

## First Contact Process Map

### INTRODUCTION

Since 2018, referrals to Northumberland Children's Services, are received through the First Contact service. The service aims to make consistent and timely decisions regarding the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and families. The service has several flow charts in place, which act as a step-by-step guide for staff to ensure they are consistently adhering to the agreed process for any course of action that is required. As the service has developed the number of flow charts has increased. To avoid any misinterpretation, the service now requires a single document that can demonstrate all the processes.

The purpose of this piece of work has been to arrange all the current flow charts into a single document, as a process map.

### HOW TO USE THE PROCESS MAP


First Contact has been broken down into 5 workstreams:

WORKSTREAMS	ROLES INVOLVED
<b>CONTACT</b>	Administration Enquiry and Referral Administrators (ERA) Team Manager Social Workers
<b>EARLY HELP</b>	Administration Team Manager Early Help co-ordinators Early Help co-ordination workers
<b>TRIAGE</b>	Administration Team Managers Social Workers <i>Safeguarding Unit</i>
<b>MASH</b>	Administration Team Manager Social Workers <i>Partner agencies</i>
<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	Administration Team Managers Social Workers
<b>TRANSFER</b>	Administration Team Managers Social Workers <i>Representatives from across the service dependent on the transfer circumstances</i>

The map is based on any scenario that staff in First Contact will manage, across all five workstreams. The full list of scenarios are represented in Appendix A. There are accompanying standard operating procedures (SOPs) for each scenario.

The key explains the different shapes that are represented in the process map and should be consulted for clarity before using the map.

The process map reflects the tasks that First Contact staff complete within a workstream from it being received, to the point it transfers to another workstream or where involvement ends for the service. There is reference on the map to tasks that are completed by staff outside of First Contact for context, but this does not go into any more detail other than the initial task and which team completes it.

Within the workstream maps, if there are tasks that continue as part of a process, into another workstream (change in colour), then the user can click  and they will move to the relevant point in the map to continue the process. This reverse function also allows the user to understand the previous tasks that were completed in another workstream.

The process maps should be used in conjunction with the following:

- Northumberland Children's Services procedures manual, which can be accessed [HERE](#)
- The threshold document, which can be accessed [HERE](#)
- EHM (Early Help Module) and LCS system crib sheets, which can be accessed [HERE](#)
- The Signs of Safety practice handbook, specifically the First Contact practice expectations and bottom lines, when it is launched.

Professional jargon can be used throughout the service and there are less familiar scenarios that staff are asked to respond to. A glossary of terms relevant to First Contact has been included, completed by staff within First Contact, which is in Appendix B as a quick reference.

There is also a list of helpful abbreviations used within the process map document.

## **SCOPE**

**The scope of the document includes:**

- This will be a reference document to ensure that all staff in First Contact are following the agreed processes, adhering to the safe working practices of the service and remain accountable in their practice.
- This will be used by colleagues across Children's Services to understand the breadth of issues that First Contact manage and to understand what processes have been followed before their service becomes involved with a family.
- This can be referred to by colleagues if a challenge is considered and/or made about practice within First Contact.
- This document should be made accessible to families and professionals.

**It excludes:**

- This process map does not replace the agreed policies and procedures within Childrens Services; it should be used in conjunction with them.
- This process map does not represent the Liquidlogic system processes, only practice.
- The document only represents the current processes in place. They have not been reviewed to consider areas to strengthen, as part of this work.

## Appendix A- Possible scenarios within First Contact

The processes considered within all workstreams include:

PROCESS	DATE SIGNED OFF
Telephone referral	4.3.2021
Telephone advice request	4.3.2021
Email referral	4.3.2021
Face to face referral	4.3.2021
Referral or enquiries about an unborn child	4.3.2021
Diary in calls	4.3.2021
Calls from parent following First Contact Letter	4.3.2021
Referral via the website	4.3.2021
Transfer in requests (permanent and temporary)	5.3.2021
CCN (Child Concern Notification) triage meeting	4.3.2021
Postal referral	4.3.2021
Information requests on closed cases	4.3.2021
Early Help support request on a case open to a social work team	4.3.2021
Case note-contact	4.3.2021
Police Protection notification	4.3.2021
Assessment request from OLA (Other Local Authority) practitioner	4.3.2021
PREVENT	4.3.2021
New information received on an open case	4.3.2021
Disabled child	4.3.2021
Homeless 16/17-year-old	4.3.2021
Leaving care team requests	4.3.2021
Direct payment requests	4.3.2021
MSET referrals	4.3.2021
Request for welfare visits from OLA	4.3.2021
Request for a statutory visit from OLA	4.3.2021
MAPPa information request	4.3.2021
MARAC information request	4.3.2021
MATAC information request	4.3.2021
CAFCASS information request	4.3.2021
Probation information request	4.3.2021
Notification of prisoner release	4.3.2021
CEOP requests for information	4.3.2021
POLIT requests for information	4.3.2021
SSAFA requests for information	4.3.2021
Ofsted checks	4.3.2021
DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checks	4.3.2021

