



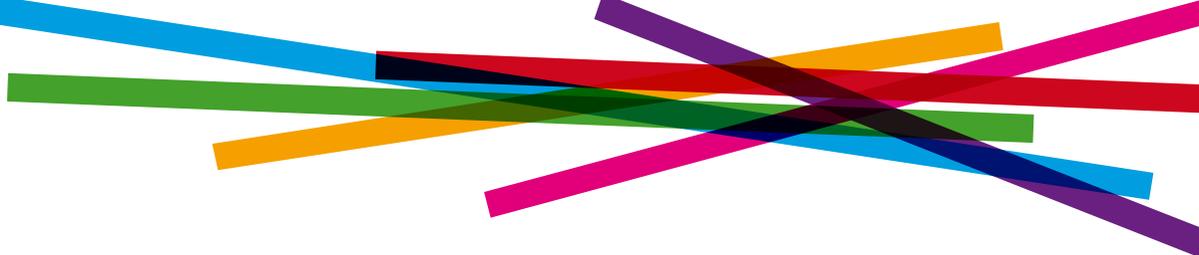
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Practice guide



Contents

Foreword.....	3
Background.....	4
MASH background.....	4
MASH partners	5
MASH management structure	6
MASH processes.....	7
MASH workflow: overview.....	7
How does it work?	8
MASH workflow: signposting referrals (Part 1)	9
MASH workflow: signposting referrals (Part 2)	10
Help and support or protection form	11
MASH workflow: criteria	12
MASH workflow: Children with disabilities criteria	13
BRAG rating	14
What is BRAG rating and why do we do it?	14
Our BRAG rating definitions.....	15
What sort of cases are BRAG rated?.....	16
Do we need to obtain consent from families for all safeguarding cases?	17
Contacts	18



Councillor Mark Rusling
Cabinet Member for Children
and Young People

Foreword

At the heart of our priorities and commitments for 2015-18 is to ensure children and young people are protected from harm, neglect and abuse.

There have been episodes across the country where children have been left in vulnerable situations when professional agencies have not communicated with each other. This has led to children being failed and not protected from harm. In Waltham Forest we strive to ensure strong communication between partner agencies to protect children from harm and understand that our children and young people deserve better.

This is why I am delighted to introduce this updated guidance for making a contact or referral to our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Our MASH acts as a single front door for all children's safeguarding concerns in Waltham Forest. Made up of professionals from the police, local schools, hospitals, charities and others, our MASH offers a true multi-agency approach when dealing with children's safeguarding. This will ensure that information across all our partner agencies is shared and acted upon quickly, with referrals reaching the right social care services.

This guide will take you through our newly developed and strengthened partnership working, criteria and streamlined processes – part of our ambition to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable children and young people in Waltham Forest.

I look forward to working with you to improve the lives of all young people in our borough.



Background

MASH background

What is MASH?

- The MASH acts as a **single front door** for all children's safeguarding in Waltham Forest
- The Hub **protects** children and young people from harm, neglect and abuse
- It is made up of professionals across the public sector to deliver a true **multi-agency** approach when dealing with children's safeguarding

What will our MASH deliver?

- **Rapid** and **better decisions** made on any child, young person or family
- Referrals reach social care services **quickly**
- **Streamlined pathways** to ensure referrals reach the right services

