

Children first and at the heart of all we do

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Responding to MP / Councillor Enquiries - Process

- A Councillor or MP raises an enquiry via the members portal or by contacting Dudley Council Plus (DC+)
- An entry will be created in Dynamics by DC+ and allocated to the correct service area. An automatic acknowledgement will be sent to the Cllr/MP from Dynamics.
- An automated email, with a reference number, will be sent to the children.services@dudley.gov.uk mailbox. This mailbox will forward the enquiry to the relevant Personal Assistant to send to an appropriate officer to investigate, action and draft a response, within the Corporate 10-day deadline.
- **All Councillor / MP enquiries should be responded to by the relevant Service Director. The Director for Children's Services (DCS) only responds to enquiries sent directly to the DCS or to any escalations that are received in the DCS inbox.** The children.services@dudley.gov.uk mailbox should be copied into all correspondence to ensure a running log is kept centrally. Executive Support will ensure copies of correspondence are uploaded to Dynamics.
- A formal response needs to be sent to the Cllr / MP **within 10 working days**, a copy of the response should be sent to children.services@dudley.gov.uk. Executive Support will upload the final response to Dynamics and close the case.
- Cases must be closed on the day the responses are sent to ensure Corporate deadlines are adhered to, performance reports are generated on a quarterly basis to measure how each Directorate are performing.
- The subject line of all emails in relation to the case should state "CAS XXXX" reference number, MP / Cllr and service area, with issue details. By keeping the title of the email consistent this will ensure accurate record keeping.
- **At day 8** the Children Services Mailbox will escalate the non-response to the officer's manager to provide a draft response.
- If a formal response cannot be provided within **10 working days**, a holding response will need to be sent to the Cllr / MP with an estimated time of response, again a copy of this response to be sent to children.services@dudley.gov.uk. Executive Support will upload to Dynamics.
- **At day 15** if no response is provided to the Children Services mailbox the issue will be escalated to the Director of Children's Services.