A+E referrals	4.3.2021
Recording visual impairment details	4.3.2021
Emails from Adult Social Care/ACN	4.3.2021
Child death	4.3.2021
Fabricated Induced Illness (FII)	4.3.2021
Regulation 85 referrals	4.3.2021
OLA request to view files	4.3.2021
Missing alerts	4.3.2021
Regulation 116 of the Mental Capacity Act	4.3.2021
Section 2 of the Mental Health Act	4.3.2021
Section 3 of the Mental Health Act	4.3.2021
OLA CLA notifications	4.3.2021
Home office referrals	4.3.2021
Inhouse referral	4.3.2021
Request for Section 7 Reports	4.3.2021
Request for Section 37 Reports	4.3.2021
Input to TAF (Team Around the Family)	4.3.2021
Appropriate/Responsible adult requests	4.3.2021
<b>TRIAGE WORKSTREAM</b>	
Case note only	4.3.2021
EHFW (Early Help Family Worker) Assessment	4.3.2021
EH (Early Help) support request	4.3.2021
Universal services	4.3.2021
MASH	4.3.2021
C+F assessment	4.3.2021
<b>MASH WORKSTREAM</b>	
Closure	4.3.2021
Universal Services offer	4.3.2021
Early Help support request	4.3.2021
Progress to referral	4.3.2021
Strategy	4.3.2021
Assessment	4.3.2021
<b>ASSESSMENT WORKSTREAM</b>	
Child and Family Assessment (10 days)	4.3.2021
Child and Family Assessment (25 days)	4.3.2021
Child and Family Assessment (45 days)	4.3.2021
No further action - information provided during assessment.	4.3.2021
Other Actions outcome	4.3.2021
Referral to EHFW (step down) outcome	4.3.2021
Private Fostering Agreement	4.3.2021
Start Active C+F Plan outcome	4.3.2021
Specialist Assessment (Parenting Assessment and PAMs)	4.3.2021

Strategy Discussion	4.3.2021
Legal Action (Legal Planning Meeting)	4.3.2021
Legal Action (Legal Gateway Panel)	4.3.2021
Legal Action (PLO (Public Law Outline))	4.3.2021
Legal Action (Section 20)	4.3.2021
Legal Action (Issue Care Proceedings)	4.3.2021
Place into Accommodation	4.3.2021
S47 assessment (and the possible outcomes)	4.3.2021
Agreeing support from 14+ and DCT (Disabled Childrens Team)	4.3.2021
Direct Payment	4.3.2021
<b>TRANSFER WORKSTREAM</b>	
CiN (Child in Need) Care Team/planning meeting: transfer from Assessment Team to Locality Team	4.3.2021
20 Day CLA review: transfer from Assessment Team to Locality Team	4.3.2021
Initial Child Protection Conference: transfer from Assessment Team to Locality Team	4.3.2021
Transfer from Assessment Team to 14+	4.3.2021
Transfer from Assessment Team to Early Help Family Worker	4.3.2021
Transfer from Assessment Team to DCT	4.3.2021
<b>EARLY HELP WORKSTREAM</b>	
Send back to EHFw	4.3.2021
Transfer out to OLA	4.3.2021
Early Help support request	4.3.2021
Virtual Hub	4.3.2021
Transfer to EHFw	4.3.2021
Allocated to specific service	4.3.2021
Universal Services/other offer	4.3.2021
Playscheme request	4.3.2021
Young carers assessment	4.3.2021
Referral for an assessment (C+F)	4.3.2021
Closure EHA (Early Help Assessment)	4.3.2021
Load EHA	4.3.2021
Input TAF	4.3.2021
Community hub referral	4.3.2021

The process map and accompanying SOPs should be reviewed at an agreed schedule- the frequency needs to be determined.

