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The Redcar MACH Operating Procedures should be read in conjunction with *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018) and the threshold of need document: *‘Providing the Right Support to Meet a Child’s Needs across Tees’* (2021)

Children & Families Directorate

June 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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# 1 Introduction

The Multi-Agency Children’s Hub (MACH) is a single point of access across Redcar and Cleveland providing multi-agency triage and assessment of enquiries about children. Partners within the MACH share information, risk assess and make decisions to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and their families with the aim of providing the right support at the right time.

The MACH operates Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm. When it is closed on evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays, the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) provides cover. EDT can be contacted on 01642 524552.

This document details the process by which enquiries are dealt with by the MACH. In addition to this document, there are detailed working procedures for specific tasks which are carried out by staff working in the MACH.

It is important to recognise that this document does not replace or amend any of the Tees Child Protection Procedures listed on [www.teescpp.org.uk](file:///C:\Users\LS2022\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\RXVJT680\www.teescpp.org.uk). The Tees Procedures are used to inform relevant elements of work carried out within the MACH.

This Standard Operating Procedure applies to all partners based in the MACH and ‘virtual’ partners:

Co-located partners are:

* Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
* Cleveland Police
* Health Specialist Nurse
* Education Safeguarding Lead

Virtual partners with a single point of contact (SPOC) are:

* Housing
* National Probation Service
* Substance use services. (We A With You)
* Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust – Adult Services
* Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust – CAMHS
* Youth Offending Service- YOS

Other local authority services co-located within the MACH include:

* Education Safeguarding Officer
* Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
* Early Help Assessment Team

# 2 Contact Information

The MACH can be contacted by members of the public or by professionals who may have concerns about a child. Methods of contact are:

* Telephone – 01642 130700
* Secure Email – [redcarmach@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](mailto:redcarmach@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)
* Secure LADO Email – [redcarLADO@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](file:///C:\Users\LS2022\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\RXVJT680\redcarLADO@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)
* Post – Redcar MACH, Daisy Lane, Ormesby, TS7 9JF

# 3 New Enquiries

In order to manage workload within the MACH, a rota is in place to ensure all tasks are covered. The rota ensures that there are appropriate levels of staff to cover all phone calls, emails, post and other day to day tasks as required.

New enquiries will generally be received by a MACH Business Support Officer. All enquiries are dealt with according to Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), with a decision made by a Team Manager within 24 working hours. A brief explanation is given here:

* Telephone calls – real time typed notes are made if appropriate on an Enquiry Proforma. Index checks are undertaken on social care and early help systems by the call taker whilst the caller is on the line. The index checks will indicate if a child is known, not known, open to a worker, has had previous involvement. The caller will be advised that their enquiry has been noted and will be acted upon appropriately.
* Email – All emails are logged.
* Post – A MACH Business Support Officer will follow up any enquiry received by post. They will undertake index checks and complete any work requiring further action by the MACH.

Not all new enquiries will require a multi-agency response. The Team Manager(s)/ Deputy Team Manager will determine if a multi-agency response is required. This is also determined at the ‘Morning Triage Meeting’ see below for further information

In the majority of cases, a SAFER referral form will be submitted by professionals when they have concerns about a child. Some agencies may use an early help request for service form or their own proforma to submit concerns about a child; however this will always include the information that is required in a SAFER.

The quality of information received is crucial if the MACH and its Partners are to pursue an effective outcome. To this end, all staff in the MACH as well as Partners are responsible for challenging poor-quality information/referrals. Partner agencies in the MACH are expected to follow up within their own organisation any quality issues that require action.

A recently developed [‘Guide for Professionals Making a Referral’](https://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/resident/adult-children-health/children-services/more-information/Documents/Guide%20for%20Professionals%20-%20Making%20a%20Referral.pdf), was shared with partners and the Safeguarding Children’s Partnership in September 2020. This document provides advice and guidance about the best ways for partners to record worries on the SAFER referral form. The completion of SAFER referrals in this way supports MACH staff to clearly understand the level of risk to the child and the important people in the child’s life who can help. This will help social workers in their decision making so that they can get the right help in place for the child at the earliest opportunity.

# 4 Consent

Where an enquiry has been made by a professional, consent should generally already have been gathered. That being said, consent will not be a barrier to accepting a referral and attempts to secure consent will continue to be sought.

