

Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

information for **parents and carers**

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a partnership between Devon County Council (DCC) children's social care, education and youth services; Devon NHS health services, Devon and Cornwall Police and the Probation Service working together to safeguard children and young people.

What does the MASH do?

When a professional, family member or member of the public is concerned about a child or young person's welfare or safety, they can contact us so we can look into it. This is called making an **enquiry**.

Will I be told if there is an enquiry about my child?

Yes. Usually you will be told at the time the enquiry is made. If the enquiry has been made by a professional, for example a social worker or a teacher, they will tell you what their concerns are and may ask your permission to contact us.

Can information be shared without my permission?

Yes. Information may be shared without your permission if:

- someone is being hurt or may be hurt in the future
- the information may help to stop or solve a crime.

What happens when an enquiry is made?

Partners in the MASH will share information to decide if:

- the child or young person has been hurt or could be hurt in the future
- the child or young person or you would benefit from support from other people who help children and families.

What happens after the enquiry?

If the child or young person is thought to have been hurt or could be hurt in the future, we will refer them to the DCC social care assessment team. Information will also be given to the police if it is necessary to help stop or solve a crime.

If the child or young person has not been hurt, but we think they or you would benefit from extra help then their name, address, reason for the enquiry and outcome, will be given to the Early Response Service (ERS) who will make sure that they get the services and support they need.

We will also write to the child or young person and you explaining the outcome of the enquiry within 10 working days.

How will my information be used?

Your information will only be used to decide whether:

- you or someone else is being hurt or may be hurt in the future
- you or your family would benefit from help and support
- a crime has been committed or could be committed in the future.

Your information will be held in a safe place and will not be shared with other people unless they have a legal power to see it.

Can I see what is written about me?

Yes. The Data Protection Act 1998 lets you ask for a copy of the information held about you. If you would like to request this contact Devon County Council:

- **email** dpoffice@devon.gov.uk
- **write** to Devon County Council, Data Protection Officer, Information Governance Team, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QD.

Where can I get more information?

To find out more about the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) visit

www.devon.gov.uk/childprotection

Remember - if you are concerned about a child or young person in Devon and want to speak to someone, contact the MASH on **0345 155 1071** and give as much information as you can.