

MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB GUIDANCE FOR LUTON

Version No: 2.0

Date: April 2025

Owner: Quality & Professional Standards Team

Contents

Introduction

Purpose of the Adults MASH

Core Principles

Governance and Accountability

Escalation Procedures

Information Governance and Data Protection

Roles and Responsibilities of Partner Agencies

Outcomes of MASH Interventions

Performance Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Contact Information

Adult Safeguarding Flowchart

Adults MASH Processes

Progression to S42 Enquiry

Appendix 1

Introduction

The Adults Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a team of professionals from a range of organisations and agencies who work together to safeguard adults who may be at risk of abuse, harm or neglect, and to support the screening of non-statutory safeguarding enquiries. The MASH is a collaborative model designed to improve the protection of Adults at risk of Harm and abuse. It enables partner agencies such as social care, health, police, education, and others to share information quickly and efficiently, ensuring coordinated decision-making for safeguarding interventions. This guidance is prepared to support Adult MASH Practitioners in the triaging of referrals, assessment of risk, planning and decision making within the MASH. Guidance will not replace Safeguarding policies and procedures.

Purpose of the Adults MASH

The primary objective is to ensure that residents are safe and supported within the community. The Adults MASH will receive referrals, triage safeguarding concerns, and assess need to identify the most appropriate service to promote the independence and wellbeing of residents who are referred. If emergency provision is required to maintain the safety of a resident, this will be initiated, and the resident's situation will be stabilised within MASH.

The MASH approach improves the speed, quality, and consistency of decision-making for safeguarding cases. It also enhances information sharing between relevant agencies and provide a comprehensive and coordinated response to safeguarding concerns.

Core Principles

Partnership: Agencies work together in a spirit of cooperation and trust.

Confidentiality: Information shared within the MASH is managed with the utmost care and shared only with those who have a legitimate need.

Timeliness: Decision-making is rapid, to minimize risks to adults at Risk.

Person-Centred Approach: Decisions prioritize the welfare, safety, and needs of the adult at risk of harm, neglect or abuse.

Governance and Accountability

MASH operations are overseen by the Head of service Safeguarding, Quality and Professional Standards. The Head of service is responsible for setting strategy, monitoring performance, and ensuring accountability. Each Partner agency within the MASH remains responsible for line management of their staff and other responsibilities and statutory obligations and detect crime and protect life and property.

Escalation Procedures

If there are disagreements or concerns regarding the decision-making process, there is an escalation protocol that staff must follow. The Adults MASH Manager is the first point of contact. If the dispute remains unresolved the Head of Service Safeguarding, Quality and Professional Standards will be the next level contact. This protocol ensures that disputes are resolved swiftly to avoid delays in safeguarding actions.

Escalation Procedures

All MASH partners are bound by data protection laws, and information is shared only within the boundaries of the law to protect the welfare of adults at risk and/or children. The main aim of the Adults MASH is to share information about adults at risk to make timely and informed decisions about interventions.

At the same time, information sharing must be lawful and uphold any confidentiality obligations an agency owes to the family. The information shared by MASH team members is often sensitive and may have been collected for different reasons, but can only be shared within the MASH to safeguard an adult or child at risk of harm, abuse, or neglect.

To ensure that each agency feels secure in sharing confidential and sensitive personal information, there is a MASH data-sharing protocol in place. This protocol outlines the rights and responsibilities of all MASH partners concerning the information shared. Generally, information may only be shared with a third party if the person concerned consents.

However, information may be shared without consent if it is in the public interest. The extent to which agencies can share information will depend on the RAG rating of the case, which indicates the level of harm and risk. This is a decision made by the MASH Manager in consultation with social work staff.

A data protection/information sharing guidance statement will be read at all Safeguarding Meetings held in the Adults MASH. Attendees must agree to the information protection measures in place.

Roles and Responsibilities of Partner Agencies

Adult Social Care: Lead on coordinating Safeguarding interventions. This includes undertaking Triage of new referrals and completing appropriate MASH enquiries under s.42 (s.42A).

Police: Provide relevant criminal intelligence and ensure the protection of individuals from crime.