The MACH will check the status of consent (where appropriate) and will record this as part of the enquiry process. Where it is not clear that consent to gather and share information has been gained, the MACH will decide if and when consent should be sought.

Detailed processes can be found in the corresponding document at Appendix 5: Redcar Multi-Agency Children’s Hub (MACH) Consent Procedure.

# 5 Children within a Household

Where an enquiry raises concerns about a child and it becomes clear that there are multiple children within the same household, all of the children must be considered, even if they are not the main subject of the enquiry. Where the concern is primarily about an individual child, rather than concern about the parenting being provided, the Team Manager or Deputy Team Manager will decide if the enquiry should be progressed on all, some or none of the children and will document the rationale on the **child’s record.**

Examples of enquiries which might only be progressed on one child within a household are:

* Where a referral is being made to request services for a child who has complex or additional needs rather than issues about the parenting being received; or
* Where services are being requested for an older teenager particularly where they are vulnerable to exploitation (contextual safeguarding)

If the enquiry is about an individual who is or may be posing a risk to children, consideration must be given to any other children outside the household who may also be at risk from the individual.

Enquiries are made on all the relevant adults linked to the child, during screening, to identify any associated risks or other linked children.

# 6 Multi-agency consideration

During screening, social workers will speak with the referrer and a person with parental responsibility to establish, the worries, strengths and safety in relation to the child.

The MACH receives anonymous referrals and on these occasions, attempts are made to contact an adult with parental responsibility to discuss the worries with them. Consent is sought to share and gather information from our multi-agency partners based within the MACH. Where consent is not provided, either due to being unable to contact the adult or because it is withheld, a decision regarding whether the consent is to be dispensed will be made by the management team. If this is the case the rationale will be clearly recorded. The information will be requested from our multi-agency partners, via a MASH episode. See appendix 1.

During this information gathering process, all partners are required to provide their individual decision/outcome using a Signs of Safety scaling process to identify level of risk. The Social Worker collates all individual partner contributions and analyses the data and then makes an overall recommendation in respect of an outcome; this recommendation is presented to the Team Manager or Deputy Team Manager for decision-making and authorisation.

‘Morning Triage Meeting’ - this is a daily meeting attended by our multi-agency partners and chaired by a member of the MACH management team. The meeting considers referrals received from the Police - Police Protection Notices (PPN). This information is triaged, scaled and rag rated by MACH and partners: (Police, Health, Education) and a multi-agency decision is made regarding next steps; for example, to be fully screened by MACH social worker or to be referred to early help. See appendix 1.

‘Early Help Huddle’ – this is a weekly meeting chaired by the Early Help Coordinator Team Leader and attended by our internal early help team representatives (inc Youth service and Family Hubs), as well as partners such as YOS, Health and Education. Cases that have already been screened by Social Workers to be at an early help level are discussed where there is potential for a partner-led Early Help Assessment to be undertaken. A multi-agency decision is made regarding who is best to be the lead practitioner. See appendix 1.

## **6.1 Children with an allocated Social Worker**

The Redcar MACH email inbox is the central point to receive all referrals or requests for information. The inbox is ‘filtered’ each morning as the MACH may receive information about children who already have an allocated social worker. When this happens, a MACH Business Support Officer will send relevant information via secure email to the appropriate worker, copying in the relevant Team Clerk and Team Manager.

If the referral comes from the Police, they will be copied into the email to the Team Manager so that systems can be updated to reflect that the child/children have an allocated social worker.

Where it is deemed appropriate to do so, the MACH Business Support Officer will inform the person making contact that the child has an active referral and provide the contact information for the allocated worker and Team Manager so that they can further discuss as necessary.

The MACH Team Manager or Deputy Team Manager will undertake an initial review of the emailed referral and allocate a preliminary RAG rating, which will determine the level of priority needed to progress to a MACH social worker for the information to be screened.

A MACH Business Support Officer will add the contact to the Children’s System (EHM) and this will automatically be alerted to the Team Manager and/or Deputy Team Manager. In cases, where a telephone call is received and there are concerns that there is a sense of urgency or heightened risk, the MACH Business Support Officer will provide a verbal update to the manager, as well as adding the contact to the system.

