropriate information sharing in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk of immediate and / or serious harm.”

### MASH Background

There continue to be many local and national drivers for change to strengthen and improve the ability of all safeguarding partnerships to protect the most vulnerable and in need within our society. The importance of information sharing and communication and the deficiencies that continue to present in this regard, are recurring themes in most serious case reviews. Some of the challenges associated with safeguarding information is that it is held by different agencies and numerous teams and services which can prove very difficult to gather and bring together in one place at one time. This makes the analysis of risk notoriously difficult and threatens the safety of the vulnerable and those most in need of protection.

The creation of the first MASH, bringing allied safeguarding partners together in one place to share information, occurred in Devon in 2010. This was reviewed by Professor Eileen Munro whilst undertaking the field work associated with her review of the country’s child protection system in 2012 when she identified MASH as a model of best practice.

The London Safeguarding Children Board established a Pan-London MASH Project Board in 2012 with the aim of establishing a MASH in each London borough by 2014. Haringey was an early adopter and launched its MASH in February 2012. A review and refresh of arrangements was initiated in 2015 which reiterated a number of the original MASH core elements and strengthened existing arrangements.

### MASH Research

As part of the Pan-London implementation programme the University of Greenwich (2013) published “Assessing the Early Impact of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) in London” (University of Greenwich, 2013). The research findings are summarised below;

- There had been fast progress in a short time suggesting a MASH culture that may support working together and information sharing
- There were promising signs that a MASH can improve safeguarding outcomes by providing a fuller picture of the child
- More informed decisions can be made with improved turnaround times

- There were challenges of gathering information from different data bases  
Raising awareness was still a challenge in respect of understanding the MASH role and referral process
- There were pressures on partners to manage workloads and staff shortages were a challenge
- Feedback to partners referring into the MASH needed to be improved
- Utilising the skills of all partners (not just social care & police) was important area for development

## **MASH Five Core Elements**

There are five core elements established as part of the Pan-London MASH model. These were agreed as part of the Pan-London implementation programme governed by the London Safeguarding Children Board. These are as follows:

### **1. ALL NOTIFICATIONS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN TO GO THROUGH THE HUB**

- All safeguarding and child welfare notifications (whatever the nature and level of concern) should be routed into the MASH
- This should prevent concerns being masked by volume or bureaucracy
- This should enable the identification and analysis of low level repeat concerns from a variety of partners
- This will promote effective interventions at the earliest opportunity
- This ensures one standard decision making and assessment process
- This allows a practice and performance base-line to be established and regular auditing process

### **2. A CO-LOCATED TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS FROM CORE AGENCIES DELIVERING AN INTEGRATED SERVICE WITH THE AIM TO RESEARCH, INTERPRET & DETERMINE WHAT IS PROPORTIONATE AND RELEVANT TO SHARE**

- This recognises the importance of having confidence and trust amongst safeguarding partners to engage and work effectively together
- The duty of care for agency information remains with the “owner” eg: CYPS access to MOSAIC, Health access to RIO and Police access to PNC
- Decisions to share information are made on a case by case basis within the statutory framework
- All multi agency information is shared within the security of the hub to confirm the agreed outcome

### **3. THE HUB IS FIRE WALLED, KEEPING MASH ACTIVITY CONFIDENTIAL AND SEPARATE FROM OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY, AND PROVIDING A CONFIDENTIAL RECORD TO SUPPORT THIS**

- This ensures that sensitive information is kept within a confidential environment

- Information is shared only on a strict “need to know” basis
- Only those that have a need to know the information get to see it
- There is a MASH premises checklist which is marked Appendix A

#### 4. AN AGREED PROCESS FOR ANALYSING AND ASSESSING RISK, BASED ON THE FULLEST INFORMATION PICTURE AND DISSEMINATION TO THE MOST APPROPRIATE AGENCY FOR NECESSARY ACTION

- The partnership gives itself the best opportunity to make effective and efficient multi agency decisions about cases,
- Partners gather the most complete information at the earliest opportunity
- Consistency and clarity of decisions is made utilising a standardised risk assessment and threshold model
- All information that is shared is proportionate and relevant to the nature and level of the original concern