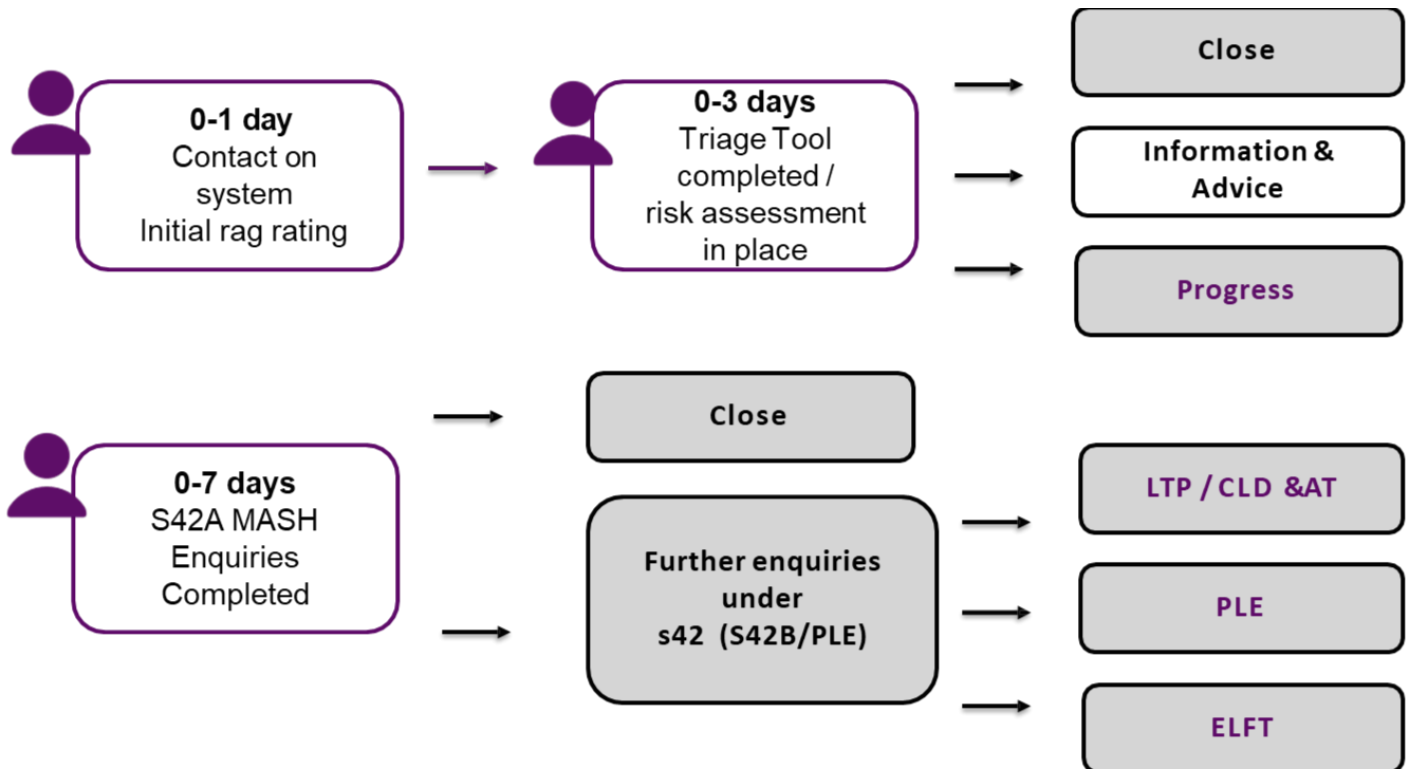
Health Services: Contribute health data and professional insights into the individual's medical needs or risks.

Other Agencies: such as housing, probation, and community services, may contribute relevant information and advice based on their involvement

Following the MASH enquiry, the outcome can include

- Progression for further enquiries under s42
- Progression to other Social Work Interventions
- Early help or signposting to support services.
- Immediate protective action if the risk is significant and imminent.
- Information and advice.

Adult MASH Flow chart



Performance Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Regular audits, performance reviews, and case evaluations are conducted to assess the effectiveness of MASH processes. The schedule of these is set by the Quality Assurance, Audit & Practice Improvement Manager. Feedback mechanisms are in place via planned workshops, training and supervision to learn from cases and continuously improve safeguarding practice.

Contact Information

Adults MASH Team is contactable on 01582 547730.

Email address is
adultsafeguarding@luton.gov.uk

Adults MASH Processes

The initial RAG rating is undertaken by the Duty worker on the day.

All safeguarding concerns are RAG rated. The Duty worker uses the RAG rating matrix to determine safeguarding concerns appropriate for Triage function from those that are appropriate for MASH Enquiry.

Red - High risk - To progress to MASH Enquiry

Amber - Medium risk - may progress further depending on triage findings

Green - Low risk - Information and advise will suffice with the relevant connections.

