



**North Tyneside Council**

# **How we come to a decision about what help and support is required to meet the needs of a child or young person**

**Local Assessment Protocol 2020-22**



December 2019

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## Introduction

It is important that all those with worries about a child or young person in North Tyneside have confidence that they will be listened to and their concerns responded to. This document sets out the arrangements for how we do this in North Tyneside. It is intended to be as clear and simple as possible. This document is about how decisions are made.

The document sets out how the Local Authority and its partners work to decide what is the right help and support to meet the needs of children and young people, the right time to provide it and the right length and the right intensity of it. Only by having the strongest possible arrangements can we deliver on our passion – to make North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, have special educational needs or disability have the best possible life.

We know that every child and young person has a unique life story and experience. Our arrangements always put the child at the very centre of all that we do. Nevertheless, this document sets out some of the circumstances where the Local Authority and its partners take particular care in coming to a decision about what help and support is required. These circumstances include where a child or young person: is a Young Carer; has a Special Educational Need or Disability; is an Unborn; is in hospital; has specific communication needs; is an asylum seeker; is at risk of exploitation; is at risk of female genital mutilation; is in the youth justice system or is a child or young person returning home from care or is a Care Leaver.

Finally, this document sets out the arrangements by which any one with concerns that a decision of the Local Authority and its partners is wrong and will not meet the needs of a child can raise a disagreement in the confidence that their voice will be heard and their worries responded to.

This document maps out as openly and transparently as possible what should happen and when. We believe helping everyone to know and understand our arrangements is the right thing to do and will help children and young people in North Tyneside get the right help at the right time to thrive.

## Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

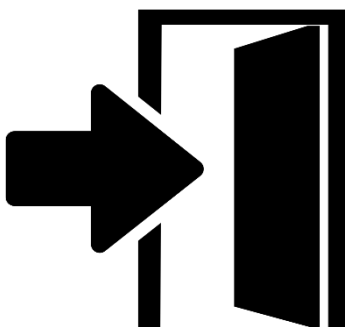
Our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is our front door to a decision by the Local Authority and its partners about what help and support will be provided to meet the needs of children and young people in the Borough. It is the same front door whether the help required is safety for a child from abuse or neglect or the help required is because a child is disabled or is a young carer or the help is required because a parent is not coping, ill or in prison. It is one front door.

The MASH is open from 08:30am in the morning until 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and from 08:30am until 4.30pm on Friday. At all other times, on evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays, the Out of Hours Duty Team is available to respond where there are worries about the safety of a child or young person. In an emergency however, if there is worry that a child or young person may be harmed, the Police should always be contacted first to provide an immediate response.

The MASH is a hub or place in which a number of practitioners from different agencies that provide services to children and young people work together in one location to decide together what help and support is required to meet the needs of a child. The MASH decides whether this help and support is provided as Early Help or by Social Care. Decision-makers within the MASH include Health, Police, Education, Probation, Housing, Youth Justice, Social Care and Early Help. Information is shared to help come to a decision about what is the right help and support required to meet the needs of a child or young person.

The MASH will always try to make a decision on what help and support is required ***within one working day*** of receiving a worry about a child or young person.

### Contact Details for the MASH



**0345 2000 109**

[childrenandadultcontactcentre@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:childrenandadultcontactcentre@northtyneside.gov.uk)

[www.northtyneside.gov.uk](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk)

Quadrant, Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, NE27 0BY  
Out of Hours (Evenings, Weekends and Bank Holidays)

**0191 200 6800**

## Disagreeing with a Decision of the MASH

Decision-making by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub is as open and transparent as possible. Professionals will be told what decision the MASH made 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, the MASH will confirm that they have listened to and considered the worry and that a decision made about the needs of the child or young person, but they will not be told about what actions the MASH decided were appropriate.