MASH partners

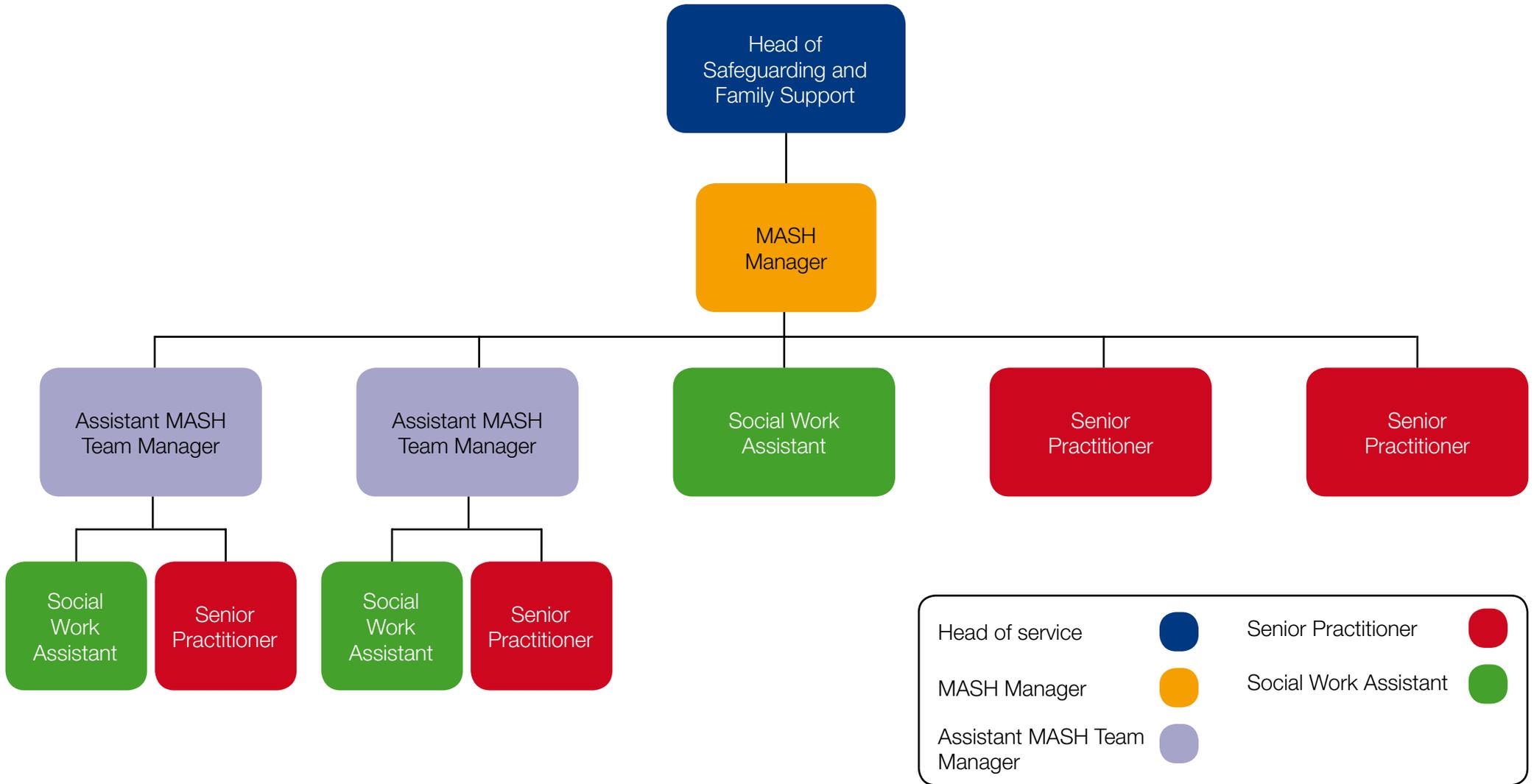
Who are our partners sitting in the MASH?

Our MASH is made up of professionals from across the partnership, which helps us to protect vulnerable children through effective and efficient partnerships and information sharing.

Health	MET Police	Probation	Education	Early Help	Housing	IDVA (Victim Support)	Gangs Bronze
Representatives from the health sector help to deal with referrals related to health and child development by liaising with other health professionals from the community and hospitals	Representatives from the MET Police help to deal with referrals related to criminal activity	Representatives from the London CRC Probation and National Probation Service help to deal with referrals related to reoffending and high-risk offenders released into the community	Representatives from Waltham Forest Council help to deal with referrals concerning children in education alongside the borough's schools	Representatives from Waltham Forest Council's Early Help service help to deal with referrals requiring early interventions to prevent persistent problems arising e.g. truancy	Representatives from Waltham Forest Council's Housing service help to deal with referrals related to children's safeguarding issues in residential properties across the borough	Representatives from Victim Support help to deal with referrals related to domestic abuse	Representatives from Waltham Forest Council's Gangs Bronze multi agency panel reviews referrals where interventions are required for those involved with, or at risk from, or victims of gang activity

