**MASH / Duty & Assessment Team Dispute Resolution Process January 2021**

MASH Dispute Resolution Process is to be utilised when a case is progressed to the locality team at Level 3 or 4 on the Continuum of Need for assessment and the locality team do not agree with the decision making and Level of the CON.

All challenge should be undertaken in a professional manner and the child and family should remain the focus of the discussion / challenge.

Locality Team manager to make contact with the MASH practice manager to professionally challenge/discuss the decision making and to ascertain if they can come to a shared agreement about how to progress the case. In the majority of cases, it is envisaged that this will be rectified at this stage.

In the event that this is not the case, then the matter should be escalated to the respective Managers for further review.

If the locality Team Manager agrees that the case should be challenged they should make contact with the MASH Team Manager to request that the case is reviewed and then wherever possible agree a course of action.

If the Team Managers are not able to agree, the MASH Senior Manager and relevant locality Senior Manager will be consulted and work together to reach an agreement.

A Head of Service for the relevant locality social work team and the Head of Service for MASH will be made aware of cases where Senior Managers are not able to reach an agreement and will work together to make a final decision. As stated earlier, it is anticipated that the majority of disagreements will be resolved between Practice Managers.

Professional challenge should be by telephone and any recordings around the challenge should be documented via Email – **NOT** on a child's record.

In the event that the decision is to de-escalate the case and cancel a C&F assessment, the Locality Practise manager will add a case note to document that **'A Reflective discussion has been held between MASH and Locality team and owing to X Y Z (explaining a brief rationale), a joint decision has been made to de-escalate the case to level 1 / 2'** or of similar content.

**NOTE -** In cases where the decision is to 'cancel' the C&F assessment, the MASH County Manager and relevant locality Senior Manager should be informed and jointly agree this is the correct course of action. This is the case even if Locality and MASH Practice/Team Managers agree on this course of action.

**Assessments should not be closed or cancelled without these joint discussions taking place and an agreement reached.**

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