



Suffolk Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub



Professional Consultation Line

A Guide for Professionals and paid carers working with children and/or adults

0345 6061499

Monday – Thursday 9:00am to 5:00pm

Friday: 9:00am to 4:25pm

(The consultation line is not a point of referral. If you have an immediate safeguarding concern use this link <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support/safeguarding/> or call Customer First on 0808 800 4005)

What is the MASH?

The Local Authority and partners have established a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Suffolk which brings together a team of multi-disciplinary professionals from partner agencies to deal with all safeguarding concerns, where someone is concerned about the safety or well-being of a vulnerable child or an adult at risk of abuse.

Within the MASH, timely and proportionate information from partner agencies will be collated to assess risk and decide what action to take. As a result, the agencies will be able to act quickly in a co-ordinated and consistent way, ensuring that vulnerable children and adults are kept safe.

The consultation line will allow professionals who may be unclear on what action they should take, or be in need of support/guidance to make the most informed decision by contacting the MASH team to access advice about a child or adult at risk of abuse and to discuss the most appropriate and effective way of providing or obtaining help and support. The person offering advice on the consultation line will ordinarily be a Social Worker within MASH familiar with levels of service provision across partner agencies. You will be able to choose to speak to an Adult or Children's Social Worker.

This advice may include information about a range of services including voluntary and community sector. Where the child may need help and protection from Children's or Adult Social Care this will include advice and guidance about making a referral, including how to involve parents. This will be done without naming the child or adult so consent is not required. Uncertainty regarding consent should not deter a professional from contacting the professional line.

During Consultation – The caller should:-

- Be clear about their concern and what is needed from the consultation
- Clearly identify what the agency has already done about the concern and the impact of this
- Seek clarification where there are any uncertainties about what is involved
- Discuss the appropriateness of not seeking, or overriding parental permission

The MASH will

- Discuss concerns, and offer advice and guidance and record detail of the discussions and decisions made.
- Record detail of the discussions and decisions made but will not record the child's name.

When discussing an adult: For enquiries about ongoing cases please use the **Adult protection Team Duty Line: 01449 724593** to talk about whether a referral is required use the consultation line

Consultation within your own agency



All statutory agencies should offer means by which staff can seek help and advice on individual cases.

All organisations are required to have Named/designated safeguarding professionals and you should make yourself familiar with their contact details.

You may also take advice through your line manager or the person who offers you safeguarding supervision.

Further action

If following consultation more information comes to light or the situation changes, the professional can seek further clarity by consulting again.

Any professional who believes that the response they have received following a consultation is inadequate, does not meet the needs of the child/family or leaves a child at risk of harm may still make a referral in the usual way or escalate the concerns through their normal agency process.