#### 5. A PROCESS TO IDENTIFY VICTIMS AND EMERGING HARM THROUGH RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

- The identification of victims, perpetrators and patterns of behaviour can be predicted by understanding repeat notifications and identifying individuals who may suffer increasing levels of harm
- Developing skills in predictive analysis will enable services to intervene earlier to reduce harm and long term costs
- This analysis will enable joint commissioning and prioritisation of resources

### MASH Benefits

The MASH model aims to deliver a number of benefits, including:

- A faster, more coordinated and consistent response to safeguarding concerns about children and families
- An improved ‘journey’ for the child with greater emphasis on early intervention and better informed services provided at the right time
- Greater ability to identify potential vulnerability, enabling more preventative action to be taken, dealing with issues before they escalate
- Closer partnership working, clearer accountability and less duplication of effort
- A reduction in the number of inappropriate referrals and re-referrals to children’s social care through earlier intervention and robust risk assessment at earlier stage

### Haringey MASH Team

Haringey’s Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the single point of entry for referrals regarding the well-being and protection of children, strengthening the safeguarding partnership’s ability to meet the needs of children and young people in

the borough. Located within the Children in Need of Support and Protection Service, the MASH will provide access Children’s and Young People Services in Haringey.

Figure 1 below is a diagrammatic illustration of the arrangements for Haringey Children & Young People’s Services incorporating local safeguarding partners in the MASH. This shows how contacts from all sources, including professionals, children and families and members of the public, are directed into the MASH for processing and triaging by a social worker and advice being provided to professionals before being directed onto the most appropriate part of the service that is best placed to respond. The referral pathway outlines:

- A fast track into assessment for strategy discussion / meetings. On a case by case scenario, such cases may also be considered for MASH Assessment in parallel to support the information gathering for the strategy discussion / meeting or clarify pertinent information.
- A direct referral into MASH Front Door or a step up from Early Help, into Social Care to access specialist services for children with acute needs
- A direct referral into MASH Front Door or a step down from MASH, into Early Help to access for children with additional need.

