



North Tyneside Council

Policy for Disagreements with the Decisions of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

Document Control	
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Service Area/s	Front Door
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Authors	Nik Flavell, Senior Manager for QA and Dawn Hodgson, Service Manager for Front Door
Owner	Julie Firth, Assistant Director of Children's Services
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1. Purpose of Policy

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all professionals, parents, carers, members of the child's network and children and young people themselves have access to a simple, straightforward process to quickly escalate and resolve disagreements that they may have about decision-making by the North Tyneside Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- 1.2 The MASH deals with several thousand Contacts a year relating to worries about the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Despite every effort by skilled and experienced staff from across the multi-agency partnership to make the right decision in every case, it is inevitable that there will, on occasions, be differences of opinion and disagreements about the decisions made by the MASH about how best to help and support a particular child or young person. This policy is intended to ensure that all those who make contact with the MASH have confidence that if they disagree with a decision, they have a means of raising their disagreement and that their voice will be heard.
- 1.3 This policy makes clear the process to be used by professionals, parents, carers, members of the child's network and children and young people themselves. It intentionally avoids complexity and seeks to establish a simple, four-stage graduated response process in which a decision is reviewed at increasing levels of seniority in as short a timescale as practicable.

2. Process

- 2.1 Decision-making by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub is as open and transparent as possible. All those who contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub with worries about a child or young person should expect a decision to be made within one working day. Professionals will be informed of the decision by the MASH, in light of the worries shared. Where possible this decision will be communicated verbally in the first instance and then in writing. Where contact was made with the MASH by a non-professional member of the network, for example wider family member, friend or neighbour, they will be informed that the MASH has received the Contact and made a decision about the needs of the child or young person, but they will not be informed about what actions the MASH decided were appropriate.
- 2.2 Communication by the MASH back to the referrer enables the referrer to be aware what actions were decided by the MASH as appropriate to meet the needs of a child or young person. Where the referrer is of the opinion that the decision of the MASH will mean that the needs of the child will not be met and remains worried for the child or young person, the referrer should raise their disagreement with the MASH as soon as possible. For simplicity, the main MASH contact details can be used for disagreements with decisions of the MASH but a separate contact pathway is also available.

Contact Details for Disagreement with a Decision of the MASH

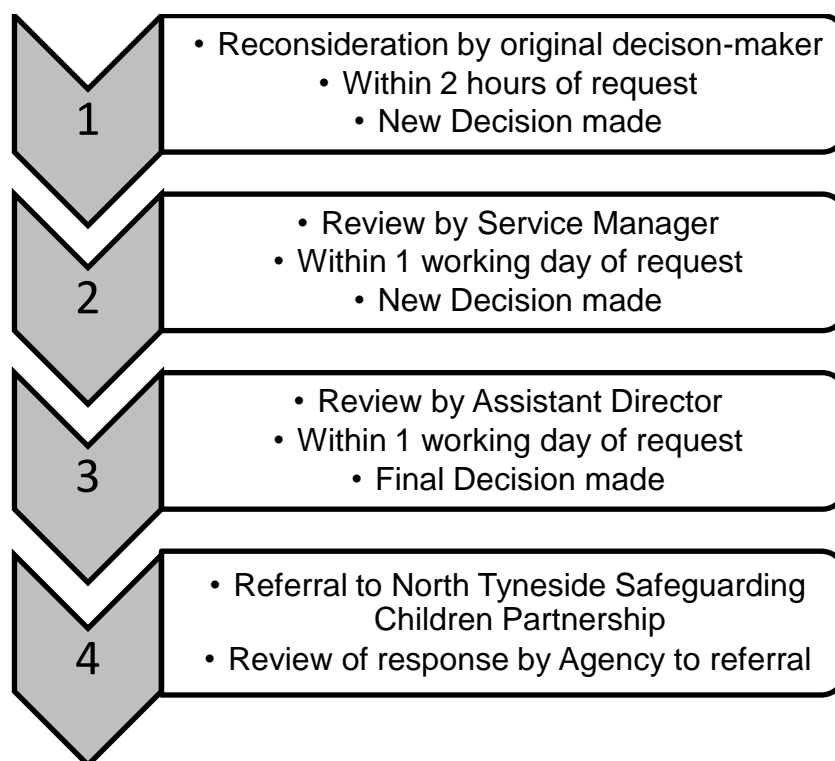
Telephone: 0191 643 7366

Email: MASH@northtyneside.gov.uk

- 2.3 The process of raising a disagreement with the MASH about a decision made is not only available to the referrer – the named person who made contact with the MASH – but also to all those within the child’s network, those naturally connected to the child, including father/s, extended family, friends, neighbours, involved professionals and the child or young person themselves. This wide accessibility is based on the importance of establishing confidence in the decision making of the MASH. Members of the network will often have a unique, but partial, understanding of the lived experience of the child or young person and this understanding may mean that the decision by the MASH – taken without this information – may not address the needs of a child or young person. It is therefore important that the voice of others, as well as the referrer, is taken into account. The MASH will, of course, only share information deemed relevant and necessary under its general data protection duties.
- 2.4 A disagreement with a decision-taking by the MASH will always be recorded on the case management system in use, currently Liquidlogic. The outcome will either be recorded as a new Contact Record or a Case Note referencing the existing Contact.

- 2.5 The process of resolving a disagreement involves a review of the previous decision based on the worries about the child or young person provided by the person expressing disagreement with the MASH decision. As noted, the process is as simple and timely as possible, based on review by escalating levels of seniority of decision-maker. Each review effectively generates a new decision. At all times, the key consideration will be to ensure that the decision of the MASH leads to the right help and support being provided to a child or young person which meets their needs, including their need for everyday safety.
- 2.6 There are four distinct stages. If at any stage, resolution is reached through the agreement with the decision of the MASH, the process ends. If not, the concerned professional, parent, carer, member of the child’s network or child or young person is able to escalate their concern.

Four Stage Response to Disagreements



A quick reference guide is appended to this document.

3. Link to Complaints Process

- 3.1 This policy is about the swift resolution of disagreements about a decision of the MASH in relation to the help and support to be provided to meet the needs of a child. It is not intended to be the pathway for the resolution of concerns about the practice of the MASH, for example the timeliness of a decision, the attitude of a staff member or other concern that a dissatisfied user of the service provided by the MASH may have. The North Tyneside Council complaints process can be used for this purpose. However, in the first

instance, practice concerns should be raised directly with one of the Team Managers so that the issue can be explored and resolved informally.