## **6.2 Rag Rating Systems**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GREEN | AMBER | RED |
| Enquiry received into the MACH  Will not require multi agency information sharing/ response. Decision made within 24 hours on action required  Requests for low level EH support/ file viewing/ non-urgent information requests/notifications.  Including National missing alerts and SEND requests. | Enquiry received into the MACH  Further information is likely to be required.  Multi Agency/MASH episode considered and can be used to share information  Decision made within 4 – 24 hours on action required  Potentially Early Help, Child in Need or Child Protection referral | Enquiry received into the MACH  These referrals are a priority, and likely to suggest that a child is suffering or has suffered significant harm.  Decision made in 4 hours on action required |

The MACH Team Manager or Deputy Team Manager will allocate the enquiry to a Social Worker, via a contact record, for investigation and co-ordination of MACH activity.

National Missing Alerts (NMA): These will be created as a contact and checks will be required from housing, Police and health – once these have been requested the contact record is outcomed as Information and Advice provided and this record remains open until the checks are received by MACH.

This process will ensure that a contact is created straight away when receiving a NMA and there’s no delay in terms of closing the contact down within 24 hrs.

When appropriate, social workers and all Partners will check their own electronic recording systems for relevant, appropriate and proportionate information including past harm and this will be added to the contact record. The contact record information will evidence the worrying harmful adult behaviour and the impact on the child.

All Partners will update their own electronic recording system to indicate the information they have shared and why they chose to share. This is crucial should the need arise to later explain what information was shared and most importantly why.

On occasion, someone working in the MACH may realise that they have a personal or professional connection to a child or family who is the subject of an enquiry. Where this happens, the person must inform the MACH Team Manager or Deputy Team Manager so that a decision can be made about that person’s continued involvement in the enquiry. This requirement is in addition to any Partner’s own procedures regarding such an issue.

There are a range of potential outcomes for enquiries. These include:

* No Further Action
* Providing Information and Advice
* Other agencies/ partners to offer support – single agency able to lead on the enquiry and offer an appropriate service
* Refer to Early Help
* MASH (please see flow chart for MASH episode)
* Refer for a Social Work assessment
* A Strategy meeting to be convened.

Should there be professional dispute as to the outcome and recommended next steps, professionals are invited to raise a formal challenge. This is done by emailing the MACH their challenge, which details why the challenge has been raised and their recommendation. The MACH Team Manager or Deputy Team Manager will request the outcome is reviewed and considered by an alternative manager to which has made the outcome recommendation. Steps will be followed as appropriate and set out in appendix 2.

In accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), referrers are notified of the outcome of their referral in the following way:

All professionals (with the exception of EDT) that refer concerns about a child receive an outcome letter, return email or telephone call and recorded within the contact record. Letters and emails are added to the child’s record in the document tab in EHM also.

Members of the public do not get a formal letter although they receive assurance from a MACH Business Support Officer and/ or Social Worker that their concerns are being considered.

# 7 Strategy Discussions

Where a Strategy Discussion needs to take place, the MACH Team Manager/Deputy Team Manager will invite relevant Partners to the meeting. All Partners will have access to the information shared on the contact record. Additional information to be brought to the meeting will include Partner information and analysis based on the information shared.

The MACH Team Manager/Deputy Team Manager will ensure that appropriate Partners are represented at the Strategy Discussion (at the very least police, social care and health) and that the meeting is recorded in the correct manner. The receiving Team Manager or Social Worker from the Assessment Social Work Team will also be present.

Strategy Discussions will be facilitated using a Signs of Safety approach and a Harm Matrix. The MACH Team Manager or Deputy Team Manager will lead the process and Chair the meeting.

Referrals that have a Strategy Discussion will be prioritised for transfer to the receiving team, following the conclusion of the meeting or multi-agency discussion. The receiving team will be responsible for the completion of any Section 47 Investigation.

A record of the meeting will be added to the child’s record on LCS as soon as possible following the meeting. If it is not possible to complete this within 24 hrs then actions agreed at strategy need to be added to the child’s LCS recorded as a case note.

On occasion, a Strategy Discussion may need to take place at a location other than in the MACH (e.g. James Cook Hospital). This will not be a barrier to holding Strategy Discussions; the relevant Assessment Team Manager will take responsibility for ensuring that the meeting is appropriately attended and recorded.

