



COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN'S
ROOM

C/O Andrew Spragg
Democratic Services
Surrey County Council
Room 122
County Hall
Penrhyn Road
Kingston Upon Thames
KT1 2DN

13 January 2017

Dear Linda, Clare and Julie

Social Care Services Board – MASH Update to the Performance and Finance Sub-Group

I am writing following an update the sub-group received regarding the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 12 January 2017.

The sub-group notes several key areas of concern since the MASH went live on 5 October 2016:

- That the MASH was initially resourced with 34 social workers, despite advice consultants gave suggesting a MASH of equivalent size would require in the region of 150. The sub-group was informed the MASH is now resourced with approximately 80 social workers;
- That IMT issues related to the Liquidlogic Children's Social Care System (LCS) resulted in low productivity and created unnecessary delays in the referral process;
- That a backlog of contacts awaiting assessment was created as result of these issues, and that children were exposed to an unacceptable level of risk during that time.

Further to this, the sub-group was also informed that the management of these issues has created a number of cases awaiting allocation in the Early Help Co-ordination Hubs (EHCH).

In light of the above, the sub-group would like to request the following:

- Data demonstrating the trends in contacts, referrals and unallocated cases, both for the MASH and EHCH, since the MASH was operational;
- A briefing note outlining how risk is managed in unallocated cases for all aspects of the referral and assessment process;

The sub-group notes the overspend within the Children, Schools and Families budget brought about by the MASH requiring additional resource.

It acknowledges that this was reported in the budget report to Cabinet on 13 December 2016. The sub-group was informed by officers that this additional resource had contributed to the council overspend by approximately £1 million. The evidence above would suggest that this will be a continued pressure for the foreseeable future.

The sub-group strongly supports the allocation of appropriate resource to the MASH, and would ask that this is built into the directorate budget.

It also asks that the service and IMT look to engage with other local authorities using LCS and Liquidlogic to ensure that issues are escalated and addressed by the software provider as a matter of priority.

I would be grateful if you could confirm the anticipated timescales for improvement in the performance for the MASH, and that a further update is brought to the scrutiny board in three months.

I thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely



Keith Witham
Chairman, Social Care Services Board

Cc. David Hodge, Leader of the Council
David McNulty, Chief Executive of the Council
Tim Hall, County Councillor, Leatherhead and Fetcham East