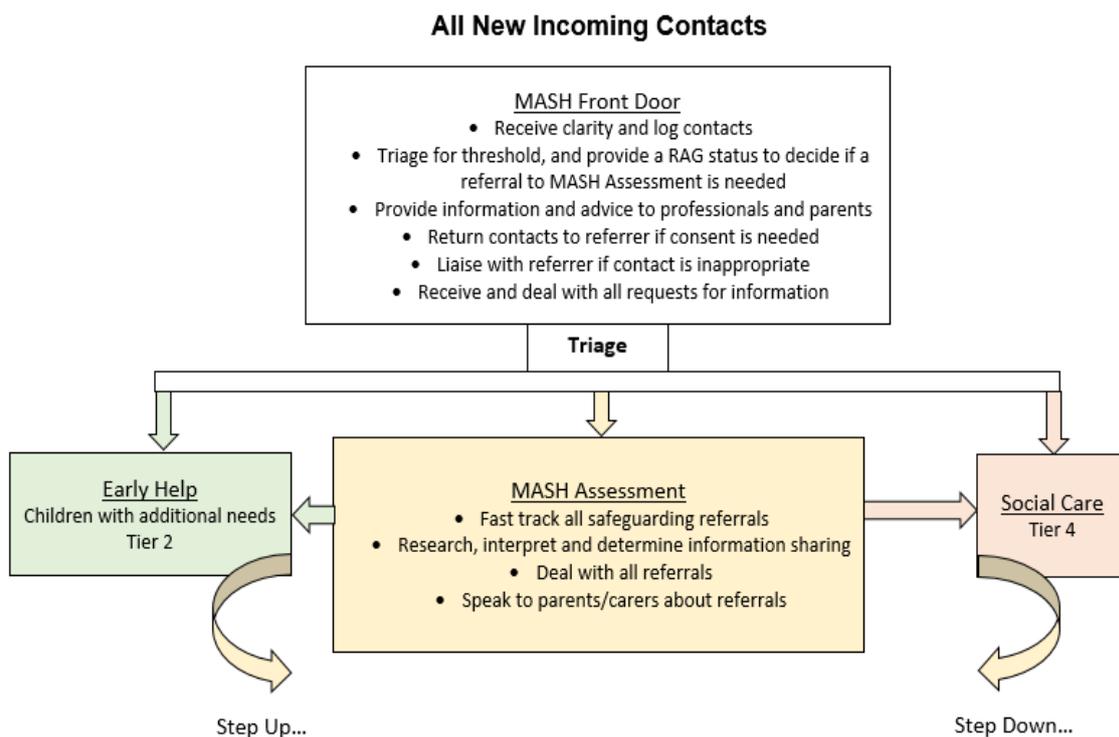
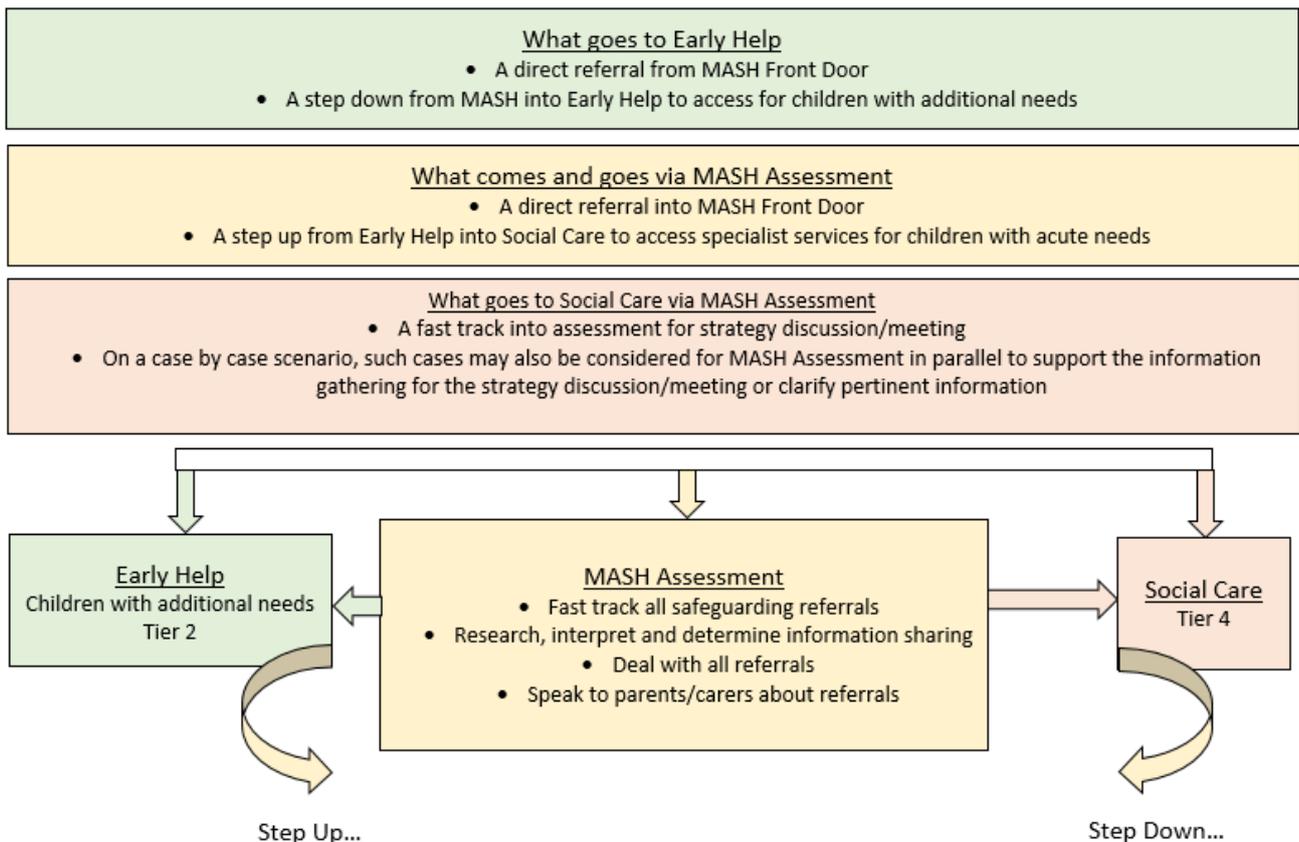


