

Briefing note

To: Schools Forum

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Purpose of the Paper:

Information	
Consultation	
Decision	√

Title of Briefing: Education post in the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Background

The MASH is a dynamic multi-agency integrated team assessing notifications and referrals regarding children. The Local Authority holds the statutory responsibility for the management of notifications and referrals and the overall decision taken, but the decision and planning required to inform the outcome of the notification or referral is made by the integrated MASH team.

This type of multi-agency cooperation is a statutory duty of all professionals delivering care to children, families and adults.

In September 2018, following consultation with Head Teachers, it was agreed that an education specific post would be established within the MASH to support live information sharing and joint decision-making between schools and the safeguarding partnership. A recruitment exercise took place and several individuals expressed an interest in the role; latterly this role has been delivered by one secondee from a school in North Tyneside. It was agreed that the Local Authority would fund the post during this initial pilot stage, during which period it was hoped the benefits of this core post in the MASH would be evident for schools and the safeguarding partnership.

When the post was established it was noted the role would be kept under review with updates being provided to colleagues via Designated Safeguarding Leads updates, the Primary Learning Partnership, Education Improvement Partnership, Head Teacher Briefing, and Schools Forum, as the key decision-making body regarding funding for education services.

Current Position:

The post is an integral component of our MASH, with specific responsibility for:

- Gathering and sharing information from schools to ensure that all relevant information about the child and family informs the joint decision-making process;
- Ensuring schools are kept informed about the outcome of referrals and the rationale behind decision making;
- Providing advice and guidance to schools about the MASH referrals and safeguarding

- Acting as the education representative on Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences
- Representing schools at strategy meetings when schools are unable to attend
- Acting as the education representative for the early help triage process

Feedback from schools has indicated that the post is highly valued and supports schools in terms of when and how to make referrals to the MASH and the outcome of these referrals. At a recent Head Teacher Briefing session, the post was listed as the number one strength in relation to joint working between schools and Children's Services.

The post is also highly valued across all partners within the MASH, and it is recognised that it significantly enhances decision-making for children and - through liaison with schools - brings the details of the child's lived experience into the decision-making process.

In the last twelve months of the post the MASH has dealt with the following: -

- 11,547 contacts
- 1,186 of these were from Schools which represents 10.3% of the total contact.
- While we do not hold the data in a reportable way for the breakdown of school contacts by first/primary, special or high/middle/ secondary, we would estimate that the split is 60% primary and 40% secondary.
- 445 children were subject to a Strategy discussion across the whole service. While we can't quantify those strategy discussions held in MASH as opposed to the wider service, for those that are held in MASH the education post represents the school in approximately 98% of discussions.

Whilst it is acknowledged that there is no statutory requirement for an education post to be in a MASH, there are clearly significant benefits for all partners in North Tyneside, including schools, and most importantly for children and families by having this role as a core component of our MASH.

The cost of the post for the initial 12-month pilot period has been the equivalent of an UPS3 0.8 FTE - £40,000 pro rata inclusive of costs pa. @ 1st September 2019.

In recognition of the continued pressure on schools' and local authority budgets, it is proposed that the costs of the post are split equally between the local authority and the Dedicated School Grant.

Should Schools Forum agree with this consideration as the MASH is used by all Schools in North Tyneside the funding would need to come from all schools and not just maintained first/ primary and middle/high/ secondary (e.g. academy, special, nursery).

Recommendations:

Schools Forum are asked to consider the information in this report consider the following recommendation: -

- That the education post within the MASH is continued, on a partnership basis with 50% of the cost of the post (£20,000) funded from the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, from April 2020.
- That the post and its funding is reviewed again in November 2021.