

Standards and Guidance for Multi- Agency Referrals to Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Children’s Social Care

This guidance will support you to make good quality referrals to Children’s Social Care via the Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Before making a referral to the MASH:

1. Discuss your concerns with the child/family, unless doing so would place a child at risk of harm.
2. Consult the Herefordshire Levels of Need Threshold Guidance.
3. Consider discussing your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in your agency.
4. Advise the family that you intend to make a referral to Children’s Social Care, unless doing so would place a child at risk of harm.

Advice and guidance will always be provided to practitioners by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub by calling 01432 260800 or secure Email cypd@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you believe that a child/young person is at risk of significant harm always make an immediate referral to MASH or if there is an immediate risk of death or serious injury call West Mercia Police on 999. The Emergency Duty Team for MASH telephone number is (01905) 768020 (*out of hours number for when MASH are unavailable)

This guidance and associated support documents can be found on the following pages of the [Herefordshire Child Protection Procedures](#) website.

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The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of **significant harm** as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention into family life in the best interests of the child, and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm.

Significant harm is often a complication of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any maltreatment alongside the family's strengths and supports.

The Act sets out the following definitions:

'*Harm*' means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;

'*Development*' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;

'*Health*' means physical or mental health; and

'*Ill-treatment*' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

Whether the question of harm suffered by a child is significant revolves on the child's health and development, and his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.

Completing the Multi-Agency Referral Form

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT THE FORM. Please complete the form as clearly and fully as possible. Do not delay the referral if you do not have all the information required in a situation where a delay may place the child at risk of harm.

Agreement Statements (including Information Sharing)

What is meant by 'inform'?

Unless by doing so puts the child or other individuals at risk, tell the child or family that you will be making a referral. This should be communicated in a way that will be fully understood by the child or family and understanding should be checked by the referrer.

Have you informed the child/family that you are making this referral? Tick 'Yes' or 'No'.

It is good practice to inform the parent/s or carer that you intend to make a referral (unless to do so would place a child/ren or other individuals at risk of harm). It is critical to develop a co-operative working relationship from the outset (wherever possible), so that parents/carers feel;

respected and informed; that professionals are being open and honest with them; and they in turn are confident about providing vital information about their child and the family circumstances. HOWEVER, do NOT inform the parents if you have any reason to believe this would put the child or other individuals at risk of harm (i.e. the parent may be the perpetrator of abuse or harm).

In most circumstances informing a child or young person that you are going to make a referral and for what reason is good practice. However, you need to use your professional judgement about whether this would place the child at risk of harm.

- If you have not discussed the referral with the child/family, you must state the reasons why. Note if you have not informed the family or child that you are going to make a safeguarding referral, you can still make that referral if you have concerns about the safety of a child. Relevant personal information can be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional well-being, or if it is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation, or if it is necessary for the performance of a task in the public interest.

Details of the Child (ren)

Child's Name: State clearly the correct spelling of the child/rens full name and any other name that the child is known by, or has been known by. If you are making a referral about more than one child in a family unit please list all the children's names here with the child you have most contact with listed first. Include further details for only the child you have listed first. Please relist the other children in the Family Composition section with their data of birth and relation to the main child (i.e. sibling).

Gender: Please tick either Male or Female – or Unknown if unborn child.

DOB / Expected Date of Delivery: State the full date of birth of the child/ren at the time of the referral. State if the child is not yet born and state the expected date of delivery.

Address, Postcode, Contact Phone Number for Carer/Parent: State clearly the full home address of the child including the postcode and phone number. If the child is residing at more than one address or is residing away from their home address, please include all the details under the section current address (if different from above).

Nursery/ School /College: Please complete if known.

NHS number: Health professionals to complete.

Unique Pupil Number (UPN): Schools and colleges to complete.

Religion: Please state, if known.

Ethnicity: State clearly, to the best of your knowledge, the ethnicity of the child. This information may assist to identify services that meet the child's ethnic background.

Child's First Language: It is essential to identify the first language of the child and parents. This information will ensure that Children's Social Care is aware of any language needs when engaging and communicating with the family.

Is an Interpreter or signer needed? Laming Recommendation 12 states that when communication with a child is necessary for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare and the

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Approval Log

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Version Log

Version	Date	Description of change	Reason for Change	Pages
V 0.1	December 2017			
V1.1	August 2018	Change to Info sharing/ consent. Changes to MARF, included GCP2	To update following changes to MARF referral Form and info sharing	
V1.2	November 2018	Changes to info sharing	GDPR compliance	
V1.3	March 2019	Added extra info re accompanying forms such as EHA, CSE Tool etc.	As across	
V1.4	June 2019	Added AnyComs contact details	Schools asked for info to be added	
V1.5	November 2019	Added section 'Concerns after a referral has been made		
V1.6	31 January 2020	New email address added for MASH	Gcsx email address closed	
V1.7	March 2020	Logo and name SCYPiHP changed		