Figure 2: Diagram of MASH Process

## How it works

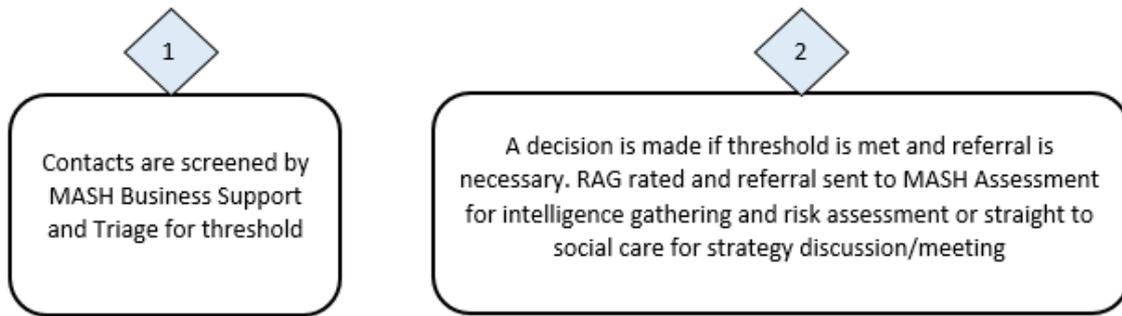


## The functions within the MASH

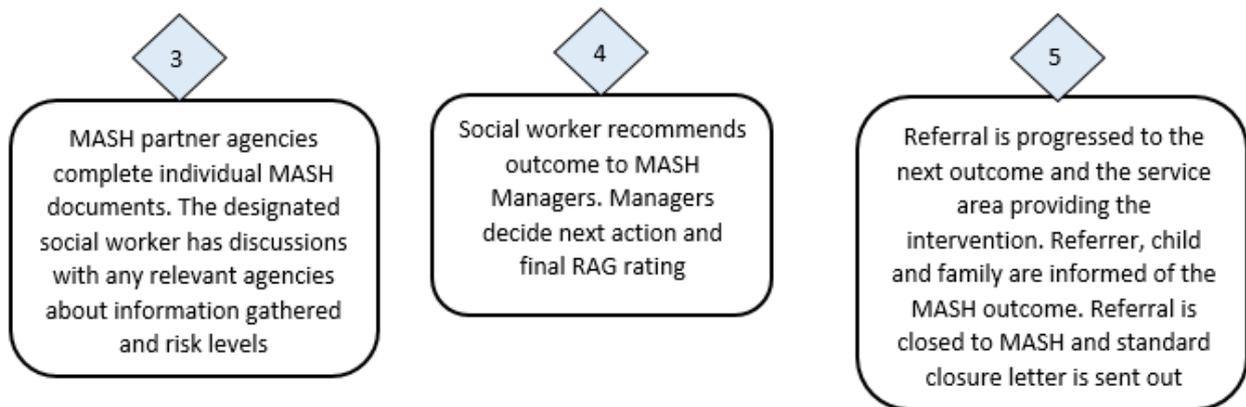
All contacts into the MASH will be processed however only those meeting threshold will be passed to MASH Assessment if needed and appropriate. Features of the MASH and the functions with the MASH Assessment are as follows:

- The MASH will have a skill mix of staff comprising of non-social work trained staff and social work qualified staff at social worker, senior practitioner, and team manager levels.
- The MASH has Senior Practitioner posts which have a strong consultative element. The posts serve to both strengthen social work practice and enhance Haringey's partnership working.
- Early Help practitioners form a part of the MASH providing an expertise in the Early Help Assessment and its implementation and also providing strong links and good knowledge of the local community.
- All MASH posts carry a developmental role aimed at up-skilling the workforce and continuously improving practice and promoting a culture of organisational learning.