Anyone who is of the opinion that a decision of the MASH is wrong and will mean that the needs of a child or young person will not be met and remains worried for the child or young person can and 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](mailto:MASH@northtyneside.gov.uk)

If a disagreement is made to the MASH, a review of the previous decision will be undertaken and a new decision reached. This will take place in 2 hours of the disagreement being notified to the MASH. If no agreement can be reached, the process will be repeated by a more senior decision-maker within one working day. Finally, the Assistant Director will review the worries about a child or young person and make a final decision. At all times, the key consideration will be to make sure 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.

## Principles and Practice Standards

Central to all our work with children, young people, parents and carers is the Signs of Safety model of practice. This is a way of working, an approach to how the Local Authority and its partners come to a decision about what help and support is required to meet the needs of a child or young person.

The Signs of Safety model has helped us identify five principles that inform all our work. These are:

- We will work to give the right help at the right time
- We will work only for as long as is necessary
- We will work openly, honestly and respectfully
- We will work to build strong relationships with all those we work with
- We will work with the whole family and network to bring about change

The model has also informed eight practice standards that we seek to achieve for every child and young person. These are:

- Children and young people will be **listened to** and we will act on what they tell us
- Children and young people will have **people important to them involved** in helping to meet their needs
- Children and young people will have their **needs clearly understood**
- Children and young people will have a **plan** which tells those who need to know their identified needs, outcomes we seek to achieve, and the provision and support available to meet their needs, including how to keep them safe
- Children and young people will only have help for **as long as they need it** (so they can get on with their own lives)
- Children and young people will be able to **understand** all the things written about them
- Children and young people will have help which **follows the rules**
- Children and young people have help from Workers who get the **advice and support** they need to do a good job

## Types of Assessment

Name	Early Help Assessment (EHA)
Description	<p>An Early Help Assessment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details about the child</li> <li>• Details about the Family and Network</li> <li>• Presenting Issues</li> <li>• What are we worried about</li> <li>• What is working well</li> <li>• What needs to happen</li> <li>• Voice of the child</li> <li>• Scaling Question</li> <li>• Action Plan</li> <li>• Signed agreement to Plan</li> </ul>
Author	Undertaken by a professional working with a child or young person, parent or carer. Wherever possible, the person who best knows the family should complete the EHA, this maybe someone that the parent has approached to ask for help or someone that the parent later nominates.
Process	An EHA is a holistic, co-produced assessment that considers the needs of all the children/family members alongside the home environment, health, education, parenting etc. and only takes place with the explicit consent of the family to do so.
Timescale	Up to 6 weeks
Use	<p>An Early Help Assessment will be completed if (1) a family request it (2) there is more than 1 agency involved with a child or young person and (3) the family are experiencing 1 or more problems.</p> <p>An EHA is not a referral document, it is as tool to assess the family at an early stage to prevent the problems from worsening and enable the family to solve their problems for themselves. It is therefore important to start it at the earliest opportunity, before the situation deteriorates.</p>
Authorisation	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Stored	On the Liquidlogic Case Management System if provided