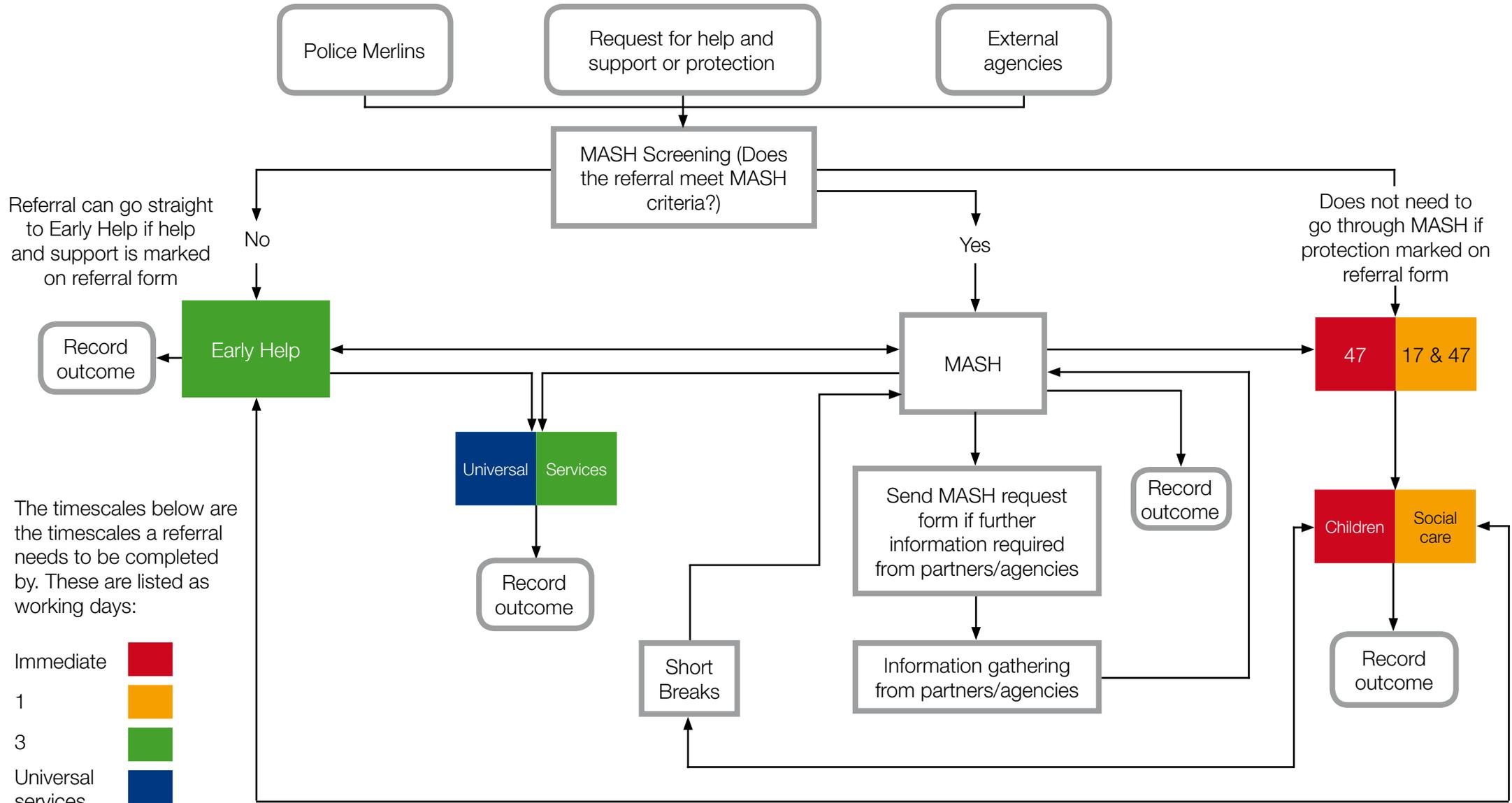
MASH management structure

What is the management team structure within the MASH?