# 8 Emergency Duty Team Link

Some enquiries will not have an outcome by the end of the MACH’s working day. When this happens, the MACH will ensure that sufficient information is recorded on the Children’s Social Care system so that EDT can access sufficient information about an ongoing enquiry. This will allow them to appropriately respond to any emergency that may arise outside of normal office hours. In some cases (e.g. A missing child) the MACH Team Manager or Deputy Team Manager will need to make contact with EDT prior to the end of the working day to share and discuss information in respect of a child. The appropriate EDT proforma will be emailed securely before the end of the working day.

# 9 Complaints

Should the MACH receive a complaint, it is important to be clear what the complaint is about and who is ultimately responsible for following the appropriate complaints procedure. Attempts will always be made to resolve the complaint informally.

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, this should be directed to the Service Manager and the Redcar and Cleveland Complaints Officer.

If the complaint concerns a MACH partner, the applicable organisation will be notified and must then follow their own relevant complaints process.

# 10 Appendices

**Appendix 1** – Processes, including the following flowcharts:

* **Enquiry received via post or MACH inbox**
* **Enquiry received via telephone call**
* **Morning Triage Meeting Flowchart**
* **Early Help Assessment Team Flowchart**
* **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)/Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Flowchart**
* **National Missing Alerts Flowchart**
* **Missing from Home/Education Flowchart**
* **MASH Assessment Flowchart**

**Appendix 2** – Dispute Resolution Policy

**Appendix 3** – Key Contacts

**Appendix 4** – Information Technology Business Continuity

**Appendix 5** – Consent Procedures

# Appendix 1 Processes

**Receiving enquiries**

Redcar MACH can be contacted by members of the public or by professionals who may have concerns about a child. Methods of contact are:

* Telephone – 01642 130700
* Secure Email – [Redcarmach@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](mailto:Redcarmach@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)
* Secure LADO Email – [redcarlado@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](mailto:redcarlado@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)
* Post – Redcar MACH, Daisy Lane, Ormesby, TS7 9JF

**New Enquiries**

In order to manage workload within the MACH, a rota is in place to ensure all tasks are covered. The rota ensures that there are appropriate levels of staff to cover all phone calls, emails, post and other day to day tasks as required.

New enquiries will generally be received by a MACH Business Support Officer. All enquiries are dealt with according to Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), with a decision made by a Team Manager within 24 working hours.

**Telephone calls**

Real time typed notes are made if appropriate on an Enquiry Pro-forma. Index checks are undertaken on social care and early help systems by a MACH Business Support Officer whilst the caller is on the line. The index checks will indicate if a child is known, not known, open to a worker, has had previous involvement. The caller will be advised that their enquiry has been noted and will be acted upon appropriately.

**Flowcharts**

The following flowcharts set out:

* The process for dealing with enquiries received via post or MACH inbox.
* The process for dealing with enquiries received via phone calls.
* Morning Triage Meeting
* Early Help Assessment Team in MACH process
* CCE/CSE process
* National Missing Alerts
* Missing from Home/Education
* MASH Assessment

## **Flowchart: Enquiry received via post or MACH inbox**

## **Flowchart: Enquiry received via telephone call**

Open Case

Closed case

Business support to send information to allocated Social Worker, Team manager and Team Admin

For a closed case the scanned postal enquiry or email is then moved to the duty management folder for review

Scanned copy of postal enquiry or email is moved by business support to admin completed folder

MACH duty manager initiates decision making process and rag rates the enquiry received.

Please refer to decision making flowcharts for ongoing steps

Contact received via MACH inbox

Business support officer scans the post enquiry and emails into Redcar MACH email on the day received.

Contact received via post by business support officer

Business Support checks if child is known or an open case

Business support officer emails the telephone proforma into Redcar MACH

The caller is advised that their contact has been noted and will be acted upon appropriately.  
If it is identified that there is an immediate safety concern the caller is to be advised to contact the Police as MACH are not an emergency response service.

s

Telephone enquiry proforma is used by Business Support Officer live.  
Business Support Officer completes checks within EHM/LCS systems and identifies if a child is known/not known/ open to a worker / has had previous involvement

Closed case

Open Case

Business support to send information to allocated Social Worker, Team manager and Team Admin

For a closed case the proforma is then moved to the duty management folder

Call priority assessed by Duty Manager and allocated to a Social Worker via email to make full enquires.

Duty manager to identify in email to social worker the urgency of response required:

Red phone call – call back required within 1 hour.   
Amber phone call – call back required within 24 hours  
Green phone call – call back required within 24 hours

Green

Call taken by Business Support Officer

Advice provided to a family member/anonymous referrer. Contact created. Duty manager to review if advice is complete or full screening is required.

Telephone enquiry proforma is moved by business support to admin completed folder

Concerns have been identified – contact to be created and screening completed within 24 hours

Advice only provided to a professional.

Contact not required. Move to admin completed folder

Duty Manager reviews and rag rates if agreed to be created as a contact.

Morning Triage Meeting

## 

PPN received into Redcar MACH

Added on the child’s file in documents with direction given to allocated worker by Team Manager

Business support send referral to allocated Social Worker, Team Manager and Business support. Missing children team copied in where concern includes that a child is missing.

Following meeting - PPN, and meeting minutes with agreed actions sent back into MACH with updated rag rating.

Morning meeting starts at 09:00am. meeting chair prioritises PPN’s in order of rag rating

Rag rated by Team Manager in preparation for triage

Child not open

Open case

Presenting issue, worries and what is working well considered – scaling and next steps agreed by all partner agencies – if professionals agree that threshold has been met for a strategy – meeting converted to reflect this

Contact created by Business Support and processed by the screening Social worker or Early Help Co-ordinators in line with identified actions and MACH timescales

Early Help Assessment Team Flowchart

Threshold met to offer social work assessment and support, but family won’t consent, threshold not met to dispense However, consent gained for Early Help Assessment and support.

EHA passes to intervention team to continue plan/TAF process.

Discuss with MACH to consider C & F Assessment

Referral screened by EHCs

EHA transferred to family hubs to continue plan/TAF process.

Information and Guidance given to family.

EHA – passed to partner to continue plan/TAF process e.g. school/Health Visitor etc.

Request for a PLEHA from the most appropriate service

Referral transferred to RCBC team to complete EHA/Plan

Referral for direct or specialist intervention

Identified cases considered at weekly multi-agency Early Help huddle

Referral threshold checked by SW and measured as Early Help

EHC completes EHA

Case received from SW field teams/assessment team via the step-down process

Safer referral/PPN reviewed in MACH

Early Help referral received in the MACH

## **CCE/CSE Flowchart**

Referral received   
into   
Redcar MACH

Allocated   
Worker/   
Early Help/  
Social Worker   
to refer to VEMT within 2 weeks

Contextual safeguarding highlighted

Jayne Hunt to send reminder 1 week before to Social Worker/Team Manager

Jayne Hunt to send reminder 1 week before to Social Worker/Team Manager

Allocated worker   
to make a referral   
to VEMT within 2 weeks of receiving update if not   
already open.   
VEMT update to be completed within 2 weeks if already an active case

Referral sent to allocated social worker,   
TM & Business support.

Copy in Missing children

Next steps, to   
outline concerns   
and YP's id shared   
with Nikky Henry /Jayne Hunt by authorising manager

CSE   
checklist   
used by screening social worker

RAG rated  
 by Team Manager

Child not open

Open   
case

## **National Missing Alerts Flowchart**

Cleveland Police for their records

National Missing Alert Received

Copies will be sent to

Safeguarding Health for their information & records

The following checks will be actioned:

Business Support staff check the details of all those people named within the alert on the Middlesbrough and Redcar Systems and will record that all children, parents and associated parties were checked on the systems and identified/not identified

Business support will make a request to Child Health to ask if any of the parties on the notification are known, the form can be forward onto Child Health for them to see this request. Record that checks were completed and the outcome.

The children’s names will be checked against Capita and & recorded.

A Check will be made with Housing and Benefits to see if the adults have made a claim in this area.

MACH screening social worker will review the completed checks & the information.   
Will record an outcome and confirm all relevant checks have been completed

If the family **are not known** within the Middlesbrough/Redcar area and there are **no known associates**

If the children or family **are present** in this area

Social Worker to email referrer to say this has been recorded, checks have been completed and we have no record of the children and family and we will contact you should they arrive in the Redcar area.

Social Worker to contact the referrer. Contact details included in the referral (they should always provide both EDT and daytime contact and number).

Missing from Home/Education Flowchart

Referral received into Redcar MACH for a missing child

Checks made by business support if the child is known/open to Redcar, Childrens’ Services

Child is not open and resident of Redcar LA

Child has an allocated Social Worker

Missing team generate missing return interview to allocated to early help team or social worker to complete

## **MASH Assessment Flowchart**

Missing team generate missing return interview for allocated early help team or social worker to complete

Outcome of referral overseen by team manager/deputy team manager to ensure right service for the child

Missing episode screened by MACH social worker, with clear next steps outlined

Rag rated by team manager/ deputy team manager

Missing team generate missing return interview for allocated social worker to complete

No further action taken by MACH

Copy sent to missing team and duty manager folder for rag rating

Copy of referral sent to allocated social worker, team manager, deputy team manager and team business support and missing team by Redcar MACH business support.

Duty manager to review MASH assessment in line with duty manager authorisation process flowchart.

Decision made within 4 – 24 hours on action required

Decision made in 4 hours on action required

Social worker to complete MASH assessment, reflecting any management discussions and guidance already obtained. Social worker sends the MASH assessment record to contact authorisation tray and alerts duty manager via teams.

RED MASH –

Professional responses requested to be returned within 2 hours to allow screening worker to apply information to decision making.

Social worker emails out request for proportionate information from MACH partners to inform next steps and decision making.

Social worker indicates on request for information whether parental consent has been obtained or not

MASH assessment is agreed by duty manager as required following contact screening by social worker.

AMBER MASH –

Professional responses requested to be returned within 6 hours to allow screening worker time to apply information to decision making.

# Appendix 2 – Dispute Resolution Policy

The MACH and its Partners deal with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council enquiries on a daily basis.

Enquiries are ‘RAG’ rated by the MACH Team Manager or Deputy Team Manager (Red, Amber, Green) to determine the action that is needed by the MACH staff and Partners and the speed with which enquiries must be processed.

In all cases the MACH Team Manager/ Deputy Team Manager will make the final decision on the appropriate outcome for a child; however, it is acknowledged that on occasion, Partners may not agree with the final decision made.

In the first instance any challenge on the right service for a child or young person will be discussed and a Group Supervision will take place using the Signs of Safety Harm Matrix to focus on the evidence of harm. Problem resolution is an integral part of multi-agency working. It is a positive sign of developing thinking within a dynamic process.

Professional disagreement is only dysfunctional if not resolved in a constructive and timely fashion.

Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:

* Thresholds
* Roles and responsibilities
* The need for action
* Communication

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, is committed to prompt and fair resolution of all disputes of any nature, which may arise as a result of decision-making within the MACH.

Disputes that arise are aimed to be resolved quickly and effectively by discussion with appropriate Partner Managers and the MACH Team Manager/ Deputy Team Manager. Parties should seek to understand the reason for dispute and attempt to reach a suitable consensus on decision making. This should be resolved as quickly as possible in order to ensure MACH decision making is compliant with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

However, it is acknowledged that in some cases resolution by Team Managers may not be achieved.

Where Team Managers are unable to resolve a dispute, their concerns should be escalated to their respective Service Manager. The MACH Service Manager will liaise with the relevant Partner Service Lead and seek to understand and resolve the dispute without further delay.

In some circumstances, it is acknowledged that informal resolution may not be achieved. In such cases, the dispute resolution policy outlined below should be followed.

Formal disputes should be escalated to the Redcar and Cleveland Assistant Director for Children’s Social Care and Early Help. The Assistant Director will receive written reports from the MACH Service Manager and Partner Service Lead, outlining clearly their concerns. The Assistant Director will review the reports and provide a final written response to the dispute within 5 working days.

Attempts at problem resolution may leave a worker or agency believing that the child remains at risk of significant harm. This person or agency has responsibility for communicating such concerns through agreed channels. In such cases they should refer to [Tees Child Protection Procedures](https://www.teescpp.org.uk/default.aspx?Key=Search&q=SAFER+referral+form&qp=6).

Dispute should not be confused with an official complaint. Complaints should be dealt with as in Section 9 above and the most appropriate agency can then follow their complaints process.

