

# Understanding MASH

Oxfordshire's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

If you have been referred to MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hub), it means either you or someone else has raised concerns around your child's wellbeing.



## What does being referred to MASH mean?

The MASH brings together the right professionals to understand and provide you with the support or protection your child may need.

**The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is made up of professionals from different organisations that come together to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.**

**They could include social services, health, education and police. They all share information so they can make decisions about keeping children safe.**

By doing this, everyone involved can have a better understanding of what a child's life is like and what might need to happen to improve things.

### **Why have I been referred?**

It might be that you have asked for help from a professional such as a GP or someone from your child's school and they have shared their concerns with MASH.

It could be that someone else has raised a worry and the MASH has been asked to find out more about your child's safety and wellbeing and decide what should happen next.

## What happens next?

### **What can I expect?**

**Step 1** – a referral will have been made

As you have provided consent for your child to be referred to MASH your information will be shared with our partner agencies.

We will ask for any relevant information from them to help the professionals make a decision about next steps.

In some cases where it is felt the risk will increase by telling you, you will not have been told about the referral.

**Step 2** – we'll talk to you

As a parent or carer, MASH will attempt to call you to talk about the referral. We will talk to both parents, even if you are no longer in a relationship with the child's other parent; unless we consider this to increase the risk to your child.

By sharing what is happening, it means we can understand better if there are any risks to your child and the support your family might need.

## We will talk you through the options

### Step 3 – we'll discuss the options together and with you

The benefit of the MASH is that we have the right people together for your situation.

We'll work with you.

It could be the best option is family help or local support.

If the concerns are significant, and your child is being harmed or might be harmed in the future, we might suggest an assessment by the children's assessment service.

Whatever the best option, we want you to understand and, where appropriate, agree to what we recommend. It means we can get your child the right protection and support.

If your child is old enough and able to understand we will also provide you with support in explaining what happens next to them.

## What happens after I've agreed?

### Step 4 – support and protection will be put in place

If you agree, your child's details will be passed onto the team or organisation who will be able to better understand what your child needs. They will then be in touch with you directly.

If you are not in agreement, we will work with you to understand why and find the right option. If we are really worried about your child, we will override your consent. We would then progress straight to the children's assessment service who will look at it further.

Any Information that could help stop or solve a crime will also be given to the police.

Where appropriate, we will try to inform you of the decision made in MASH about your child. This is unless it makes it more risky for them.

We also have a duty to inform any professional referrers of the decision.

# Notes

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# Useful contact details

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Please speak to a practitioner or professional who knows you well if you have any worries about the process.



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# Working together

**We're committed to giving you the best possible advice and support, treating you with respect and listening to your views.**

While we are working with you, we will be honest with you from the start and be open on the next steps if changes are not maintained and your children are impacted.

## **What happens to the info that is collected about me?**

Any information about you can be shared with all those working with you, usually with your agreement.

We will treat your information as confidential and won't share it with any other organisation unless we are required by law, or if it is felt that anyone including yourself you or any person will come to some harm if we do not.

In this case we will only ever share the minimum information needed. All personal information will be processed and stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

**For further information contact**  
[commentsandcomplaints@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:commentsandcomplaints@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