## Appendix B- Glossary of terms

TERM	EXPLANATION
<b>CCN triage meeting</b>	This is a daily meeting where all the CCNs (Child Concern Notification) received are discussed and the next steps are agreed, for example transferring to Early Help, triage, MASH or for a statutory assessment.
<b>Children triage email</b> <a href="mailto:childrentriage@northumberland.gov.uk">childrentriage@northumberland.gov.uk</a>	Children's Services - written referrals or queries to be submitted to this email address.
<b>Community Hub (Early Help)</b>	The Community Hub is a phone line for any resident in Northumberland to contact for support (it came out of the Covid situation), this is for Adults and Children.
<b>Early Help support request</b>	This was the hub referral, so a form for any family or professional to request support for a child if they do not have an allocated worker (Social Worker/EHFW).
<b>Early Help inbox</b> <a href="mailto:Earlyintervention@northumberland.gov.uk">Earlyintervention@northumberland.gov.uk</a>	Early Help support requests - written referrals or queries to be submitted to this email address.
<b>EHA inbox</b> <a href="mailto:EHA@northumberland.gov.uk">EHA@northumberland.gov.uk</a>	Email inbox for any documents or requests Re: EHAs (Early Help Assessment).
<b>First Contact admin email</b> <a href="mailto:firstcontactadmin@northumberland.gov.uk">firstcontactadmin@northumberland.gov.uk</a>	Admin support for First Contact Assessment Team.
<b>First Contact duty diary</b>	First Contact letter / Unborn referrals and any other tasks requiring follow up. Checked daily by ERAs (Enquiry and Referral Administrators).
<b>First Contact email</b> <a href="mailto:firstcontact@northumberland.gov.uk">firstcontact@northumberland.gov.uk</a>	Triage Social Work Team accessed by Triage Social Workers and Team Manager/Deputy Team Managers.
<b>First Contact generic diary</b>	This is where ERAs record unborn referrals if they are received before 12 weeks' gestation or if a letter has been sent to parents that has been identified for a follow up.
<b>First Contact group (in LCS)</b>	Telephone queries taken/advice given by ERAs, First Contact group chosen so that Triage Manager can have oversight of this.
<b>Initial decision makers tray (in LCS)</b>	Contact Records assigned to this tray before being allocated to Triage Social Worker for triage.
<b>Legal Planning Meeting</b>	A legal planning meeting is a meeting between professionals and a solicitor where they share information to decide if the worries are great enough to issue care proceedings and ask the courts to remove the children from their parents.
<b>MARAC</b>	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a meeting where information is

	shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases, by partner agencies.
<b>MAPPA</b>	Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) assess and manage the risks posed by sexual and violent offenders.
<b>MATAC</b>	Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination protocol (MATAC).
<b>MSET</b>	Missing, Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficking (MSET).
<b>MASH</b>	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
<b>PAMs assessment</b>	Parenting Assessment Manual, this is the tool used by social workers carrying out an assessment where there are concerns that the parent(s) have a learning difficulty or another disability. The tool is used to assess different aspects of the parents' ability to safely care for a child(ren).
<b>Police Protection</b>	Is an emergency power which enables any police officer to take action to protect a child who is at risk of significant harm. Police protection cannot be kept in place any longer than 72 hours.
<b>Regulation 85</b>	Places a duty on local authorities to check on the safety and welfare of children living in residential education or hospital provision for any continuous period exceeding and/or likely to exceed 12 weeks.
<b>Regulation 116 of the Mental Health Act</b>	<p><b>Welfare of certain hospital patients.</b></p> <p>(1) Where a patient to whom this section applies is admitted to a hospital, independent hospital or care home in England and Wales (whether for treatment for mental disorder or for any other reason) then, without prejudice to their duties in relation to the patient apart from the provisions of this section, the authority shall arrange for visits to be made to him on behalf of the authority, and shall take such other steps in relation to the patient while in the hospital or nursing home as would be expected to be taken by his parents.</p> <p>(2) This section applies to-</p> <p>(a) a child or young person—</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) who is in the care of a local authority by virtue of a care order within the meaning of the Children Act 1989, or</li> <li>(ii) in respect of whom the rights and powers of a parent are vested in a local authority by virtue of section 16 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968;</li> </ul> <p>(b) a person who is subject to the guardianship of a local Social Services authority under the provisions of this Act; or</p> <p>(c) a person the functions of whose nearest relative under this Act are for the time being transferred to a local Social Services authority.</p>
<b>Section 2 of the Mental Health Act</b>	<p><b>Admission for assessment.</b></p> <p>(1) A patient may be admitted to a hospital and detained there for the period allowed by subsection (4) below in pursuance of an application (in this Act referred to as “an application for admission for assessment”) made in accordance with subsections (2) and (3) below.</p> <p>(2) An application for admission for assessment may be made in respect of a patient on the grounds that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) s/he is suffering from mental disorder of a nature or degree which warrants the detention of the patient in a hospital for assessment (or for assessment followed by medical treatment) for at least a limited period; and</li> <li>(b) s/he ought to be so detained in the interests of his own health or safety or with a view to the protection of other persons.</li> </ul> <p>(3) An application for admission for assessment shall be founded on the written recommendations in the prescribed form of two registered medical practitioners, including in each case a statement that in the opinion of the practitioner the conditions set out in subsection (2) above are complied with.</p> <p>(4) Subject to the provisions of section 29(4) below, a patient admitted to hospital in</p>