Name	Single Assessment
Description	<p>A Single Assessment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details about the child</li> <li>• Details about the Family and Network</li> <li>• A Chronology of Significant Life Events</li> <li>• Worries – Past Harm and Complicating Factors</li> <li>• What is working well – Existing Strengths and Existing Safety</li> <li>• Voice and Lived Experience of Child, Family and Network</li> <li>• Danger Statement and Scaling Question</li> <li>• Bottom Lines</li> <li>• Timeline</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manager's Authorisation</li> </ul>
Author	Undertaken by a Qualified Social Worker supervised by a Qualified Social Work Team Manager
Process	<p>A qualified Social Worker is allocated at the point that a Referral is determined by the MASH to require an assessment to determine the needs of a child or young person, based on the worries referred.</p> <p>The allocating Team Manager will identify the key issues on which to focus the assessment and also the expected timescale for completion of the assessment.</p> <p>Central to assessment is that the lived experience of the child or young person is clearly understood because the child or young person has been directly involved in mapping to find out what is working well, what is worrying and what needs to happen. This is achieved through the use of a creative range of tools which meet the child or young person's communication needs, developmental needs and preferences.</p> <p>Single Assessments should involve meeting with all those who have natural connections to the child, including father/s, extended family, friends, neighbours and involved professionals.</p> <p>Mapping is used to help bring clarity to the complexity of working with children and families – in assessment it will take a number of meetings to sort out information that has been gathered so that it can be identified what is working well, what the worries are and what needs to happen next. Mapping frames risk by considering strengths, existing and future safety, as well as harm and danger. Mapping is supported by scaling questions and informs Danger Statements, Safety Goals, the Safety Plan and Bottom Lines.</p> <p>Assessment informs a Safety Plan based on the mapping of past harm, future danger and complicating factors with strengths, existing and required safety and a safety judgment. The Safety Plan is co-created by the network and that describes how the family will live its everyday life to show the child and the network, that the child will be safe in the future. The Safety Plan will also have a few Bottom Lines detailing what will happen if everyday safety is not achieved for the child</p>
Timescale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Initial Single Assessment is completed within 45 working days of a Referral to the MASH. Assessment should be proportionate to the level of worries and complexity</li> <li>• An updating Single Assessment must be completed in advance of a Child Protection Review or a Child in Care Review.</li> </ul>
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Initial Single Assessment is used to decide whether a child is a child in need, a child in need of protection or a child with a disability</li> <li>• An updated Single Assessment is used to inform a Child Protection Review and a Child in Care Review.</li> <li>• A Single Assessment is used to record the conclusions of a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>
Authorisation	A Qualified Social Work Team Manager
Stored	On the Liquidlogic Case Management System

Name	Specialist Assessments
Description	There are occasions when it is in the best interests of a child or young person for a particular area of need to be assessed in greater detail, either by a Qualified Social



	Worker or specialist with particular expertise
Author	Undertaken by a Qualified Social Worker or a specialist with particular expertise
Process	<p>The necessity of a specialist assessment will be agreed by the Team Manager responsible for the case management of the assessment work. Where assessments are required through a specialist external to the Council, Senior Management agreement is required.</p> <p>Where an assessment may subsequently be used in Court by the Council, the assessment will be organised to ensure that it complies with legal guidance about the use of such assessments.</p>
Timescale	Various
Use	<p>All assessments should be purposeful – helping to ensure that children and young people get the right help at the right time. Specialist assessments may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the relationship between siblings</li> <li>• Psychological Assessment</li> <li>• Psychiatric Assessment</li> <li>• Parenting Capacity Assessment</li> <li>• PAMS – Parenting Assessment where a parent has learning difficulties or disabilities</li> <li>• AIM – Assessment of the risk of sexually harmful behaviour by a young person</li> <li>• Assessment of the Capacity of a parent to protect a child from an abusing parent</li> <li>• Court directed assessment</li> </ul> <p>This list is not exhaustive. Specialist assessments are used to get the best possible understanding of the needs of a child or young person.</p>
Authorisation	A Qualified Social Work Team Manager or a specialist with particular expertise
Stored	On the Liquidlogic Case Management System

Name	Pathway Needs Assessments – to be updated
Description	
Author	
Process	
Timescale	
Use	
Authorisation	
Stored	On the Liquidlogic Case Management System