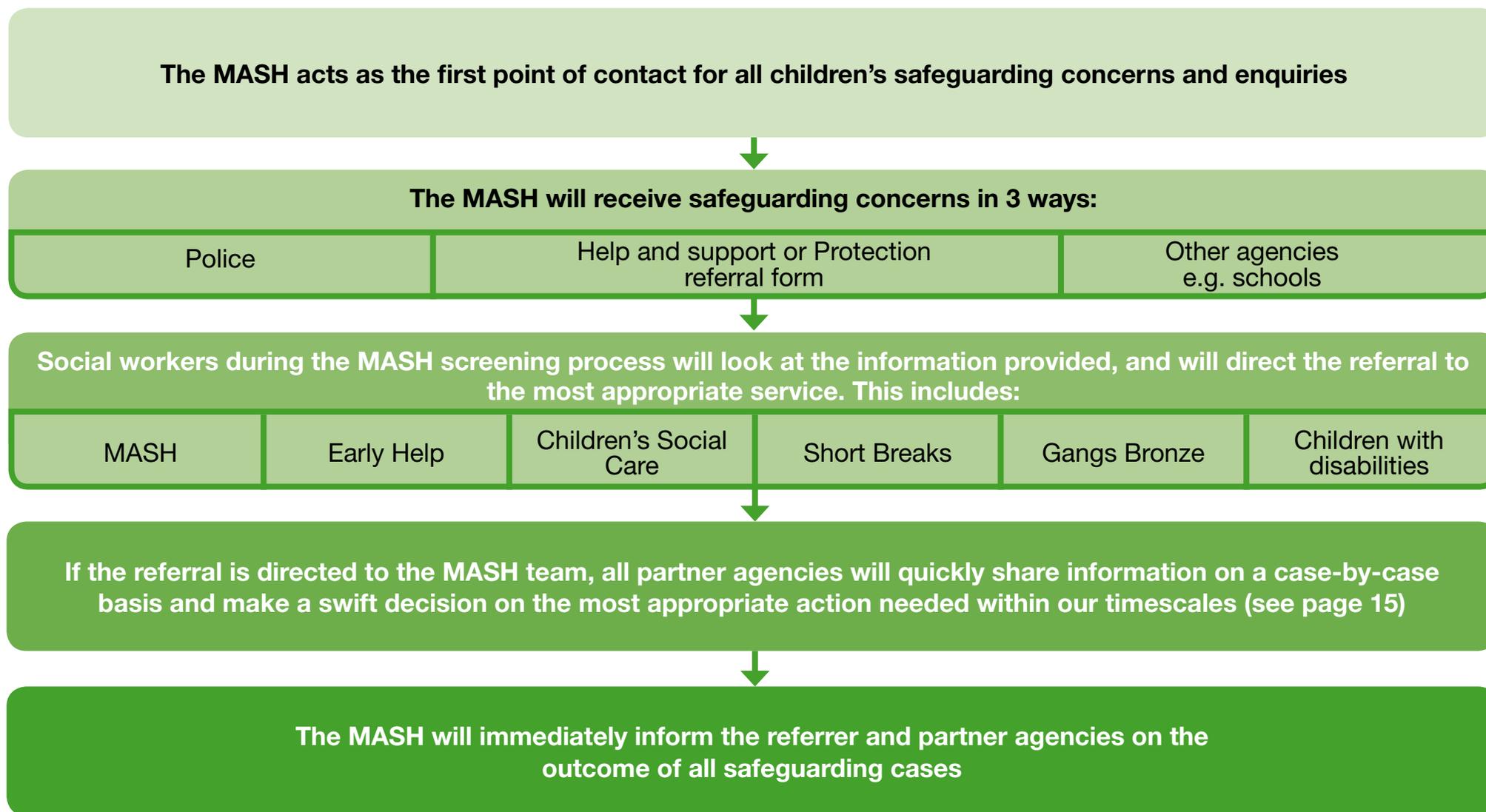
MASH processes

MASH workflow: overview



How does it work?

A step-by-step process on how the MASH works



MASH workflow: signposting referrals (Part 1)

How are referrals signposted from MASH screening?

Referrals can be signposted to SIX different services after the MASH screening process. Referrals will be signposted to these services based on the criteria below:

Early Help

- If the referral meets Early Help criteria and thresholds. The request form can be referred straight to Early Help
- If the referrer has marked help and support on the help or support and protection form
- If the referrer has BRAG rated the referral as **green** on the help or support and protection form*

Children's Social Care

- If the referral meets Section 47 and/or 17 criteria and thresholds
- If the referrer has marked **protection** on the help or support and protection form
- If the referrer has BRAG rated the referral as **orange** or **red** on the help or support and protection form*

MASH

- If the referral meets MASH criteria and thresholds (see page 12)

Short Breaks

- If the referral involves a SEN child and does not meet Children's Social Care thresholds

Gangs Bronze

- If the referral involves children involved in gangs, including injuries caused by gang violence
- If the referral involves child sexual exploitation, FGM and other issues related to gangs

Children with disabilities

- If the referral meets Children with disabilities criteria and thresholds (see page 13)

*For further information on BRAG ratings, see pages 14–17



MASH workflow: signposting referrals (Part 2)

How are referrals signposted from the MASH?

Referrals can be signposted to SIX different services from the MASH. Referrals will be signposted to these services based on the criteria below:

Universal Services

- If no additional needs are required

Early Help

- If the referral meets Early Help criteria and thresholds. The request form can be referred straight to Early Help
- If the referrer has marked **help and support** on the help or support and protection form
- If the referrer has BRAG rated the referral as **green** on the help or support and protection form*

Children's Social Care

- If the referral meets Section 47 and/or 17 criteria and thresholds
- If the referrer has marked protection on the help or support and protection form
- If the referrer has BRAG rated the referral as **orange** or **red** on the help or support and protection form*

Short Breaks

- If the referral involves a SEN child and does not meet Children's Social Care thresholds

Gangs Bronze

- If the referral involves children involved in gangs, including injuries caused by gang violence
- If the referral involves child sexual exploitation, FGM and other issues related to gangs