	<p>pursuance of an application for admission for assessment may be detained for a period not exceeding 28 days beginning with the day on which he is admitted but shall not be detained after the expiration of that period unless before it has expired, he has become liable to be detained by virtue of a subsequent application, order, or direction under the following provisions of this Act.</p>
<b>Section 3 of the Mental Health Act</b>	<p>A team of health professionals have assessed a person's mental health and decided that the best way to provide the care and treatment they need is to admit them to hospital under Section 3 for treatment. The team of professionals would be an Approved Mental Health Professional known as an AMHP and two doctors.</p>
<b>Section 7 Report</b>	<p>Welfare reports.</p> <p>(1) A court considering any question with respect to a child under this Act may—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) ask an officer of the Service; or</li> <li>(b) ask a local authority to arrange for— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) an officer of the authority; or</li> <li>(ii) such other person (other than an officer of the Service) as the authority considers appropriate, to report to the court on such matters relating to the welfare of that child as are required to be dealt with in the report.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>(2) The Lord Chancellor may, after consulting the Lord Chief Justice, make regulations specifying matters which, unless the court orders otherwise, must be dealt with in any report under this section.</p> <p>(3) The report may be made in writing, or orally, as the court requires.</p> <p>(4) Regardless of any enactment or rule of law which would otherwise prevent it from doing so, the court may take account of—</p>

	<p>(a) any statement contained in the report; and</p> <p>(b) any evidence given in respect of the matters referred to in the report, in so far as the statement or evidence is, in the opinion of the court, relevant to the question which it is considering.</p> <p>(5) It shall be the duty of the authority or officer of the Service to comply with any request for a report under this section.</p> <p>(6) The Lord Chief Justice may nominate a judicial office holder (as defined in section 109(4) of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005) to exercise his functions under subsection (2).</p>
<b>Section 37 Report</b>	<p><b>Powers of court in certain family proceedings.</b></p> <p>1. Where, in any family proceedings in which a question arises with respect to the welfare of any child, it appears to the court that it may be appropriate for a care or supervision order to be made with respect to him, the court may direct the appropriate authority to undertake an investigation of the child's circumstances.</p> <p>(2) Where the court gives a direction under this section the local authority concerned shall, when undertaking the investigation, consider whether they should—</p> <p>(a) apply for a care order or for a supervision order with respect to the child;</p> <p>(b) provide services or assistance for the child or his family; or</p> <p>(c) take any other action with respect to the child.</p> <p>(3) Where a local authority undertake an investigation under this section, and decide not to apply for a care order or supervision order with respect to the</p>

	<p>child concerned, they shall inform the court of—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) their reasons for so deciding;</li> <li>(b) any service or assistance which they have provided, or intend to provide, for the child and his family; and</li> <li>(c) any other action which they have taken, or propose to take, with respect to the child.</li> </ul> <p>(4) The information shall be given to the court before the end of the period of eight weeks beginning with the date of the direction unless the court otherwise directs.</p> <p>(5) The local authority named in a direction under subsection (1) must be—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the authority in whose area the child is ordinarily resident; or</li> <li>(b) where the child is not ordinarily resident in the area of a local authority, the authority within whose area any circumstances arose in consequence of which the direction is being given.</li> </ul> <p>(6) If, on the conclusion of any investigation or review under this section, the authority decide not to apply for a care order or supervision order with respect to the child—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) they shall consider whether it would be appropriate to review the case at a later date; and</li> <li>(b) if they decide that it would be, they shall determine the date on which that review is to begin.</li> </ul>
<b>Virtual Early Help Hub</b>	Once a fortnight a multi-agency virtual meeting takes place to find solutions for those families where the EH First Contact team cannot find the solution.
<b>Parenting assessment</b>	Parenting Assessment is a more detailed assessments that is completed with a family who are already open to Children's Services. It looks at a parent's strengths and identifies the areas that

	may need support. This assessment looks at a parent's upbringings, any struggles they may have such as drug use or mental health struggles and it uses all this information to make a recommendation about whether a parent can or cannot care for their child safely.
<b>Private Fostering Agreement</b>	Private fostering is an arrangement whereby a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if the child has a disability) (S. 66 Children Act 1989) is placed for 28 days or more in the care of someone who is not the child's parent(s) or a 'connected person'. Children's Services have a responsibility to ensure that where children are living with someone who is not their parent or connected person such as a grandparent, adult sibling or an aunt or uncle that this person is a safe person to be looking after the child.
<b>Section 20 agreement</b>	Section 20 is where a parent accepts that they need some support and that the children are not safe with them while they get this support. Parents can voluntarily place the children in the care of Children's Services while support is offered so they can return home.
<b>Section 47 Enquiry</b>	Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 allows Children's Services to complete a Child Protection Investigation wherever they feel a child is at risk of significant harm.
<b>Strategy discussion/meeting</b>	A Strategy Discussion is a meeting between professionals where they share information to decide if the worries are great enough to complete a child protection investigation.