

What happens when a concern is reported to Knowsley Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, (MASH)

Knowsley safeguarding adult's process

If you are concerned that an adult is experiencing abuse or neglect you can report your concern to Knowsley MASH by clicking here: [Report a concern about an adult at risk](#)

or telephone 0151 443 2600

What is a contact?

Any concern referred to Knowsley MASH is known as a) contact. Once the contact is received it will be looked at by a senior member of the MASH team known as the Information Management Officer, (IMO).

Where there is no safeguarding element to a contact no further safeguarding action will be taken; the IMO will consider any alternative action to be taken on a case-by-case basis, this may include signposting to another service or advice being given.

What is a safeguarding concern?

The IMO will decide, based on the information in the contact, if the adult safeguarding process should be initiated.

Where there is a safeguarding element, the contact will be confirmed as a safeguarding concern.

An adult safeguarding concern is any worry about an adult who has or appears to have care and support needs, that they may be subject to, or may be at risk of, abuse and neglect and may be unable to protect themselves against this.

Safeguarding concerns can include domestic abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse, financial abuse, discriminatory abuse, sexual exploitation, modern slavery, sexual abuse, organisational abuse, neglect, and self-neglect. A report about adults at risk of being drawn into extremist activity will also trigger a safeguarding response.

Information gathering:

When the IMO has confirmed that the contact is a safeguarding concern, partner agencies will be asked to share information about the person, in line with the MASH Information-sharing agreement.

The IMO will review the information gathered and make one of the following decisions:

Decision 1- Information gathered indicates that a safeguarding enquiry is not required. The IMO will initiate any other action required e.g., social care assessment, unscheduled review, signpost to alternative agency for advice and support etc. The IMO will inform the referrer of the decision and of any other action required by the referrer.

Decision 2- A safeguarding enquiry is required. In this case the IMO will allocate the case to a social worker in the MASH to undertake the enquiry.

Decision 3- Information gathered indicates that a safeguarding enquiry is not required, however there is a need to initiate the Quality Concern process. The IMO may decide to do this in circumstances where care has been compromised within a provider service, however, abuse and neglect has not occurred. A Quality Concern cannot be initiated when the incident involves an allegation of a criminal offence, such as physical or sexual assault, financial abuse, and serious wilful neglect, these are always Safeguarding Concerns.

If it is decided that a safeguarding enquiry is required, the social worker allocated will lead on the enquiry.

Immediate safety plan:

The safety of the adult is the initial priority. The social worker will liaise with the adult, and/or the referrer to identify the steps that may need to be taken to keep the adult safe while the safeguarding enquiry takes place.

Safeguarding strategy discussion:

When the relevant information has been gathered a Strategy Discussion will take place within 7 working days. The purpose is to consider the immediate safety of the adult at risk and to agree how the concern should be followed up.

The adult at risk's views should be included in the Strategy Discussion, if known.

During the course of the strategy discussion, it may become clear that the person does not want a safeguarding enquiry to be carried out and has capacity to make this decision. In this case a finding of Enquiry Ceased at Individual's request may be recorded. However, an enquiry should only be ceased at an individual's request when no one else is at risk and the IMO is satisfied that the person has capacity to make this decision and is not subject to undue influence.

Safeguarding strategy discussion:

For complex enquiries requiring a multi-agency response, a Multi-agency Strategy Meeting should be convened within 5 working days of the Strategy Discussion. The purpose of the meeting is to share and assess information about the concerns and any other information gathered during the strategy discussion, including information about the person(s)/organisation posing the risk. The meeting will assess the risk to the adult and anyone else and will agree how the enquiry will be carried out.

The safeguarding enquiry:

There are two types of safeguarding enquiry-

- **Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiry - *must*** be carried out where an adult meets *all* of the Section 42 criteria. The criteria are:
 - The adult has needs for care and support, whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs, and
 - The adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect *and*
 - As a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect, or the risk of it.

Non-statutory Safeguarding Enquiry (known as 'Other' safeguarding enquiry) – *may* be carried out where an adult does not meet all of the Section 42 criteria, but the IMO considers it necessary and proportionate to have a safeguarding enquiry. The IMO may decide to initiate a non-statutory safeguarding enquiry in response to concerns about carers, or about adults who do not have care and support needs but who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

It is the responsibility of the professional charged with the task of carrying out the enquiry to collate all relevant information about the circumstances of the adult at risk and to assess any risk to them or to others, including children.

Other enquiries and actions may be an appropriate response to the risk that is presented and support the adult:

- Section 9 of the Care Act (S9) assessment of an adult's need for care and support
- Section 10 of the Care Act (S10) assessment of a carers need for support

- Social work services such as care management.
- Signpost for advice/resources
- Quality of care concern
- MARAC
- Complaints

If the concern raised does not meet the s42 safeguarding criteria, however the adult is considered to be at risk, resulting either from their own choices or behaviour alone or from a range of individual and environmental factors, the Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management, (MARAM) process may be an appropriate option to use.

These procedures are designed to provide guidance to staff seeking to support individuals at risk to live autonomously and independently, whilst seeking to support them to manage, reduce and mitigate any risks resulting from their lifestyle and their choices and decisions.

Police Involvement:

If the incident relates to a criminal matter the police will be informed. A criminal investigation by the police takes priority over all other enquiries, although a multi-agency approach should be agreed to ensure that the interests and personal wishes of the adult will be considered throughout, even if they do not wish to provide any evidence or support a prosecution.'

Making safeguarding personal:

The desired outcomes of the adult at risk must be established as soon as it is practical and safe to do so. The views and wishes of the adult at risk remain the key factor which determines the response to the concern. These wishes may be apparent at the report/referral stage. Where this is not the case, it is important for the person to be spoken to, preferably by someone they know and can confide in; this should be decided by the IMO in consultation with others involved with the person. It is important in discussing their wishes with the adult at risk, that the implications of each option are explained in order that an informed decision can be made.

Advocacy:

Advocacy means giving a person support to have their voice heard; helping the person to understand their rights and express their views. The person supporting the adult could be a family member or a friend.

The Care Act Guidance states that the local authority must arrange, where appropriate, for an independent advocate to represent and support an adult who is the subject of a safeguarding enquiry where the adult would have 'substantial difficulty' being involved in and contributing to the process and where there is no other appropriate adult to assist.

Timescales:

The enquiry should be concluded within 35 days of the initial Strategy Meeting; if further time is required it is important that the reasons for this are recorded in the person's file. An enquiry is concluded when all of the necessary information gathering is complete and all of the necessary actions to safeguard the person have been agreed.

An enquiry may also cease at the request of the individual adult at risk. The IMO must be satisfied that the person has the capacity to make this decision, that their capacity is not affected by undue influence from anyone else, and that no one else is at risk.

Safeguarding enquiry outcome:

At the end of an enquiry one of the following conclusions should be recorded:

- Risk identified – evidence is found of, or potential for, abuse or neglect
- Risk assessment inconclusive – no direct evidence is found of, or potential for, abuse or neglect but there is uncertainty as to whether the person is susceptible to abuse or neglect
- No risk identified – no evidence is found of, or potential for, abuse or neglect
- Enquiry ceased at individual's request

There should be a clearly recorded rationale for why the conclusion has been reached.