Children with disabilities

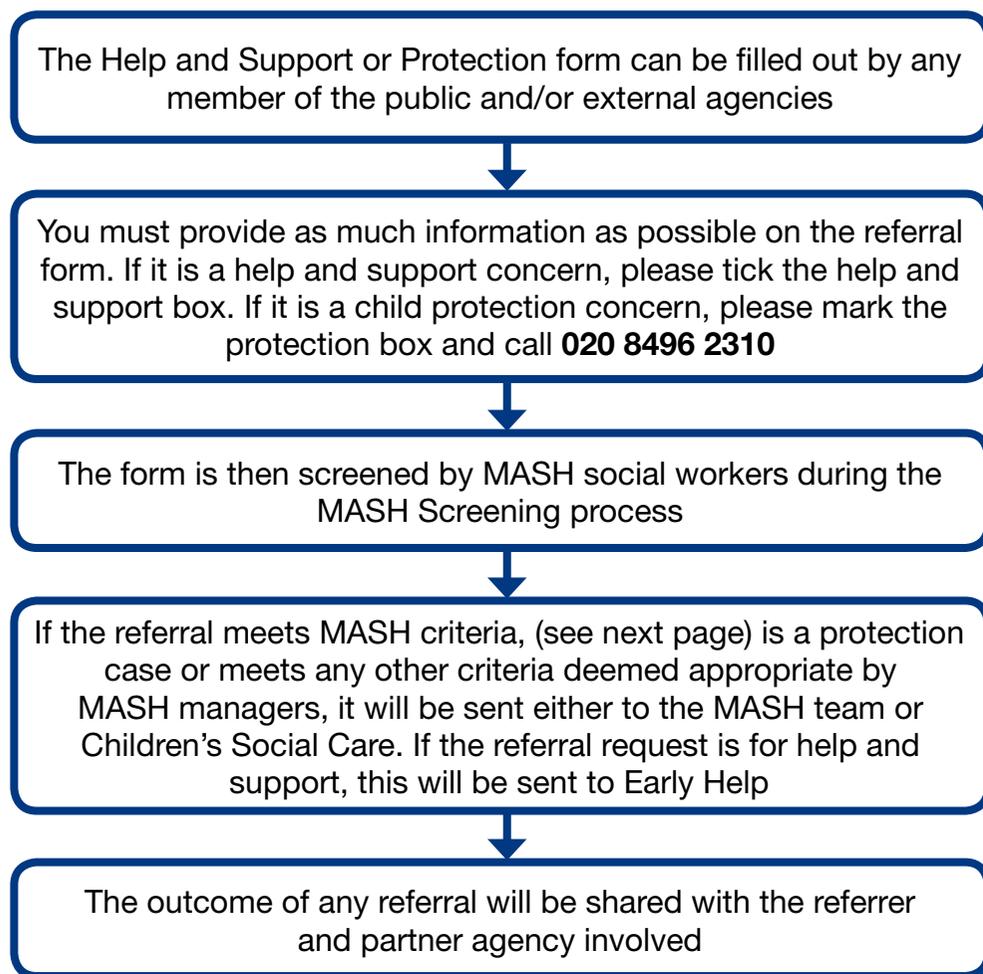
- If the referral meets Children with disabilities criteria and thresholds (see page 13)

*For further information on BRAG ratings, see pages 14–17

Help and support or protection form

How do I refer a safeguarding issue using the MASH referral form?

We have designed a new single front door for agencies and members of the public to refer all children's safeguarding cases to the MASH. This will allow us to make decisions and deliver outcomes affecting the safety of children in a speedy and effective way. The following step-by-step guide will show you how to complete the new Help and Support or Protection form:



Request for Help and Support or Protection

Guidance

If you do not have direct access to Waltham Forest Families Information system then this form should be completed and emailed, to the MASH team:

Tel: 0208 496 2310 | Email: MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk

Requests for Help and Support and or Protection must be made via this form and all relevant sections **MUST** be completed in order to support a good referral. For guidance please refer to the Threshold Document <http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/pages/servicechild/mash-profession-als.aspx>

You can make a **'Request for Help and Support'** if you think a child or family has additional needs which require a multi-agency intervention, for example, persistent truanting, chronic/ recurring health problems, or behaviour is harmful to self and others. Before making this request you should gain consent of the child/young person or family concerned.

However, if you are worried that a child is at risk of significant harm i.e. through abuse or neglect you should make a **'Request for Protection'**. In this case you should inform the parents unless this will endanger the child's safety.

FEED BACK TO REFERRERS

- We will ensure that your referral reaches the correct team and that you receive a written response to your referral within 48 hours of receipt of a fully completed form (24 hours if there are Protection concerns). This is automatically generated by the Families Information System.
- If you do not hear back from us regarding the outcome and/or progress of your referral, please contact the MASH Administrator on 0208 496 2310 who will inform you of your referral.
- If you encounter any difficulties in relation to your referral that you wish to bring to the attention of a Senior Manager, please contact the Head of Service for Safeguarding and Family Support on 0208 496 2310



MASH workflow: criteria

Referrals that will always go through the MASH

To ensure the MASH delivers the best outcomes for children and their families, any referrals matching the criteria below will always go straight to the MASH for further assessment:

Sexual harm, sexualised behaviour and/or exploitation

Other referrals deemed appropriate by MASH managers

Faith based abuse, spirit possession, FGM, forced marriage, honour based violence, radicalisation

Repeat police merlin's e.g. missing, DV, criminal activity (child or parent)

Transient families

Adults who pose a risk to children

Children involved in gangs, including injuries caused by gang violence*

NSPCC and anonymous referrals

Children where identity or location is unknown

Children and adults who suffer from mental health problems

Cases meeting threshold for section 17 & 47 enquiries

*Criteria for referring cases to Gangs Bronze team

NB. Decision on whether referral meets section 47 threshold is taken by the MASH team



MASH workflow: Children with disabilities criteria

Referrals that will always go through the Children with disabilities team

To ensure that cases involving disabled children are dealt with promptly and effectively, all referrals that meet the criteria below will be transferred to the Children with disabilities team from the MASH for further assessment.