# Appendix 3 – Key Contacts

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Service / Department / Supplier** | **Contact Name and number** | **Nature of Information Exchanged** |
| EDT | 01642 524552 | EDT referrals |
| NSPCC | 0808 800 5000 | Child at Risk referrals |
| Police | 101 | SAFER/PPN |
| North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) | 0191 430 2000 | NEAS referrals |
| CCG | 0207 799 8621 | SAFER |
| James Cook University Hospital | 01642 850850 | SAFER |

# Appendix 4 – Information Technology Business Continuity

The MACH operates on behalf of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and in accordance with relevant government Acts (The Children Act 1989) and official procedures (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018). It has a legal duty to safeguard children and young people and to ensure that information received is analysed and a decision made within appropriate timescales.

The MACH requires hardware and software (including telephones) to function appropriately. Referrals are received via the phone and/ or via secure email.

The MACH uses EHM and LCS software systems to record information on children and young people and to generate referrals if appropriate. Access to these systems is vital in order to ensure enquiries are dealt with appropriately.

The MACH has access to a range of other IT products in order to support enquiry processes. Some of these systems are used regularly and some are used as and when required.

All partner agencies within the MACH will have access to their own agency’s system, accessing it either via RCBC equipment and networks or remotely using their own equipment.

If a problem affecting the MACH is being caused by an issue with RCBC equipment or networks, then it will mean that all partner agencies relying on the equipment/ networks will be affected. However, as they only use RCBC equipment/network as a means to access their own system located elsewhere, the back-up option will be relocation of affected staff back at their home agency where telephone contact can be used for the exchange of information until the affected systems are back online.

If the issue is with a partner agency’s link from RCBC to their home system, then checks will be made to determine if systems are working elsewhere within the partner agency and if so, relevant staff may temporarily relocate to a working site to communicate with the MACH via telephone. Alternatively, other staff within the agency can provide relevant information to their respective colleagues within the MACH until working links are resolved.

If the issue is a catastrophic system failure within a partner agency’s system or network, then their own Business Continuity Planning will need to be implemented.

Whenever system failure impacts on the ability to retrieve or share information, staff within the MACH will use their professional expertise to gather enough information via telephone from service users and other professionals / agencies working with the family in order to make the best possible decision on how to progress with the contact.

It is acknowledged that in such circumstances, a final decision may not be achievable within the statutory 1 working day timescale.

In all cases, the welfare and safety of children will be paramount and decisions made will prioritise the safeguarding of any children.

# Appendix 5 – Consent Procedures

1. *Working Together* *to Safeguard Children* (2018) says; ‘No single professional can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.’
2. Upon receipt of a SAFER Referral, MACH Business Support Officers will check the status of consent and will record this on the Contact Form as part of the enquiry process.
3. Where a referral is made by a professional into the MACH, consent should have been discussed and obtained prior to making contact with the MACH; however consent will not be a barrier to the MACH accepting a referral.
4. A discussion should be held with the referrer regarding them gaining consent and advice provided on how best to gain this. If this is not possible, a social worker in the MACH will endeavour to discuss and secure consent from a person with parental responsibility (PR) for the child.
5. Where it is not clear that consent to gather and share information has been gained, the MACH will decide if and when consent should be sought. Consent should not be sought if it is believed it may place the child at risk of harm. This is likely to warrant a Strategy meeting.
6. In the case of an anonymous referral (e.g. through a telephone call or via the NSPCC) or any other referral where there is no consent, the MACH social workers will attempt to make contact with a person with parental responsibility (PR) to inform them of the information received (so long as it does not place a child at risk) and gain consent to share the information with partners in the MACH and the child’s school/nursery if appropriate.
7. If the person with PR refuses this, then an open and honest conversation needs to take place with them regarding why, what, how and with whom their information will be shared. Discussions need to be held with the person with PR as to why MACH social workers believe it is important to speak to partners about the referral and gather further information to inform decision making.
8. The discussion held with a parent, or someone with PR for the child, regarding consent to share information, needs to be clearly documented by the social worker on the child’s contact record on LCS/EHM. Any decision made to discuss the referral with other agencies without parental knowledge or consent will be authorised by a Manager/Deputy Manager and the rationale for this recorded on the child’s file. This provides transparency and evidences the MACH is working in partnership with parents.