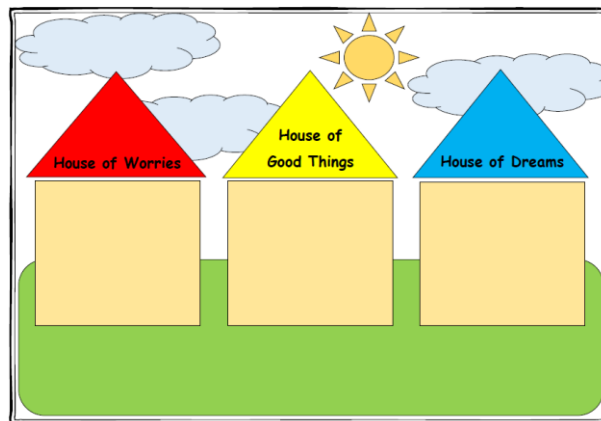
Name	ASSET – to be updated
Description	
Author	
Process	
Timescale	
Use	
Authorisation	
Stored	On the YJS Case Management System

Name	Young Carer's Needs Assessment (YCNA)
Description	<p>A YCNA must involve and incorporate the views of the young carer, parents/guardian/cared for and any other appropriate person that the young carer requests.</p> <p>A YCNA does not replace an Early Help Assessment or Single Assessment and is undertaken in addition, specific to the Young Carer's needs.</p> <p>There are age specific YCNA for those aged 12 or under and those aged 12 and over.</p> <p>It covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family set up/ important people</li> <li>• Caring role</li> <li>• Impact of caring role on young person's needs</li> <li>• Support</li> <li>• 'Miracle Question' - The 'Miracle Question' is asked to give young carers the opportunity to think creatively about their future, and what changes they would like to see in their lives.</li> </ul>
Author	Undertaken by a professional working with a child or young person, parent or carer.
Process	A YCNA is undertaken alongside an EHA or a Single Assessment.
Timescale	Within the same timescale as the EHA or Single Assessment
Use	The purpose of the YCNA is so that the professional can build up a good picture of the needs of the child or young person and their individual situation specifically in relation to their caring role
Authorisation	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Team Leader or Qualified Social Work Team Manager
Stored	On the Liquidlogic Case Management System

## Tools used in assessment

### My Three Houses

The My Three Houses tool was created by Nicki Weld and Maggie Greening. It matches the three key assessment questions of Signs of Safety – ‘What are we worried about?’, ‘What’s working well?’ and ‘What needs to happen?’ – and locates them visually within three ‘houses’ to better engage children in the conversation.



### Fairy and Wizard

This tool developed by Vania Da Paz has same purpose as My Three Houses but utilises a different graphic representation. Rather than three houses, the same Signs of Safety questions are explored using a drawing of a fairy with a magic wand or a wizard figure. The wings and the wizard’s cape represent the good things in the child’s life. On the star of the fairy’s wand and in the spell bubble at the end of the wizard’s wand, the worker and the child can write the child’s wishes and the vision of their life the way they would want it to be with all the problems solved.



# Arrangements for Children and Young People in Specific Circumstances

## **Children with a Disability**

The term disability covers a broad spectrum of needs and it is not always easy to define. A child or young person's needs resulting from disability may not require an assessment by a Social Worker and can be understood and met through universal services or Early Help. However, where a child or young person's needs resulting from disability are more severe and complex and result in a child or young person not being able to stay safe, enjoy or achieve, either the Children's Disability Team (CDT) will undertake a Single Assessment. The CDT is a small, specialist team of Qualified Children's Social Workers and will undertake a Single Assessment where the child or young person has moderate or severe learning disabilities and/or complex physical disabilities and health needs. Where a child has a disability or need relating to Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), dyscalculia, dyspraxia and dyslexia or visual and/or hearing loss, the Children with Disabilities Team will not undertake a Single Assessment but will signpost to other services for ongoing assessment and support.

For an assessment by the Children with Disabilities Team, contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

## **A Young Carer**

If it is considered that a child or young person may have support needs as a result of caring for another person or the young person or their parent requests an assessment, a Young Carers' Needs Assessment (YCNA) will be undertaken. The YCNA does not replace assessment for Early Help or Social Care. It has been co-produced to specifically focus on a child or young person's lived experience as a carer and result in a plan that supports the specific needs resulting from this role.