Child with permanent and substantial disability (diagnosed by a doctor)

Severely or profoundly impaired child

High level of dependence from moderate impairments

Children with Autism

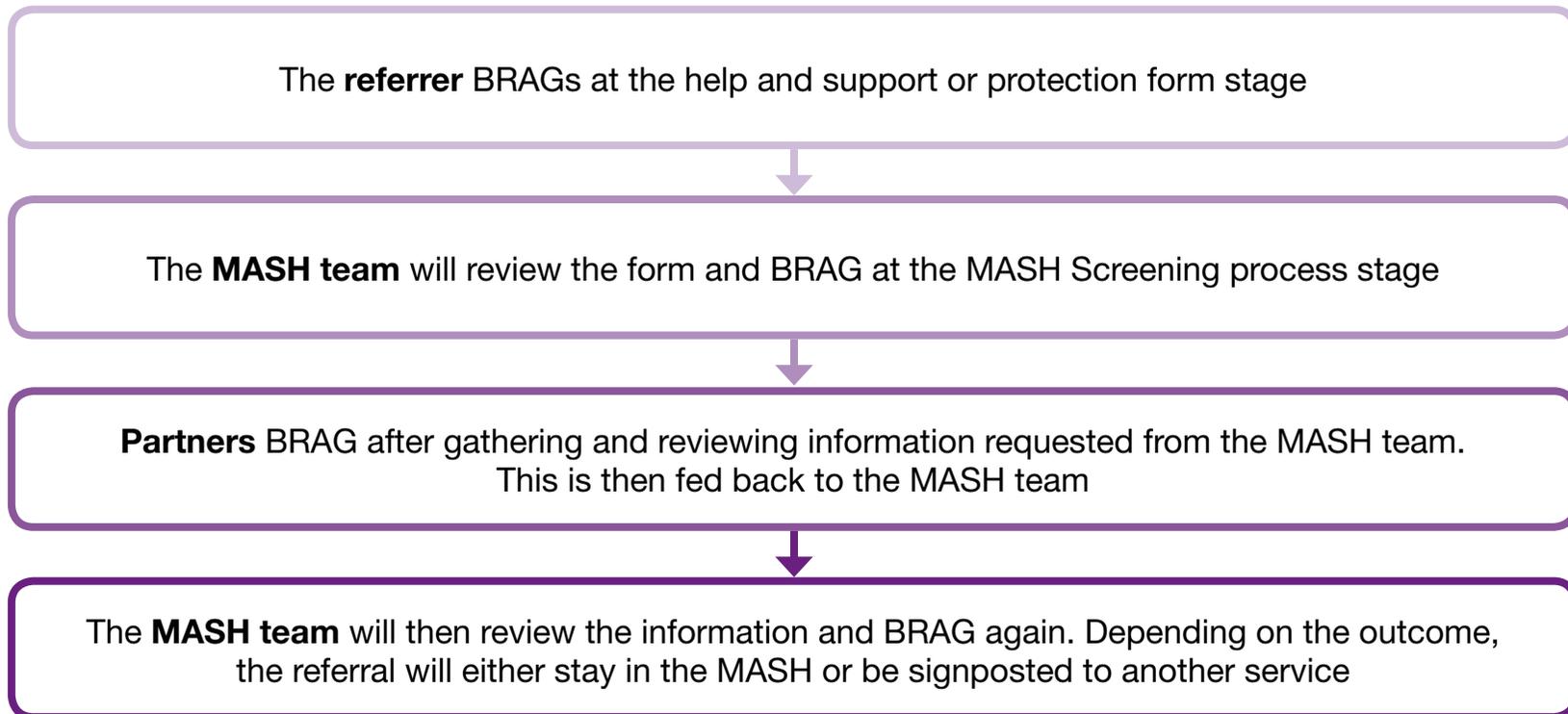
Receipt of Disability Living Allowance (child must have medium or high level of impairment)

NB. Children with ADHD, HIV, Learning Disabilities or a psychiatric illness do not meet the criteria for referring cases to the Children with disabilities team

BRAG rating

What is BRAG rating and why do we do it?