## MASH Front Door



## MASH ASSESSMENT



The triage function within the MASH determines the most appropriate contact pathway by considering the:

- Nature and level of the concerns contained in the contact circumstances, plus;
- Information about the child and family already held by CYPS (if any), within the context of;
- The local Thresholds Guidance

The Thresholds Guidance (LSCB, 2015) document sets out details of the continuum of need and levels of support and intervention. Figure 2 below is a diagrammatic illustration of each level of need from 1 through to 4. The “in need” threshold, depicted by the red horizontal arrow straddling Levels 2 and 3 below, identifies where the CYPS MASH and MASH Assessment are positioned.

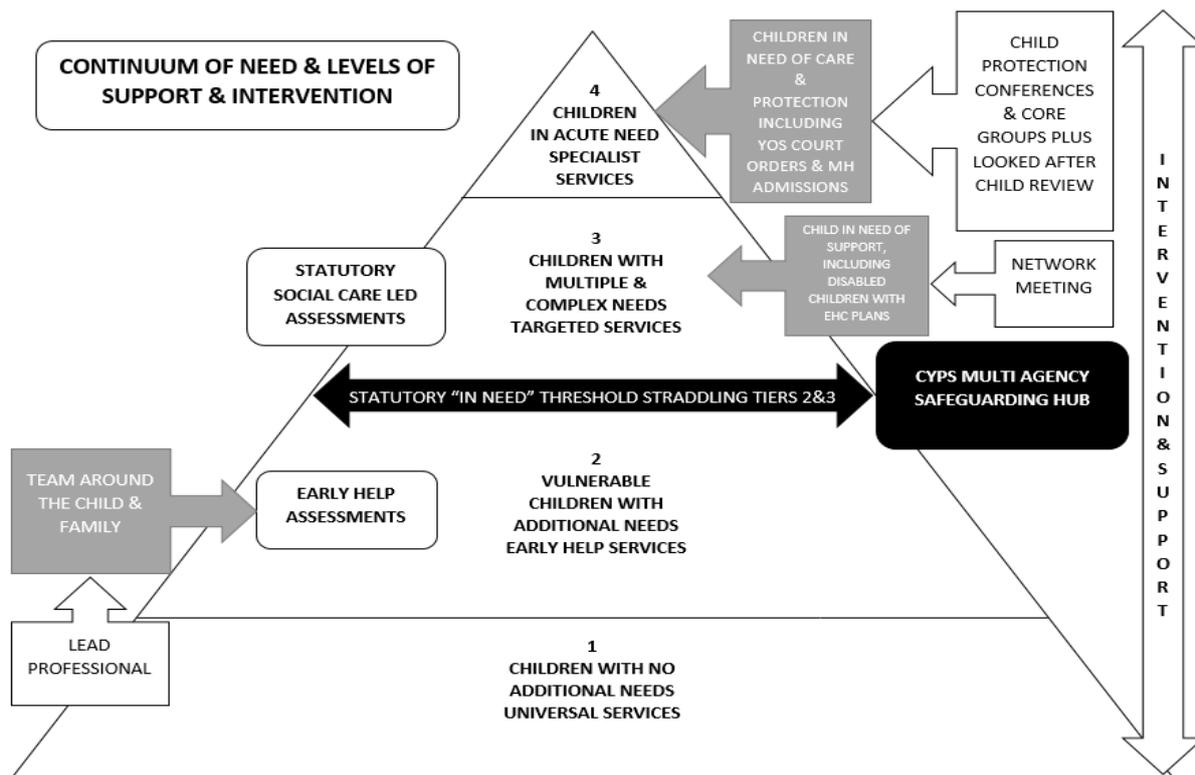


Figure 4: Threshold Guidance - Continuum of Need & Levels of Support & Intervention

By coming together and forming the MASH we establish a service standard and expectation for service users and partner professionals having contact with CYPS for the first time. Importantly, the MASH provides a safety net for children and young people, who are vulnerable and in need of help, support, protection and care, through the provision of timely and appropriate responses to child welfare and safeguarding concerns using a coordinated child centred approach.

### Processing Contacts & Referrals

The legislative and procedural requirements for managing incoming contacts and referrals are set out in Working Together (2015), the London Child Protection Procedures, (5<sup>th</sup> edition, 2015) and in The Assessment Framework for Children and their Families (2000). All incoming requests for service will initially be logged as contacts, in keeping with Integrated Children’s System (ICS) processes and language. The connectivity between the MASH and MASH Assessment functions will be a carefully ordered arrangement which will control the workflow from first contact, through to rapid identification of the nature of the concern, to the decision as to what type of assessment, intervention and/or service is required, and the desired outcome to be achieved.

Within MASH, upon receipt of a referral information from partner agencies is identified, collated and analysed to assess the nature and level of risk in order to decide what action is required by the multi-agency partnership and that this decision is made in real time and not causing delay for the child. As a result, all relevant operational teams and services will be able to act quickly, in a coordinated and consistent way, to ensure that vulnerable children and families are kept safe from harm. The outcome of the MASH process, aims to provide the fullest picture possible of all available information known within the safeguarding partnership.

All new contacts are initially subject to MASH triage which will identify safeguarding and child welfare concerns. The outcome of the MASH triage includes the option to progress the contact as a referral into MASH Assessment. If the contact advises urgent or immediate safeguarding or child welfare concerns, the contact is fast tracked to the Assessment following RAG rating by MASH as a referral to ensure that the most urgent cases are prioritised and so that Strategy meetings and discussions timescales are adhered to. MASH Assessment strand to the team initiate the multi-agency information sharing and risk assessment process with relevant MASH partners. The initial RAG rating may be subject to change during the MASH process but in any event will always be reviewed at the end of the MASH Assessment process with partners, all referrals for children over 10 will be screened for CSE.

Staff from each partnership agency will then research, gather and determine information to be shared confidentially and securely with partners in order to enable an informed decision to be made. The principles of proportionality and relevancy help partners to determine what to share. The MASH Team will use the collected information to decide the most appropriate intervention to meet the child's identified needs in consultation with partners. The MASH Team Manager's decision may include a recommendation for:

- No further Action is required
- An Early Help assessment or intervention, or;
- A Children's social care Child and Family Assessment, or;
- On rare occasions, Concerns identified through MASH Assessment may escalate concerns to where a recommendation for the case to progress for a strategy discussion / meeting by the Assessment Service.

It is important to note that, where immediate safeguarding action is required, the contact is passed to the relevant operational teams and services whilst MASH partners work together to provide a MASH outcome. The work of the MASH is not intended to delay or obstruct any immediate action that may be required to protect a child or young person. The MASH timescales are set out as part of the MASH RAG rating framework in recognition of the dynamic nature of safeguarding practice. Additionally, it is intended that all MASH decisions and outcomes will be fed back to the referrer so that this is well communicated and appreciated.

## MASH RAG Rating

The MASH RAG rating framework establishes the way in which MASH partners work together to respond to in-coming referrals. Subsequently, once MASH partners have researched and shared their agency information and intelligence, the MASH Social Worker in conjunction with partners is able to review the initial RAG rating and recommends the next course of action to the MASH Manager who signs off the final determination.

The MASH RAG rating framework is set out below:

### RED

- **Level 4: CHILDREN IN NEED OF CARE & PROTECTION**
- Complex or Acute Risk eg: A parent who has a serious mental health condition with delusions about harming their child
- Relevant teams are informed immediately
- A MASH outcome (or product) to be provided within 4 hours
- Agency action is taken by Social Care with Police OR Social Care OR Specialist Services

### AMBER

- **Level 3: CHILDREN IN NEED OF SUPPORT**
- High or Complex Risk eg: A child with non-organic failure to thrive
- Relevant teams are informed as soon as possible
- A MASH outcome (or product) to be provided within 1 working day
- Agency action is taken by Social Care OR Specialist Services OR Universal Services plus others