For a Young Carer Needs Assessment contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

## **A Child or Young Person with a Special Educational Need**

To be updated

### **An Unborn Child at risk of abuse**

Young babies are particularly vulnerable to abuse, and early assessment, intervention and support work carried out during the antenatal period can help minimise any potential risk of harm. Where professionals become aware that a woman is pregnant, at whatever stage of the pregnancy and they have concerns for the woman or unborn baby's welfare they should not assume that Midwifery or other Health services are aware of the pregnancy or the concerns held and should refer to the MASH. The MASH will establish whether an Early Help Assessment or Single Assessment is required to identify what help or support may be required to meet the needs of the Unborn child during the antenatal period and any ongoing support following birth. Assessment, if required, will commence at the point of referral and is not dependent upon the period of gestation.

For an assessment of the needs of an Unborn Child where there are worries that their needs may not be met, contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

### **A child or young person in hospital for more than 3 months**

If a child or young person is accommodated in hospital for more than 3 months the health authority must notify the Local Authority. The MASH will establish whether an Early Help Assessment or Single Assessment is required to identify what help or support may be required to meet the needs of the child or young person.

For an assessment of a child or young person who has been in hospital for more than 3 months contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

### **Children and Young People with specific communication needs**

Children and young people whose needs are assessed will be listened to. This is a practice standard that all Practitioners undertaking assessment are required to work to. In recognition of the diversity of communication needs, the practice standard does not limit the voice of a child or young person to the spoken word – for some children

due to age, development or communication need it will not be possible for the Practitioner to listen to what the child says verbally. The Standard is understood in the widest possible sense so that if the Practitioner is not able to obtain direct verbal, written or drawn feedback from a child, the Practitioner will seek to understand the 'voice' of the child through observation of and/or a reflection on child's known circumstances and lived experience. This enables the 'voice' of the unborn, very young child and those with communication difficulties and disabilities to be heard and acted upon. We are committed in assessment to work sensitively and effectively with children and young people, so that the child's world and experience is understood through the use of a creative range of tools which meet their communication needs, developmental needs and preferences.

For an assessment of a child or young person with specific communication needs contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

### **Children and Young People who are Asylum Seekers**

Children and young people who are asylum seekers are children and young people first and the MASH will establish whether an Early Help Assessment or Single Assessment is required to identify what help or support may be required to meet their needs.

Where a child or young person has no responsible adult to care for them and is therefore 'unaccompanied', they will always be assessed by a Qualified Social Worker using a Single Assessment unless it is determined that the child or young person is over the age of eighteen. The age of an unaccompanied asylum seeking child or young person is extremely important because it determines the support available and effects the way in which their asylum claim is processed. If a child or young person is, in fact, an adult over the age of eighteen years old they are entitled to support, including accommodation and essential living needs, from the Home Office. However, for children and young people seeking asylum, the Local Authority is responsible. This is why prior to the commencement of a Single Assessment of the child or young person's needs, an assessment of the child or young person's age may be necessary – this will only be carried out where there is significant reason to

doubt the self-reported age and a reasonable concern that the child or young person is in fact an adult.

The Local Authority will undertake an age assessment based on evidence-informed best practice. Two Qualified Social Workers will be allocated from the Social Work Assessment Team to undertake the assessment. Age determination is an inexact science. Age assessments cannot be concluded with absolute certainty as there is not any current method that can determine age with 100% accuracy. The outcome of the age assessment will be clearly communicated to the child, young person, or adult.

Where a determination is reached that an unaccompanied child or young person is under the age of eighteen years, a Single Assessment will be undertaken to establish their needs. Where a determination has been made that the child or young person is an adult, safe transition to adult support will be made through referral to the Home Office. If during the age assessment or Single Assessment is determined that the child or young person has been trafficked, a referral to the national referral mechanism will be also be made.