We colour all our referrals depending on the urgency and severity of each safeguarding case in blue, green, amber and red (blue being the least severe, and red being the most). This ensures that all outcomes are delivered promptly, and that all referrals are directed to the appropriate service.



Our BRAG rating definitions

What is the criteria for BRAG rating referrals?

The MASH can step up or down any BRAG ratings for referrals depending on further information received.

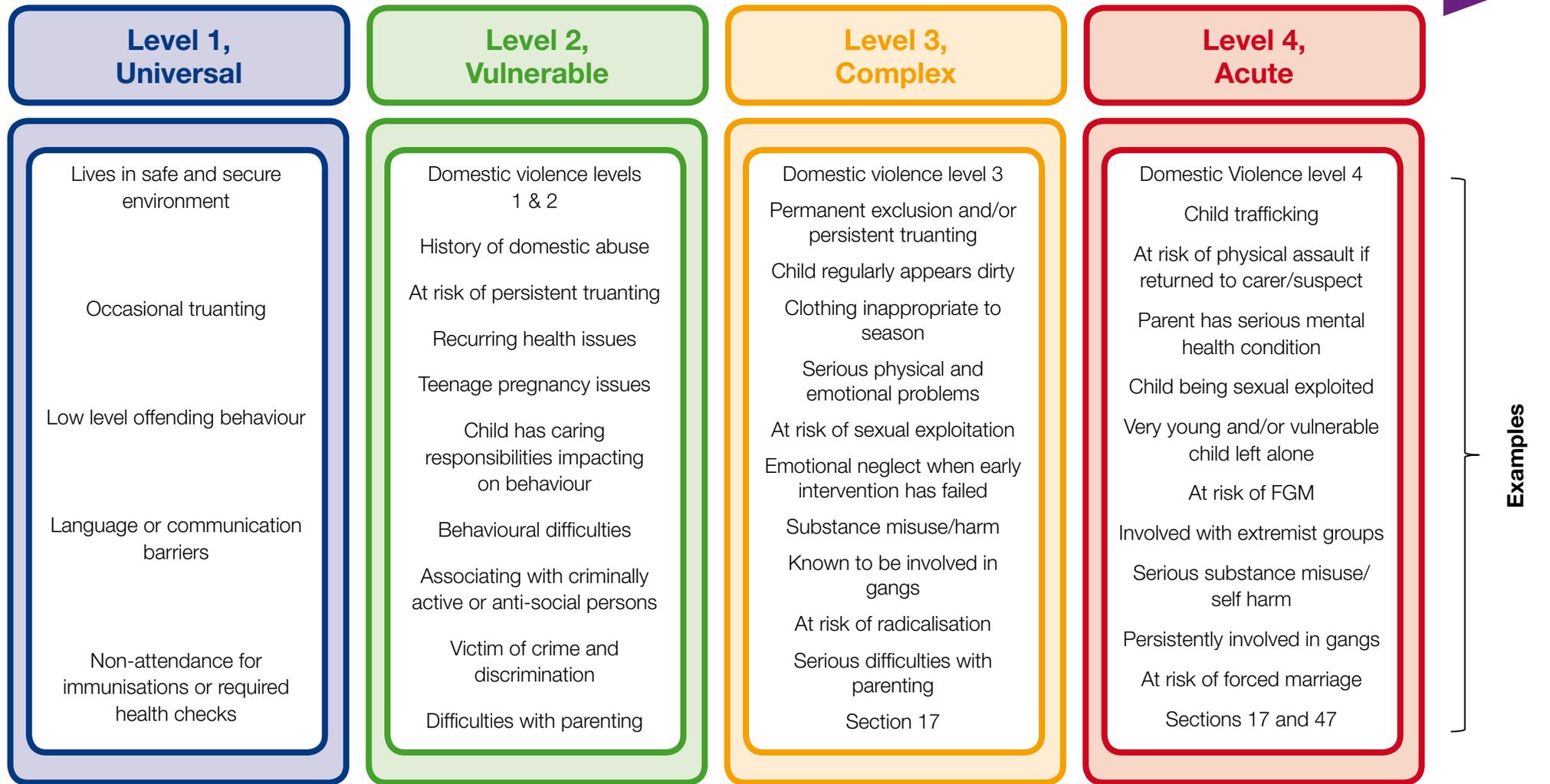
Level 1, Universal	Level 2, Vulnerable	Level 3, Complex	Level 4, Acute	
No additional needs	Child's needs not clear, known or being met	Child or young person at risk of harm, but not imminent and possibly less serious	Child or young person at risk of serious harm	Description
Universal services delivered through Resident's First Programme, Leisure, Estate programmes, voluntary sector, schools and Children's Centres	Universal support and/or Early Help	Children's Social Care and or partner agencies	Children's Social Care with Police or Children's Social Care or partner agencies	Response services
No specific timescale	3 working days	1 working day	Immediate	Referral timescale

Response times are the MINIMUM expected time we expect MASH practitioners to complete a referral. Working day = within 24 hours. No referrals, under any circumstances, should be held in the MASH and other agencies awaiting a response beyond these timescales.