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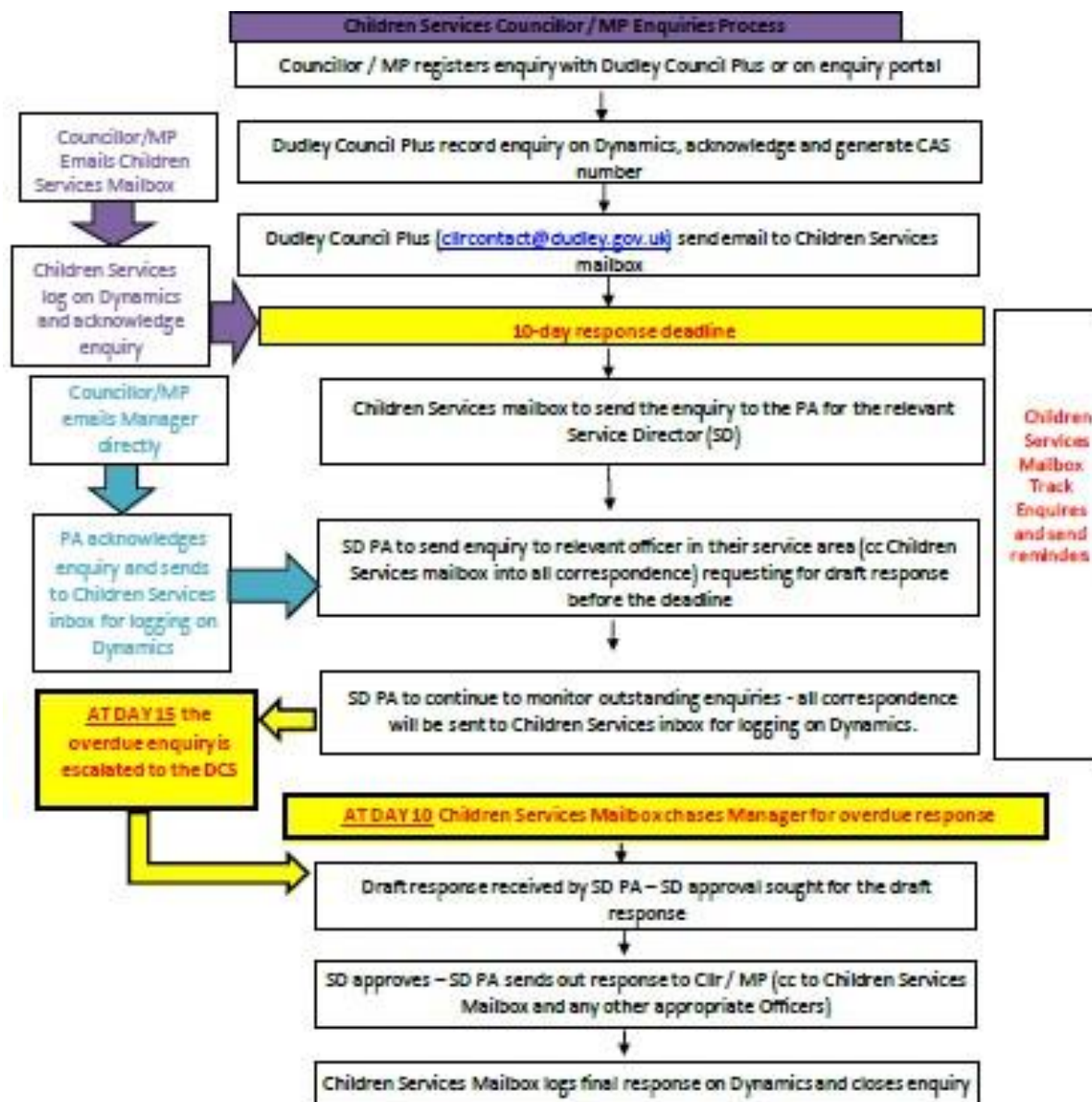
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- If a Cllr / MP contacts an officer directly, please ensure this is acknowledged and then redirected to the children.services@dudley.gov.uk or cllrcontact@dudley.gov.uk mailbox to ensure the enquiry is logged and tracked through the official route.
- If DC+ can action an enquiry directly, they will do so. The email that comes to you will advise you of this.
- **Do not include officer email trails when responding to Cllr/MP.**
- When a Cllr / MP raises an enquiry directly with the Director, a Service Director or Heads of Service, the relevant Personal Assistant will acknowledge and send the enquiry and acknowledgement to children.services@dudley.gov.uk. Executive Support will log on Dynamics and send to appropriate officer to prepare a draft.
- **Adult Safeguarding should be contacted if a Cllr / MP has been advised that:**
 - someone is subject to abuse who was living in the community or in services provided to residents within the borough
 - someone is self-neglecting
 - someone is being dealt with under Safeguarding and they had further enquiries
 - someone is under a Deprivation of Liberty and there are queries as to how that person was being dealt with in the residential or nursing home
 - someone is in a Position of Trust and had been involved in a criminal activity or domestic abuse situation that raised concerns about their work situation
 - someone / their carers had not received support from the local authority or another agency who had been asked to investigate the abuse they were experiencing
- **Front Door should be contacted if a Cllr / MP has been advised that:**
 - There is concern for a child's safety
 - There is concern regarding the risk of abuse or neglect
 - There is concern relating to a child in relation to abuse, gangs, sexual health and relationships, self-harm or online safety
 - There is concern relating to child sexual exploitation
- **The flowchart on the next page refers to the process for Children Services enquiries**



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The above process also applies for any Cllr / MP enquiries that are received directly by the DCS

Standard Acknowledgement to use for any Cllr / MP enquiries received:

Dear Councilor Name / MP Name

Thank you for your enquiry which was received on (date). Please be assured that the matter will be looked into and you will receive a response in due course.