For an assessment of a child or young person seeking asylum, contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

### **Children and Young People at risk of exploitation**

The exploitation of children and young people can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation including 'County Lines', radicalisation and modern day slavery. The MASH will establish whether an Early Help Assessment or Single Assessment is required to identify what help or support may be required to meet their needs. A range of specialist evidence-informed assessment tools may additionally be used to inform the assessment.

For an assessment of a child or young person at risk of exploitation, contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

## **Children and Young People at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures, which include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. It is a form of child abuse and violence against women.

Where there is a concern that a child or young person has been or may be likely to suffer FGM, a referral should be made to the police and to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (Regulated professionals in health and social care and teachers in England and Wales have a legal duty to report 'known' cases of FGM (either the child or young person informs them it has been carried or there is a reasonable belief it has been) to the police)). The MASH will either undertake a Single Assessment or a Child Protection Investigation depending on the information referred.

For an assessment relating to concerns about Female Genital Mutilation a referral should be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

## **Children and Young People in the youth justice system**

[Pete Xeros to complete]

### **A Child or Young Person returning home from care**

When a child or young person first becomes looked after by the Local Authority a Single Assessment is undertaken to understand the needs of the child or young person and plan how they will be met whilst in care. This is undertaken by a Qualified Children's Social Worker. During the period of care, an updating Single Assessment is undertaken to inform every Child in Care Review – four months after becoming looked after and then every six months thereafter to ensure that the child or young person is getting both the help and the care that they need.

No return home from care for a child or young person should happen without such a significant decision being informed by an up-to-date Single Assessment which also clearly identifies what the needs of the child or young person are and how they will



be met, by when and by whom to make the return home from care a success. The Single Assessment will develop a Safety Plan which clearly sets out a set of behavioural rules and arrangements necessary to achieve everyday safety for the child or young person. For children and young people returning home, it is particularly important that the Safety Plan is co-created by the child or young person and their network and that it describes how the family will live its everyday life to show the child or young person and the network, that the child or young person will be safe in the future. It is also important that the Safety Plan has Bottom Lines detailing what will happen if everyday safety is not achieved for the child or young person, including in what circumstances there might be a need for a return care.

### **A Care Leaver**

[Tracey Hopps to complete]

## Assessment Jargon Buster

It is a practice standard required of every practitioner that case recording, including assessments, are written in a straightforward way, completely understandable to the child and parents, taking into account the communication needs of the parents and child, based on capacity, education, culture and other relevant factors. Every effort is made to ensure that assessments do not contain jargon, acronyms or technical terms that require a professional knowledge-base to understand. However, just in case...

ABE – Achieving Best Evidence Police Interview

AD – Assistant Director

ADM – Agency Decision Maker

AIM – Assessment, Intervention and Moving On Assessment

ANE – Adopt North East

ASB – Anti-Social Behaviour

ASYE - Assessed and Supported Year in Employment for a new Social Worker

BAME – Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CAO – Child Arrangement Order

CDT – Children’s Disabilities Team

CE – Criminal Exploitation

CiC – Child in Care

CiCC – Children in Care Council

CIN – Child in Need

CME – Children Missing Education

CP – Child Protection

CSC – Children’s Social Care

CSE – Child Sexual Exploitation

DCS – Director of Children’s Services

EET – Education, Employment and Training

EHA – Early Help Assessment

EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan  
EHE – Elective Home Education  
EPO – Emergency Protection Order  
FCO – Full Care Order  
FP – Family Partner  
HV – Health Visitor  
ICPC – Initial Child Protection Conference  
IFA – Independent Fostering Agency  
IHA – Initial Health Assessment  
ICO – Interim Care Order  
IRO – Independent Reviewing Officer  
KFC – Keeping Families Connected  
LA – Local Authority  
LAC – Looked After Child  
LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer  
LCS – Liquidlogic Case Management System  
LGM – Legal Gateway Meeting  
MAPPA – Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements  
MARAC – Multi-Agency Risk Arrangements Conference  
MASH – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub  
MSET – Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Meeting  
NAI – Non Accidental Injury  
NHS – National Health Service  
NTSCP – North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Partnership  
OOH – Out of Hours  
PA – Personal Advisor  
PAMS – Parent Assessment Manual  
PEP – Personal Education Plan  
PF – Private Fostering  
PLO – Public Law Outline  
RAP – Resource and Placement Meeting