What sort of cases are BRAG rated?

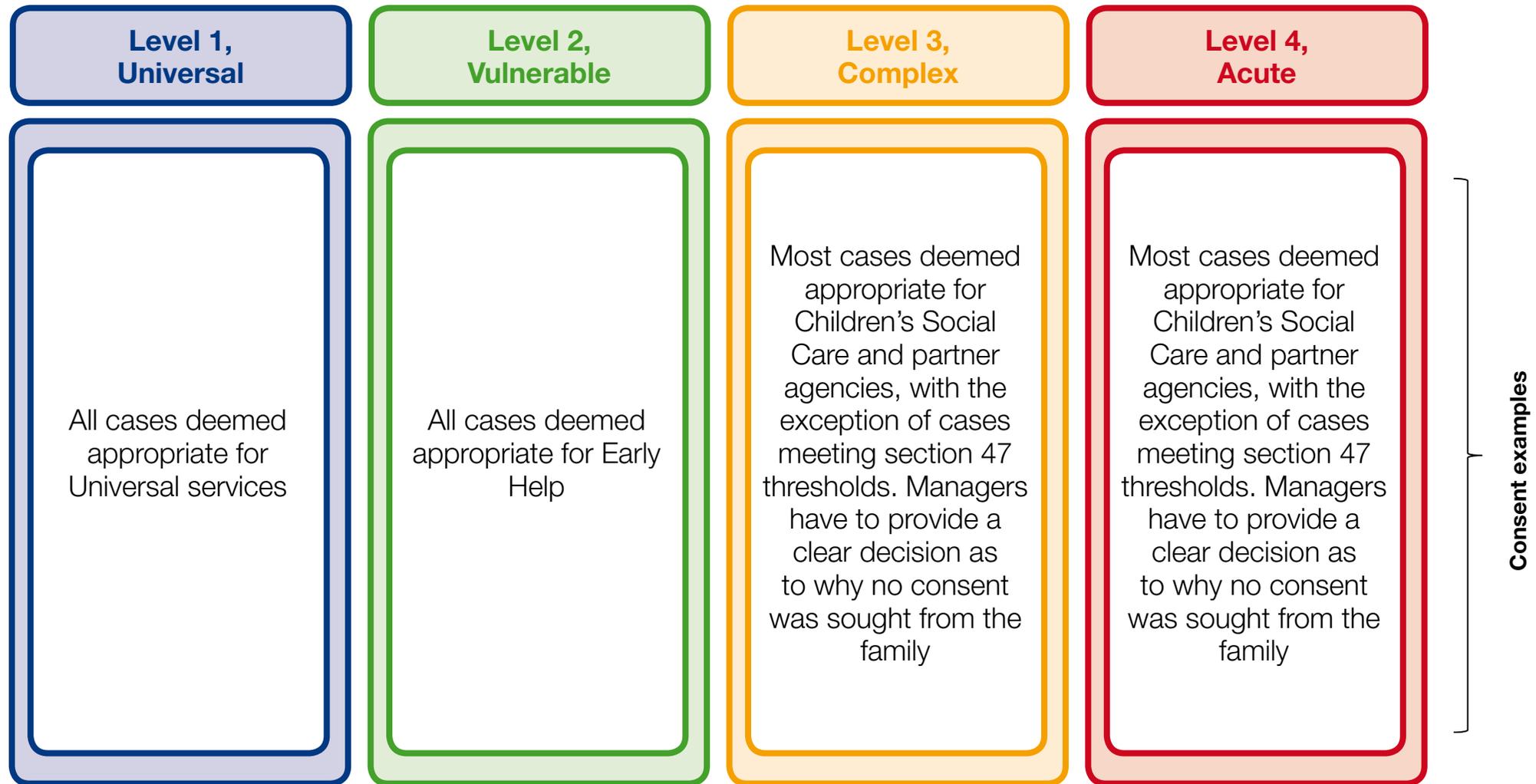
Examples of BRAG ratings for referrals

The MASH can step up or down any BRAG ratings for referrals depending on further information received.



Do we need to obtain consent from families for all safeguarding cases?

Depending on the BRAG rating of the referral, we will need to get consent for:





Contacts

To make a contact/referral, you can visit the MASH team at:

Juniper House
221 Hoe Street
London
E17 9PH

Tel: **020 8496 2310**

Opening times from 9am–5.15pm (Mon–Thurs) and 9am–5pm (Friday)

Tel: **020 8946 3000**

(Out of hours)

Email: MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk

