

Camden MASH

Information for parents
and carers



Camden Safeguarding
Children Board

C A M D E N S C B

Introduction

Sometimes professionals, members of the public or charities such as the NSPCC may have concerns about a child and will refer them to Family Services and Social Work for a social work service. Referrals now go to a specialist team called the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team. This leaflet explains how the team works to make sure children and families get the right help right from the start.

What is the MASH?

The MASH team is a multi-agency team made up of social workers, police officers and health professionals, with representatives from the following services who provide advice and information as needed:

- Probation
- Housing
- Youth Services
- Drug and Alcohol Service
- Mental Health Services
- Domestic Violence Services

What does the MASH do?

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/carers need support to help care for the child, they will refer the family on to the right service.

However, if the team thinks the child may be at risk of harm or abuse, they will each share any information their agency has about the family and decide what action needs to be taken to keep the child safe. For example, the team may refer the family on to Family Services and Social Work for a child protection service.

How does it work?

When the team receives a referral, and they are worried about a child, each agency will pass information they have on the family to the social worker who uses this to decide what help the child and family need and whether the child is at risk of harm.

By sharing information as soon as possible, the team can get a better understanding of what difficulties families may be facing. This way, we can make sure we can offer the family the right kind of help and support at the right time.

It's my information; what are my rights?

The Data Protection Act 1998 governs how the MASH team gathers information about children and families as part of their duty to support families and protect children. We can:

- Only hold information that we need to help families
 - Only use the information for that reason
 - Make sure the information we hold is accurate
 - Keep the information only for as long as it is needed
 - Only share information with other agencies with your consent unless your child is at risk of harm or we must report a serious crime
 - Keep the information secure at all times.
- Any information shared is only used to protect children and it will not be used for any other purpose. Information held by the MASH team will be kept secure and no-one but team members will be able to see this information.
 - If professionals are referring your child to the MASH team for support, they will need to ask for your permission first.
 - If professionals are referring your child to the MASH team because of child protection concerns, they do not need your permission. However, they will let you know about the referral unless they believe this may put your child at more risk.
 - When your family are referred on to another service, only relevant information will be passed on. A MASH social worker will explain to you what information is being passed on and why. We will only refer you on to another agency with your permission unless your child is at risk and we have to make a child protection referral to Family Services and Social Work.

Will I find out what's happening?

A member of the MASH team will contact you to let you know the outcome of any MASH enquiry once a decision has been made.

What if I'm not happy?

If you are unhappy about the way the MASH team deals with any referral about your family, raise this first with the MASH team manager. He or she will explain why information was shared and how decisions on your case were made.

If you are still not happy, you can make a complaint using Camden's complaints system or you can contact the Information Commissioner if you are unhappy about the way Camden has used your information.

Camden CSF Complaints

Information and Records Management Team
5th floor
FREEPOST RSLT-RJBR-TXAA
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
London WC1H 9JE

Phone: **020 7974 6673**
Freephone: **0800 393561**
Fax: **020 7974 1439**
Email: **children.complaints@camden.gov.uk**

Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Phone: **01625 545745**
Fax: **01625 524510**
Email: **mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk**

Camden Safeguarding Children Board

Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

Tel: **020 7974 6639**
Fax: **020 7974 6708**

www.cscb.org.uk