

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Keeping children and young people in Barnet safe and supported

Information for parents and carers



Introduction

Children and young people come to our attention in a variety of ways.

This may be because:

- a parent or carer may want to request support directly
- a professional may feel a family need help or support
- a child or their family come into contact with the police
- a child tells someone about abuse either emotional, physical or sexual.

When children are identified as having additional needs or there are concerns, we believe that if a positive difference is going to be made, we need to understand 'the whole picture'. In order to do this the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team has been developed.



One team in one place

The new team will be called the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Who is involved?

It includes children's social care, police, health and education professionals, with on call help from a wider group including the early intervention services, probation, housing, youth offending team and adult social services.

The team works together to get a better understanding of the different issues that may affect your child's safety and welfare. By sharing the information they hold about your family they can gain a better understanding of 'the whole picture' this will help the team to decide which service to refer onto that can best assess and support your child's needs.

The social workers in the MASH team are able to speak to members of the public and professionals on the telephone (020 8359 4066). Should you wish to meet with a social worker face to face please telephone the MASH social worker who can, if appropriate, arrange for you to meet with a social worker at our offices in Barnet House, 1255 High Road, N20 0EJ.

MASH opening hours

The MASH operates Monday – Thursday 9am – 5.15pm and Friday 9am – 5pm. Outside of these hours care and welfare concerns about children and young people that require an immediate response should be reported to the Emergency Duty team on tel: 020 8359 2000.

Where an emergency response is required, at any time, the police should be called.

How does it work?

Whenever anyone is worried about a child, for example a teacher or health visitor, they will make a referral to the MASH team.

If the MASH team believe the child would benefit from extra help, or that the parents /carer need support to help care for their child, 'following agency checks' they will refer the family for the appropriate support. This may be for a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and/or for services in the community such as a children's nursery or our Safer Families service.

If the team consider that a child may be at risk of harm or abuse, they will each share the information their agency holds about the family and collectively decide what action needs to be taken to keep the child safe. For example, the MASH team may refer the family on to the appropriate Duty Social Work Assessment team.



It is my information, what are my rights?

The MASH team have a responsibility to improve the wellbeing of children and young people. By sharing your information we can ensure the best decision is made for your child and provide you with appropriate help and support when it is needed.

Information held by the MASH will be kept and processed securely, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. It will only be shared with other practitioners and/or other agencies on a 'need to know' basis, either:

- where there are believed to be child protection issues, or
- where the information is required to ensure your child receives the appropriate assessment or services.

If professionals are referring your child to the MASH team for advice and support, they will need to ask your permission first.

In cases where it is felt your child may require a social work assessment, this will be discussed with you. Your agreement to a referral will be actively sought, however professionals are able to refer your child without your permission if they have concerns that your child's welfare needs are not being appropriately met.

If professionals are referring your child to the MASH team because of child protection concerns, you will only be

told about the referral beforehand if the professional is sure this would not increase the risk to your child.

If you would like further information about how your information is being held and processed by the MASH please contact the MASH Manager on tel: 020 8359 4066. The Information Sharing Agreement to allow sharing of the information among agencies can be found at www.barnet.gov.uk/mash

Will I find out what is happening?

In most cases you will be contacted by the MASH team or service you have been referred to, who can update you on what action has been taken.

You can also contact the MASH team on tel: 020 8359 4066 to find out the outcome of the referral. If your referral is progressed to children's social care the social worker will contact you for a discussion or to arrange a time to meet with you and your family.

What to do if I am not happy?

If you are not happy about the way the MASH team deals with any referral about your family, please raise this first with the MASH manager.

They will explain why the information was shared and how the decision on your case was made.

If you are still not happy, you can make a complaint by contacting the Children's Service Complaints Officer on
tel: 020 8359 7008 or email:
childrens.service.complaints@barnet.gov.uk



Remember – If you are concerned about a child or young person in Barnet and you want to speak to someone please contact the MASH on tel: **020 8359 4066** and provide as much information as you can