RCPC – Review Child Protection Conference  
Regulation 24 – Temporary approval for Connected Person Foster Carers  
RHA – Review Health Assessment  
RI – Return Interview after a child has been missing  
S&S – Safe and Supported Social Work Teams  
SCR – Serious Case Review  
Section 7 – Court Ordered report on residence and contact  
Section 17 – a Child in Need  
Section 37 – Court ordered report on whether a child should be looked after  
Section 47 – Child Protection Investigation  
SDER – Same Day Emergency Response Meeting  
SEMH – Social, Emotional and Mental Health  
SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities  
SFFC – Safe Families for Children  
SGO – Special Guardianship Order  
SHB – Sexually Harmful Behaviour  
SO – Supervision Order  
SoS – Signs of Safety  
SWAT – Social Work Assessment Team  
TL – Team Leader  
TM – Team Manager  
UASC - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children  
VSH – Virtual School Head  
WLD – Whole Life Disability Team  
YJS – Youth Justice Service  
0-19 – Health Visiting and School Nursing Service

## How to complain about an Assessment

Our passion is to make North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, have special educational needs or disability have the best possible life. Ensuring that children and young people get the right help at the right time for the right length at the right intensity requires high quality assessments of the needs of children and young people when there are worries that their needs will not be met. Occasionally, despite every effort, there may be disagreement with some part of an assessment. If this is the case, there is a five-stage process that should be followed.

### **Informal Resolution**

Where a person is dissatisfied with any aspect of an assessment, in the first instance this should be raised with the assessing practitioner. It may be that a simple misunderstanding has occurred and the issue can be quickly resolved.

If no satisfactory resolution can be reached, often raising the concern with the practitioners line-manager will assist. This can be done verbally or in writing. Team Leaders and Managers are there to ensure that the assessments done are of a high standard and they will look into the issues raised and respond. Most disagreements about the contents and conclusions are resolved in this way.

Where however, someone remains unhappy that the worries they have about an assessment have not been resolved, they can make a formal complaint.

To make a formal complaint, contact

Customer and Member Liaison Office

Telephone: (0191) 643 2280

Email: [CMLO@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:CMLO@northtyneside.gov.uk)

[www.northtyneside.gov.uk](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk)

### **Stage 1 - Local Resolution**

- The Customer and Member Liaison Office will log your complaint and request that the concern is investigated by the Team Manager responsible for the assessing practitioner
- You will be offered an advocate (an advocate is someone who helps you make your complaint)
- A written response following investigation will normally be provided within 10 working days but this can sometimes be extended to 20 working days
- If you are unhappy with your response at Stage 1 you can take it further by informing the Customer and Member Liaison Office and ask for a Stage 2 investigation

### **Stage 2 - Independent Investigation**

- The Customer and Member Liaison Office will log your complaint and request that the concern is investigated
- Two independent people will be asked to carry out the investigation
- An investigating officer will carry out the investigation and an independent person will be involved to ensure the process is fair
- The investigating officer and independent person will ask to meet you to be sure that they understand your complaint
- A report will be written and recommendations will be made about how to put things right, these will be sent to you. It should take no more than 25 working days (or within the extended period of 65 working days).
- If you are unhappy with your response at Stage 2 you can take it further by informing the Customer and Member Liaison Office and ask for a Stage 3 Review. This must ordinarily be done within 20 working days.