### GREEN

- **Level 2: EARLY HELP**
- Low to Vulnerable Risk eg: A child has caring responsibilities that impact upon their development
- Relevant teams are informed as soon as possible
- A MASH outcome (or product) to be provided within 3 days
- Agency action is taken by Universal Services

## MASH Team

Agency	Role/Position	Working pattern
LBH – CYPS	1x Service Manager	Full time
LBH - CYPS	3x Team Manager	Full Time
LBH- CYPS	1x MASH Analyst and Admin Supervisor	Full Time
LBH CYPS	6x Senior Practitioner	Full time
LBH- CYPS	2x Social Worker	Full time
LBH- CYPS	2x Information Research Officer	Full Time
LBH- CYPS	2x Early Help Liaison Officer	Full Time
LBH- CYPS	1x Information Request Officer	Full Time
LBH- CYPS	1x Homelessness Screening Officer	Full Time
LBH-CYPS	4x Operational Support Officer	Full Time
LBH-CYPS	1x Operational Support Officer	Job Share/Part Time
Whittington Health	1x Safeguarding Advisor	Full-Time
Whittington Health	3x Safeguarding Advisor	Health MASH cover
LBH-Education	1x Principal Education Welfare Officer	Virtual
LBH-Education	2x Children Missing Education Officer	Virtual
Police PPD	1x DS	Full time
Police PPD	1x PS	Full time
Police PPD	1x DC	Full time
Police PPD	5x PC	Full time
Police PPD	1x Info Researcher	Full time
NPS	2x Probation Officer	Virtual (co located one day a week )
LBH-Housing	1x Manager, Homes for Haringey	Part time co located
LBH-Housing	1x Business Improvement Officer	Virtual
Safer London	1x Team Leader	
YOS		Virtual

CRC		Virtual
Police CAIT		Virtual
Adult Mental Health		Virtual

### Lead Role roles *in MASH*

Specialist / Lead roles held by MASH CYPS practitioners are:

- PAMS Assessments
- Hospital
- Prevent
- MAPPA

The MASH also possess a CSE champion to aid the development of timely, consistent and appropriate responses to Child Sexual Exploitation concerns for children and young people.

### MASH Police Notifications “Merlins”

The other referrals which come into MASH are generated by the Police. Police referrals, or notifications called “Merlins” as they are often referred to, are completed whenever there is a child welfare concern about a child or young person who comes to notice of the Police. They make up approximately 50% of all referrals into the MASH.

The Merlin PAC is completed by a Police Officers with reference to the mnemonic “SHEEP” which is taken from the Every Child Matters initiative and stands for:

- S - Stay Safe**
- H - Healthy**
- E - Economic Wellbeing**
- E - Enjoy and Achieve**
- P - Positive Contribution**

### Receiving a Police “Merlin” notification

Every MERLIN notification must be assessed by police MASH staff as to whether it is part of a criminal investigation and requires an immediate referral to CSC if this has not yet taken place

When a number of notifications are received at the same time i.e. at the start of the day's business, the police supervisor should immediately and quickly review these to establish a priority for research. This is not RAG but an initial organisational activity to enhance service.

Police will research each MERLIN notification using a minimum of IIP. A check of the LA database will be completed to identify if any child within the notification is an open case.

Research and initial risk assessment should be recorded using Form 87M format. This can be copied into the MERLIN PAC.

The PDM reviews the MERLIN PAC and validates the research and risk assessment, applying the London Continuum of Need thresholds. The MERLIN PAC should contain a Pre research BRAG and a Post research Level. The Pre Research BRAG indicates the prioritization of work and can be completed by the researcher or Police officer. However, the research, evaluation of risk and control measures completed as part of the research **MUST** be validated by the Police Decision Maker. Guided by the London Continuum the PDM will assign an appropriate level.

Cases considered to be Level 2, 3 or 4 (GREEN, AMBER, RED) should be forwarded to the SPA Team Manager (Decision Maker) who will make the decision in consultation as to whether or not these notifications should be subjected to the MASH process and the level of priority.

