

# Children and Education Select Committee

20 February 2018

## Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub progress update



**Purpose of report:** To provide Members with an update on MASH progress and future direction.

### Background:

1. The Surrey Multi–Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) went live in October 2016 to provide a single point of contact for reporting concerns about the safety of a child, young person or adult.
2. The primary aim of the MASH is to improve the safeguarding response to children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect by working closely with co-located partners such as the police, health, adult social care and education.
3. Contacts relating to children are received from a variety of sources including members of the public, families and partner agencies. Surrey Police submit the greatest number of contacts, with an average of 50% of the monthly total.

### Journey of a child in the MASH:

4. When a contact is received, either by phone or e mail, it is screened by a qualified social worker to determine the level of need of the child. The Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) level of need document is used to assist the social worker to make this determination.
5. Level 1 is the lowest level where the family can meet the children’s needs from universal provision. Level 2 is where the child and family require Early Help support. Level 3 relates to a child with unmet needs where there is clear evidence that the child is in need, and level 4 is where there is evidence that a child is at risk of significant harm.
6. Following screening, the child’s contact is passed to the relevant team within the MASH where further enquiries are conducted before the final threshold decision is made by a Team Manager. In December 2017, 45% of the contact outcomes were recorded at level 1, 14% at level 2 and 22% of the contacts progressed to children’s social care at either level 3 or 4.

## **Journey of the MASH**

7. In addition to the contact process, the MASH now co-ordinates the Surrey County Council (SCC) response to Prevent, Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children. The original business case for the MASH estimated that an average of 4,200 contacts would be received monthly. In reality this figure has been exceeded since the inception of the MASH, with over 6,000 in May and October 2017 respectively.
8. To address the considerable increase in demand the following activity has taken place:
  - 8.1 Together with the SSCB the level of needs document has been reviewed to determine the right level of support required for a child and family.
  - 8.2 As the police represent on average 50% of MASH contacts, triaging has been developed with Surrey Police to enable the MASH to focus on children with the greatest level of need. The police triage process commenced in November 2017 following a peak of 3050 police contacts in October. Although the process is still being embedded we have seen a 4% reduction in police contacts during November. This figure was sustained in December 2017.
  - 8.3 With police and education, Operation Encompass has been initiated to ensure that Schools are alerted to domestic abuse incidents witnessed by a child as soon as practicable.
  - 8.4 MASH staff have presented feedback to over 500 dedicated safeguarding leads from schools throughout Surrey to improve the quality and quantity of their contacts.
  - 8.5 A number of internal processes have been improved to provide a more timely and consistent journey for the child. For example, the percentage of MASH contacts progressed to Children's Services (level 3 & 4) within 1 working day has improved by 17% since May 2017.
  - 8.6 MASH Senior Social Workers have been embedded within the Early Help Hubs to improve timeliness and daily 'threshold meetings' are undertaken to improve the quality and consistency of decision making.

## **Next steps and challenges:**

9. The analysis of performance since October 2016 has enabled a detailed capacity and demand study to be completed. Agreement has been reached by the Strategic Partnership Board to increase the MASH staffing levels accordingly. Although this will be for a limited period, the increased resources will provide the opportunity to address the daily demand and for comprehensive

re-modelling of all MASH processes and partnership working.

10. The re-modelling will follow the journey of the child from the point of referral and extend beyond the MASH in order to focus on a 'one system' approach. Our operational learning since October 2016, together with 'user' feedback and national best practice now provides a strong platform and evidence base to support the need for change. For example, there is partnership agreement that the MASH 'One front door' approach for safeguarding concerns is the best way to protect our children in Surrey. However, as mentioned in section 6, the MASH is currently dealing with a high percentage of contacts where the child's needs could have been addressed by the referring partner at the Universal level (level 1), without redress to the MASH.
11. The fact that 64% (29,025) of all contacts in Q1 to Q3 2017 have an outcome of level 1 illustrates the need to revise the role of all partners to support and safeguard children, thereby enabling the MASH to focus more on the children with the greatest level of need.
12. The improvements will be driven forward in fortnightly sprints using agile leadership methodology whereby staff are engaged in the change process. Governance of the development and implementation of the new operating model will be through the MASH Strategic Partnership Board, chaired by Sam Bushby, Assistant Director.
13. The Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) will have a key role in galvanising the partnership changes. It is anticipated that the new model will be implemented within 4 months.

<b>Recommendations:</b>
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14. For Members to note the contents of this report.

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