### **Stage 3 - Review Panel**

- The Customer and Member Liaison Office will log your complaint and arrange for a Review Panel to be convened within 30 working days.
- A review panel will look at whether the independent investigation was carried out fairly
- Three independent people who do not work for Children's Services will look at the complaint

- The Panel makes recommendation to the Director of Children's Services within 5 working days of the Panel
- The Director will respond by writing with a decision about the complaint within 15 working days

### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This is an independent service that investigates complaints about councils. You can seek advice from the ombudsman at any time but they will refer a complaint back to the Council if the complaint has not been through our complaints procedure.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

0300 061 0614

PO Box 4771 Coventry CV4 0EH

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint>

## Further Contact Details

### **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

Tel: 0345 2000 109  
Email: [childrenandadultscontactcentre@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:childrenandadultscontactcentre@northtyneside.gov.uk)  
Office: Floor 2, Quadrant, Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, NE27 0BY

### **Out of Hours (Evenings, Weekends and Bank Holidays)**

Tel: 0191 200 6800  
Email: [childrenandadultscontactcentre@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:childrenandadultscontactcentre@northtyneside.gov.uk)

### **Social Work Assessment Teams (SWAT)**

Tel: 0191 643 8016  
Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)  
Office: Floor 2, Quadrant, Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, NE27 0BY

### **Safe and Supported Social Work Teams**

Tel: 0191 643 8434  
Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)  
Office: Floor 2, Quadrant, Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, NE27 0BY

### **Fostering Service**

Tel: 0191 643 2540  
Email: [fostering@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@northtyneside.gov.uk)  
Office: Floor 2, Quadrant, Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, NE27 0BY

### **Family Time Service**

Tel: 0191 643 8935  
Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)  
Office: Floor 2, Quadrant, Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, NE27 0BY

### **Riverdale Children's Home**

Tel: 0191 643 6300  
Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)  
Office: Minton Lane, North Shields, NE29 6DA

### **Sycamore Children's Home**

Tel: 0191 643 8909  
Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)  
Office: Riverside Centre, Minton Lane, North Shields, NE29 6DA

### **Addison Street Short Break Home**

Tel: 0191 200 6178  
Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)  
Office: 31 Addison Street, North Shields, NE29 6LR

### **Heatherfield Mews Children's Home**

Tel: 0191 200 6178  
Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)



Office: 1-3 Heatherfield Mews, Lee Street, Annitsford, Cramlington, NE23 7DP

### **Leaving Care Team**

Tel: 0191 200 8788

Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Office: The Lodge, Riverside Centre, Minton Lane, North Shields, NE29 6DQ

### **Whole Life Disability Service (Children's Disability Team)**

Tel: 0191 643 4151

Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Office: The Oxford Centre, West Farm Avenue, Longbenton, NE12 8LT

### **Adopt North East (Adoption Agency)**

Tel: 0191 643 5000

Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)

[adoptnortheast@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:adoptnortheast@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Office: Balliol Pembroke Wing, Chesters Avenue, Longbenton, NE12 8QP

### **Youth Justice Service**

Tel: 0191 643 8605

Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Office: Riverside Centre, Minton Lane, North Shields, NE29 6DQ

### **Raising the Health and Education of Looked After Children (RHELAC)**

Tel: 0191 643 8368

Email: [rhelac@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:rhelac@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Office: The Langdale Centre, Langdale Gardens, Wallsend, NE28 0HG

### **North West Locality Team**

Tel: 0191 643 2110

Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Office: Shiremoor Children's Centre, Bridge Terrace, Shiremoor, NE27 0TA

### **Coast Locality Team**

Tel: 0191 643 8804

Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Office: Whitley Bay Customer First Centre, York Road, Whitley Bay, NE26 1AB

### **Central Locality Team**

Tel: 0191 643 8899

Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Office: Riverside Children's Centre, Minton Lane, North Shields NE29 6DQ

### **South West Locality Team**

Tel: 0191 643 2229

Email: [firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.surname@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Office: Howdon Childrens Centre, 11A Howdon Lane, Wallsend, NE28 0AL