# Appendix 6 – Glossary of Terms

| **Term/ Acronym** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| **C&F** | Children and Families Assessment |
| **CAMHS** | Child Adolescent Mental Health Services |
| **Capita** | IT System – Education |
| **CCE** | Child Criminal Exploitation |
| **CCG** | Clinical Commissioning Group |
| **Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)** | NHS services that assess and treat young people with emotional behavioural or mental health difficulties. |
| **Child in Need (CIN)** | Children that are identified by Section 17 of the Children Act. A Child in Need is eligible for support from a social worker with the consent of the family, unlike children subject to Section 47 Enquiries or a Child Protection Plan where involvement of a social worker is required due the risk of significant harm. |
| **Children and Families Assessment (C&F)** | An assessment completed by social workers to determine if the child is eligible for support from a social worker. |
| **CIN** | Child in Need |
| **Contextual safeguarding** | Safeguarding children and young people from significant harm (or risk of harm) where this occurs outside of their home or family environment such as at school, online or in their neighbourhoods. |
| **CSE** | Child Sexual Exploitation |
| **Early Help Module (EHM)** | The Liquid Logic Computer System used to record information for Children and Families receiving support from the Early Help Intervention Teams and Family Hubs and where initial contacts are recorded by the MACH. |
| **EDT** | Emergency Duty Team |
| **EH** | Early Help |
| **EHA** | Early Help Assessment |
| **EHCs** | Early Help Coordinators |
| **EHM** | Early Help Module |
| **Emergency Duty Team (EDT)** | Out of hours social work service |
| **Group Supervision** | A facilitated and structured process to examine information on a stuck case with the aim of reaching a specific goal within a group setting. |
| **Harm Matrix** | An analysis tool used with the Signs of Safety Practice Framework to identify the frequency and severity of harm based on the available evidence. |
| **LADO** | Local Authority Designated Officer |
| **LCS** | Local Authority Children’s System |
| **Local Authority Children’s System (LCS)/ Protocol** | The Liquid Logic Computer System used to record information for children receiving help and support from a social worker including children in our care. Referred to internally as Protocol |
| **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** | The person who should be notified if allegations are made against a professional or volunteer who works with children. |
| **MACH** | Multi Agency Children’s Hub |
| **MASH Episode** | Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Episode – A process for screening information by multiple agencies within a timescale to determine if a referral to Children’s Social Care is required. |
| **NEAS** | North East Ambulance Service |
| **NMA** | National Missing Alerts |
| **NSPCC** | National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Charity) |
| **Partner Led Early Help Assessment (PLEHA)** | Early Help Assessments undertaken by partner agencies such as schools, health services or the voluntary sector. |
| **Police Protection Notice (PPN)** | Referrals received from the Police identifying worries about a child |
| **PR** | Parental Responsibility |
| **RAG** | Red Amber Green |
| **RCBC** | Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council |
| **Referral** | When concerns are raised about a child they are considered by a social worker in the MACH, if this is considered serious enough to require a social work assessment, the next stage is to complete a referral initiating an assessment. |
| **SAFER** | The document that partner agencies and members of the public complete and send to the MACH when they are worried about a child. |
| **Section 47** | Refers to Section 47 of the Children Act, Section 47 Enquiries are initiated to decide whether and what type of action is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child who is suspected of, or likely to be, suffering significant harm. |
| **SEND** | Special Educational Need and/or Disability (SEND) |
| **Signs of Safety** | A model of practice for working with children and young people in a child protection, early help (Signs of Wellbeing) and Children in Our Care (Signs of Success) context. This is Redcar & Cleveland‘s adopted practice model. |
| **Special Educational Need and/or Disability (SEND)** | A child or young person has special educational needs and disabilities if they have a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support |
| **SPOC** | Single point of contact |
| **Strategy** | A multi agency meeting which takes place to share information and decide whether a referral meets the threshold for Child Protection (requiring a Section 47) or to consider if a Child in Need case should be escalated to Child Protection where further concerns are identified. |
| **SW** | Social worker |
| **TAF** | Team Around the Family |
| **Team Around the Family** | The group of family members, network members and professionals supporting children and families with an early help assessment or plan. |
| **Tees Child Protection Procedures** | Policies and procedures in place via the Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership, a partnership between Redcar & Cleveland, Stockton, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool. |
| **Threshold** | Refers to the point at which the local authority’s **Children**’s Social Care are likely to accept a referral for a child, young person or their family. |
| **TM** | Team Manager |
| **VEMT** | Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing or Trafficked |
| **YOS** | Youth Offending Service |
| **YP** | Young Person |