

Safeguarding Children

Information for Parents and Carers

The RD&E is committed to safeguarding all children. This means that RD&E Trust staff must do all they can to ensure that children are kept safe - in their homes, at school, in hospital and in the wider community.

If a staff member is worried about the care or welfare of a child, they may share those concerns with their line manager or members of the trust safeguarding team and consider making contact with the **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**. Children can also be referred to MASH by people outside of healthcare, including education settings, police, or concerned members of the public.

What is the MASH?

MASH is a partnership between Devon County Council children's social care, education and youth services, NHS health services, police and probation services working together to safeguard and protect children.

MASH will look into concerns about a child and decide whether:

- A child is being harmed, or may be harmed in the future
- A child or their family would benefit from help and support
- A crime has been committed or could be committed in the future

What information is shared with MASH?

We are required to share all concerns about children and all relevant information. The amount and type of information that we share will depend on the level of concern. Usually staff will explain to you what our concerns are and the actions we need to take.

We want to assure you that we only share information about the child and family with other professionals who work with children and who are relevant to your child case.

You may be asked your permission to contact MASH. However, in some cases information can be shared without your permission:

- If someone has or is being harmed, or may be harmed in the future
- The information may help to stop or solve a crime

Medical assessment

As part of the process the MASH team may ask a children's doctor to provide a medical assessment. This involves talking through the reason for the referral, and finding out more information about the child's medical and social background. The child will need to be examined, and in some cases the doctor will need to arrange investigations like blood tests or x-rays. The team will do their best to ensure this is as timely and straight forward for children and families as possible.

The medical assessment at RD&E (Wonford) will usually take place in children's outpatient clinic or on Bramble Ward.

What else happens after a referral to MASH?

If the child is thought to have been harmed or could be harmed in the future, they will be referred on to the children's social care team. This team may contact you and tell you what they have to do next. Information will also be given to the police if it is necessary to help stop or solve a crime.

If the child has not been harmed but they or their family would benefit from extra help, their details may be given to the Early Help team who will be able to provide support and advice about Early Help services.

MASH will also write to the child and family explaining the outcome of the inquiry within 10 working days.

How can I find more information?

You can discuss any concerns about this process with a senior paediatric nurse or doctor, or with PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service).

You can read the RD&E Trust Safeguarding Children Policy – ask a member of staff.

You can find out more about MASH from www.dcfp.org.uk

Remember – if you are concerned about a child or young person in Devon and want to speak to someone, contact MASH on 0345 155 1071.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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