Following RAG rating most safeguarding concerns are progressed to a robust Triage process. Any concerns not progressed to MASH Enquiry are managed at triage level. This includes providing the referrer with information and advise, signposting the referrer and redirecting it to the appropriate Team/Service. Some concerns will automatically be referred for a statutory MASH Enquiry by an experienced Safeguarding Practitioner. This happen when there are significant risks and posing potential harm to an adult at risk. The following types of concern will always go through the statutory Mash Enquiry process:

- Modern slavery
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual exploitation

The roles and duties of the Duty Worker

The Duty Worker acts as the first point of contact in the Adults MASH. Their responsibilities include:

- Receiving and assessing safeguarding referrals, ensuring that concerns are directed to the appropriate agency or professional.
- Risk assessment - evaluating the level of risk to the Adult at risk
- Decision making - determining the appropriate course of action which may include progressing the case for further investigation, signposting to other services or offering immediate safeguarding interventions.
- Providing Advice and guidance to professional colleagues and members of the public who have safeguarding concerns.

The Triage Function

- The Triage function ensures that safeguarding concerns are handled efficiently and that appropriate actions are taken based on risk levels. According to Luton Levels of Response guidance, Triage function will work with level 1 and level 2 concerns.
- Triage will gather information, working collaboratively with partner agencies to informal decision making.
- Triage will complete risk analysis to inform decision making. This includes evaluating information to determine whether a case requires immediate intervention further enquiries. Or can be signposted to other services.
- Triage will make appropriate connections for cases most suitable for other interventions alternative to safeguarding.
- Triage will ensure that safeguarding outcomes are shared (in line with data protection guidelines) with relevant others including the referrer.
- It is expected that both RAG rating and Triage process will identify cases that require to progress to MASH enquiry by an experienced Safeguarding practitioner.

MASH Enquiry and the role of the safeguarding Practitioner

For an Adult at risk, MASH enquiries are equivalent safeguarding assessments under s42 that will be conducted on cases that do not require further enquiries under s42.

- The safeguarding Practitioner will complete MASH enquiries on cases meeting Level 3 response and ensure there is appropriate support and protection measures in place for individuals at risk.
- The safeguarding Practitioner will liaise with agencies and coordinate Multiagency efforts to ensure a robust safeguarding response.
- The safeguarding Practitioner will evaluate the severity and urgency of the safeguarding concerns raised.
- Facilitate strategy discussions and initial planning meetings.
- Support the Adult MASH Team in making informed decisions about safeguarding interventions.
- Provide professional advice and guidance to frontline colleagues and members of the public.
- Ensure safeguarding plans are effectively implemented and reviewed.
- Identify cases that require further enquiries either under s42, s9 and or other appropriate escalations.
- Maintain accurate and up to date records of safeguarding cases and interventions.
- The safeguarding Practitioner will ensure that safeguarding outcomes are shared (in line with data protection guidelines) with relevant others including the referrer.

The agreed standard for Triage and MASH Enquiry processes

1. Duty RAG rating decision
2. Check Client history on LAS/Create contact.
3. Make contact with referrer to discuss referral
4. Contact with Vulnerable Adult and carers (establish capacity and consent)
5. MASH Check with partners including (Police, ELFT, GP, childrens)
6. Consultation with a Senior/Manager (as required)
7. Planning Meeting/Discussion

Triage / Mash enquiry objectives are to

- Establish facts.
- Ascertain the adult's views and wishes.
- Assess the Adult's need for protection, support and redress and how they might be met.
- Consider protection from abuse and neglect, in accordance with the Wishes of the adult.
- Make decisions as to what follow-up action should be taken with regards to the person or organisation responsible for the abuse or neglect
- Enable the adult to achieve resolution and recovery.

4 Factors to consider when assessing seriousness

- The vulnerability of the adult
- The capacity and wishes of the adult – do they want you to intervene?
- Is there an overriding public concern, are others at risk.
- Nature / extent of the abuse and whether it constitutes criminal activity, and have police been consulted
- The length of time it has been occurring.
- The impact on the individual and the risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts.
- Contact the alleged perpetrator causing harm may have with other people with care and support needs or children.
- The legality of the acts and/or level of coercion, threats or manipulation.
- The wishes of the person alleging abuse

However, it is also important to take note that while a single low-level incident may not lead to serious harm or exploitation, risks can arise from an accumulation of events both acute and long term.

Levels of Response

The levels of response guide below are designed to assist the Adults MASH in assessing risk, deciding and reviewing the most proportionate and appropriate level of response to a concern and ongoing enquiry.

Level 1

Reports or concerns are made which do not identify that abuse, maltreatment or neglect has occurred.

Or there has been minimal impact on the person. The following actions will be taken:

If it is a complaint – action required.

Informal enquiries will be made to establish impact, risk to others and the views of the person concerned. Where the risk is low, and it would not be proportionate for informal enquiries will be made to establish impact, risk to others and the views of the person concerned.

Where risk is high, or a referral for assessment of need – action required.

Quality assurance information for contracts management – action required.
care planning/ risk management for provider – action required.

Concerns poor practice from a provider – action required.

