



Briefing for:	Children's Safeguarding Policy and Performance Advisory Committee
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Title:	SCREENING
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Lead Officer:	Hilary Corrick, Independent Member
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Date:	2 nd July 2013
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1. INTRODUCTION

Members are aware of changes to the screening of cases referred to Children and Young People's Services as a result of the Judicial Review judgment in March 2013. At our last meeting in April 2013 we considered the issues raised by the judgment and whether, subsequent to the judgment, workers were seeking permission to share from parents before contacting other agencies through the Multi-Agency Strategic Hub (MASH) process, except in the context of a clear safeguarding investigation (Section 47).

We were aware that officers were seeking further legal guidance, and exploring the issues within the London MASH meetings and other forums. We were also aware that training was being provided to staff within the service as well as advice and guidance to other agencies.

On behalf of the Committee I undertook to report on the outcome of these activities and audit a sample of new referrals.

2. INFORMATION FOR STAFF

A number of workshops have been held for staff in the First Response service, including the Screening team. A summary of the legal position has been shared with staff in this service and a number of case scenarios.



3. OTHER AGENCIES

Advice and legal guidance has been shared with other agencies, including those involved in the MASH, and other high referrers such as voluntary organisations and A & E departments, both individually and through Haringey Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB).

4. SCREENING AUDIT

At random, on 5th June, I asked for a list of all contacts received on the previous Friday, 31st May. There were 23 contacts from the following sources:

Contact source	Number on 31 st May	Number to MASH in April 2013
Police	14	24
Midwife	2 (Police also referred 1 of these cases)	4
Other local authority	2	
Probation	1	2
Relative/ house member	1	1
GP	1: this went to MASH	1
Courts (Cafcass)	1	2
A & E	1	3
Haringey employee	1	
Voluntary organisation		6
Self referral		3
School		2
London Ambulance Service		2



Hospital paediatrics		1
Adult mental health services		1
CAMHS		1
Health visitor		1
Neighbour /friend		1
Member of public		1
Unknown /anonymous		1
Total	24 referrals for 23 cases	57

As members can see, the vast majority of these cases came from the police; this is a similar picture to April as a whole, where of 57 referrals to the MASH, 24 came from the police.

The presenting need at the point of contact on 31st May was as follows:

Presenting need	Number on 31st May	During April 2013
Domestic violence	5	26
Family member offending	4	4
Housing	3	1
Physical abuse	2	8
Needing universal services	2	
Parental mental ill health	2	4
Child's behaviour	2	
Needing information	2	2
Parental substance misuse	1	3
Neglect		2



Unborn baby		3
Sexual abuse		3
Sexual exploitation		1
Totals	23	57

Note, the low numbers for April relate only to the numbers of contacts referred through the MASH process, about a third of all contacts over all. The figures are not therefore entirely comparable, but they demonstrate the patterns of contact and presenting needs.

I looked at 13 out of 23 cases in detail:

Age / gender	Contact from:	Presenting need	Outcome
F aged 1 month	Police	Domestic argument between mother and grandmother	Mother left home with the baby. Family history of arguments; NFA
UBB due July	Midwife and police	Need for universal services: Mo isolated	Referral for CAF
17 yr old boy	Police	Argument with mother, taking drugs	Left home. NFA
13 year old boy	Parent	Disabled child, well known to CYPS.	Referred to OT
13 year old boy	GP to EDT	Step mother's mental ill health	Sec 47 threshold met; MASH *
2 year old boy	Police	Domestic argument. Child previously CPP	NFA "for now"



16 year old girl	A & E and self referral	Self-harming; came into office homeless	Referred to specialist housing team. EDT informed.
9 year old girl	Court (Cafcass)	Request for info in private law hearing	Info given **
2 month old baby girl	Police	Domestic argument	Not known previously; NFA
UBB baby due	Enfield	Transfer in on CPP	Conference to be held
6 year old girl	Referred by Haringey employee	Concern re abuse by brother and neglect	Case only closed 4 weeks before; discussion as to way forward. ***
14 year old boy	Police	Mother has mental health problems	NFA
4 year old boy	Police (CAIT)	Visiting child described children hit with belt by Mo.	Sec 47 threshold met; immediate discussion. Police investigation. ****

* This case was extremely well recorded; both the reasons for concern and the legal basis for undertaking a MASH information sharing.

** The information given to staff about sharing information makes it clear that there is no need to seek consent when information is sought by a Court.

*** This was a good referral. The employee in question was told of concerns by a member of staff from the school attended by the child. She advised the member of school staff to follow the school's child protection procedures and make a referral, but understood her own duty to do so too. *Working Together (2013)* states "No professional should assume



that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to keeping a child safe.”

This is a family with chronic and longstanding problems of neglect and discipline. The family became part of the Haringey Families First project a month ago, and a Team Around the Family (TAF) was set up and the case was therefore closed to CYPS. With the benefit of hindsight it may be that the needs of this particular child should be reviewed apart from other members of the family.

**** Appropriately speedy response.

I found recording that was good in understanding how decisions were reached; the workshops for staff have emphasised the need for detailed and timely recording.

Of these 13 cases reviewed only 4 required a referral response; of the 23 cases it would seem that 9 required further assessment/ screening. Only one case had the benefit of a MASH discussion. Each of these decisions is a judgment call; some NFAs will return. On the whole these decisions are taken reasonably quickly and the need for considerations of consent to contacting other agencies may not be relevant. Nevertheless, prior to the judgment it is possible there would have been more exploration of the situations of the 2 small babies where the police reported domestic arguments.

Indeed, this may be the explanation for the significant fall in the number of cases referred to the MASH process since the judgement:

Month	MASH REFERRALS
February 2013	106
March 2013	114
April 2013	57

This also accounts for the fact that cases reach referral stage more speedily – 6.5 days from contact to referral in February and March this year; 4.5 days in April. It is the view of the team manager of the Screening Team, with whom I spent some time on 5th June, that, as staff



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become more confident about the legal parameters around consent issues and their responsibilities, and referrers become used to asking for permission before they refer, numbers referred to the MASH process will rise again. There must be concern that other agencies will begin to withdraw staff and commitment to the MASH process as they perceive their resources under-utilised. At present I am told this is not an issue. It is no doubt an area that Members will want to be reassured is kept under review.