

How the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) deals with issues of Consent to progress a Contact

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1. **Purpose of Policy**
   1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistency of practice by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in relation to issues of consent relating to the progression of Contacts received.
   2. Unless the immediate safety of a child requires it, the MASH will not progress a Contact received without express agreement to do so, given by the child or young person, if appropriate, or a parent or carer with parental responsibility for the child or young person.
   3. It is the responsibility of the person referring a worry to the MASH to obtain prior consent to do so from the child or young person, if appropriate, or a parent or carer with parental responsibility for the child or young person, unless it is unsafe to do so. Responsibility for seeking consent ordinarily lies with the referrer because the referrer is disclosing the personal information of the child, young person, parent or carer to the MASH and should not share such information with the MASH without consent to do so unless the safety of a child or young person requires it[[1]](#footnote-1).
   4. Only in exceptional circumstances will the MASH take responsibility for seeking consent of a child, young person, parent or carer. Unless the safety of a child or young person requires that a Contact progress, a referrer will be informed that the MASH is unable to progress a Contact.
   5. There are rare circumstances where a referrer should legitimately avoid seeking the consent of a child or young person and parent or carer with parental responsibility for the child or young person. These relate to where the very act of seeking consent by a referrer would either place the child or young person at risk or result in the potential loss of evidence, for example, the destruction of evidence of a crime or influencing a child or young person about a disclosure made.
2. **Policy**

2.1 Where the North Tyneside Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub receives contact about a child or young person by someone other than the subject child, young person, parent or carer with parental responsibility, the person contacting the MASH will be asked to confirm, either verbally or in writing, whether they have obtained consent of the child, young person or person with parental responsibility to contact the MASH.

2.2 Where the referring person is not the subject child or young person or does not have parental responsibility, the MASH will *not* progress consideration of the Contact except in two specific circumstances:

1. In the opinion of the MASH, the person making contact is justified in not informing the person with parental responsibility (or the young person themselves if appropriate) that they will contact the MASH because it would place the child or young person at risk of significant harm or may lead to a loss of evidence, for example destroying evidence of a crime or influencing a child or young person about a disclosure made; or
2. Where, on the strength of the information contained within the Contact or other information held by the MASH, not to progress a referral would place the child at potential risk of significant harm.

2.3 Where there is a decision to progress a Contact without consent having been obtained by a referrer, the MASH will itself seek to obtain consent from the child, young person or person with parental responsibility unless to do so would place the child or young person at risk of significant harm or lead to the potential loss of evidence.

2.4 Where consent is sought by the MASH and is not given by the child, young person or person with parental responsibility, the MASH Team Manager will determine whether a multi-agency Strategy Discussion is required.

1. For more information, see *Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers* (July 2018) HM Government [↑](#footnote-ref-1)