Information sharing about a vulnerable person - no further action required inappropriate.
contact – no further action required

Level 2

Reports or concerns are made identifying risk or possible abuse maltreatment or neglect.

Informal enquiries will be made to establish impact, risk to others and the views of the person concerned. Where the risk is low and it would not be proportionate for S42 (Care Act) enquiry and the issue can be managed through other appropriate routes, the following action will be taken.

Safeguarding team will provide a written report using the decision tool with recommendations for action.

These may include:

- An assessment of care and support needs or supportive action by the local authority
- An assessment of health needs by the relevant health provider
- A referral or signposting to relevant statutory or voluntary agency for information and/or advice.
- Action for the care provider which might be an internal review/ report, reviews of care plans or risk assessments with the person concerned.

Level 3

Reports or concerns are made identifying risk or possible abuse maltreatment or neglect.

Informal enquiries will be made to establish impact, risk to others and the views of the person concerned. Where risk is high, or abuse maltreatment or neglect has occurred, and the most proportionate response is to initiate enquiries under S42 (Care Act), the following action will be taken
Safeguarding team will provide a written report using the decision tool with recommendations for action under S42 (Care Act). The local authority will coordinate responses which will be one of three enquiries:

- S42 (Care Act) Enquiry undertaken by the local authority following the process outlined in section 7 of these policies and procedures.
- S42 (Care Act) Enquiry undertaken by other agencies following the formal procedures most relevant to the concern.
- A Non statutory safeguarding enquiry for example where someone is an informal carer.
- Where a crime is being investigated

Progression to further S42 Enquiry

A Section 42 enquiry is initiated when a safeguarding concern meets the criteria set out in the Care Act 2014, commonly referred to as the “three-point test”:

- 1. The person has needs for care and support.**
- 2. The person is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.**
- 3. As a result of those care and support needs, they are unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse or neglect.**

While the three-point test remains the primary threshold for initiating a Section 42 enquiry, certain safeguarding concerns, especially those involving high risks, serious harm, or broader public safety, may justify an enquiry without strict adherence to all criteria. In these cases, professional judgment, supported by multi-agency discussions, guides the decision to proceed with an enquiry”.

High-risk referrals, such as those involving repeat incidents (3 or more times) or escalating harm, might prompt a further Section 42 enquiry to prevent further deterioration, even when the individual does not meet all the criteria. Other examples include recurring hospital admissions due to neglect or abuse could justify an enquiry.

Non statutory enquiries

Other safeguarding concerns not progressed to s42 will be managed via the Informal enquiries/Non statutory Enquires route.

The Practitioners in the Adults MASH will establish the most appropriate Social and Health Care interventions to address presenting risks to others/self.

Appropriate interventions include making relevant connections for support.

Handover process to Locality Adult Community Teams

A handover process between the Adults MASH is required for all cases identified in the category of high risk. A meeting should be arranged between senior practitioners or Team Managers to agree on transfer of responsibilities and start date for planned interventions. Any disputes will be escalated via the Heads of Service.

This guidance has been produced in line with the Luton safeguarding adults policy and procedures. These can be accessed at (LBC Policy and procedures).

Appendix 1

Safeguarding principles and Good Practice checklist

Principles

The MASH Guidance is based on the Six Principles of Safeguarding as adopted in the Multi- Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and procedures that underpin all Adults Safeguarding work.

Empowerment	Adults are encouraged to make their own decisions and are provided with support and information	I am consulted about the outcomes I want from the safeguarding process, and these directly inform what happens
Prevention	Strategies are developed to prevent abuse and neglect that promotes resilience and self determination	I am provided with easily understood information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help
Proportionate	A proportionate and least intrusive response is made balanced with the level of risk	I am confident that the professionals will work in my interest and only get involved as much as needed.
Protection	Adults are offered ways to protect themselves, and there is a co-ordinated response to adult safeguarding	I am provided with help and support to report abuse. I am supported to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want and to which I am able
Partnership	Local solutions through services working together within their communities	I am confident that information will be appropriately shared in a way that takes into account its personal and sensitive nature. I am confident that agencies will work together to find the most effective responses for my own situation
Accountable	Accountability and transparency in delivering a safeguarding response	I am clear about the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the solution to the problem

Contact Details:

To contact us about the work of the **Luton Safeguarding Adults Board**:

Email: lutonsafeguardingadultsboard@luton.gov.uk or

Call: 01582 547590

To make a **Safeguarding referral for an Adult** in Luton contact the Adults MASH:

Email: adultsafeguarding@luton.gov.uk

Call: 01582 547730

To make a **Safeguarding referral for a Child** in Luton contact the Childrens MASH on

Email: Mash@luton.gov.uk

Call: 01582 547622