This process will provide the MPS with an inclusive and evidence based rationale for the management of ECM notifications. It will ensure that the LA have a record of every MERLIN PAC that is risk assessed as Red, Amber or Green and those notifications that are progressed for further consideration by the LA Decision Maker. It reduces the volume of MERLIN PACs that do not have a justifiable reason for further dissemination based upon MPS risk management principles and in the spirit of best practice in decision making as endorsed by Professor Eileen Munro. This allows the partnership to make best use of its finite resources to focus upon situations where there is a safeguarding requirement.

### **Open cases**

*When a MERLIN has been identified as an open case i.e. a Social Worker is allocated to the child. The PAC will be sent to the allocated Social Worker or Social Services Team via the MERLIN Notification process. **No checks will be completed.** The Social Worker in charge of the case can request checks or research via the agreed process i.e. to SC&O5 through the completion of an 87B form.*

### **Domestic Abuse**

A high proportion of Merlins relate to domestic abuse incidents, many will require an assessment for support and intervention and some will need to be referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

### **Missing & CSE**

Missing Police reports, in respect of children missing from home and care, will also be referred to the MASH and may include important information and intelligence provided as a result of Police “safe and well checks”. The importance of understanding this information in respect of the child who has gone missing, and more generally in relation to local intelligence which can help protect other children, is critical to help inform the local safeguarding partnership’s ability to understand and respond to CSE in the borough.

### **Gang Activity**

Gang activity will also be reported into the MASH via Police “Merlin” reports.

## MASH ICT Arrangements

Each agency within the MASH will remain responsible for accessing, scrutinising and reporting on their agencies data, information and intelligence. Although safeguarding partners will ultimately share their agency's information it is not envisaged that partners will have access to each other's data bases as this is likely to contravene agency data security arrangements. Each MASH partner will make appropriate arrangements to have access their own agency's data base within the MASH via an approved arrangement.

- CYPS – MOSAIC
- Education Welfare (navigator)
- Police – PND, Visor,
- Health (navigator)
- Probation
- Etc...

The MASH gathering process and outcome will be recorded using a MASH episode that is compatible with the CYPS electronic system, MOSAIC.

## MASH Information Data

The five core elements aim to deliver a consistent way of working across London. A pan-London MASH scorecard is published to compare MASH activity and outcomes. In Haringey the MASH scorecard is prepared on a monthly basis by the Haringey Performance Team in consultation with the MASH Operational Group and approved by the MASH Strategic Board on a quarterly basis for submission to the London Safeguarding Children Board for wider publication. The MASH scorecard is attached includes the following:

- Who sent the inquiry?
- Why was it sent?
- What was the RAG rating at the initiation of multi-agency checks?
- What was the RAG rating at the completion of checks?
- What was the change to the RAG rating?
- How long was the inquiry in the MASH by RAG?
- How many MASH inquiries were stepped across to early help?
- How many MASH inquiries were signposted or NFA'd?
- How many referrals to children's social care resulted in NFA?

## MASH Information Sharing Agreement

An Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) has been agreed by all local safeguarding partners at the MASH Strategic Board and this has been subsequently endorsed and approved by the LSCB. The Haringey ISA is an updated and revised version of the

pan-London ISA and can be obtained from the LSCB/SAB Business Manager upon request.

### **MASH Governance Arrangements**

Individual safeguarding partners engaged in the MASH continue to be responsible for their own line management and supervision. However, in recognition of the importance and necessity of working well together a MASH Operational Partnership Group will meet on a monthly basis to plan, monitor and review the collective day to day operational practice within the MASH. The MASH Operational Partnership Group will in turn report to the MASH Strategic Board on a quarterly basis to ensure that partners continue to work well together, that the operational practice is consistent with the five core elements, that the impact and the outcomes of the MASH activity are captured in the MASH scorecard and have a positive impact on the outcomes for children and young people. The MASH Strategic Board is responsible for reporting to the LSCB Executive and full Board.



Figure 5: MASH Governance Arrangements

The Chair of the MASH Operational Partnership Group is Service Manager MASH/EDT.

The Chair of the MASH Strategic Board is Sarah Akexander, CYPS Assistant Director safeguarding