



# Reality check visit update report

## Integrated Front Door (previously MASH)

A report for the  
Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee

November 13<sup>th</sup> 2018



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Details of Reality Check Visit**

#### **Explanation of service area & background to original visit:**

The Integrated Front Door (IFD) provides a multi-agency response to requests for service in relation to vulnerable children. The agencies represented at the IFD include: social workers, Police, Health, Education, Catch22, Family Safety Unit, Probation and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) representatives. The IFD provides the first point of contact for professionals, families or members of the public if they have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for a child. This can be via phone or secure email using the multi-agency request for service form. The IFD ensures the needs of children are prioritised depending on the nature of concerns or requests for service and a 'threshold of need' level is identified to provide the most appropriate response to meet the needs of the child and reduce or respond to the presenting risk.

#### **Brief description of visit (date, officers and councillors attending):**

The visit to the Integrated Front Door and the MASH in Moreton took place on Thursday 7th September. Cllr Tom Usher, Cllr Alan Brighouse, Cllr Wendy Clements, Cllr Moira McLaughlin and Cllr Chris Meaden took part in the visit, which was hosted by Liz Davenport (Head of the Integrated Front Door). She was accompanied by Debbie Prescott (Team Manager, MASH) and Anne Rannard (Detective Inspector, Police). Following a presentation relating to the operation of the Integrated Front Door and MASH, members talked to individual staff across a number of disciplines.

#### **Report findings/recommendations and concerns:**

The report findings, recommendations and concerns are detailed fully in the table below.

#### **Any other actions/comments moving forward:**

Following the Reality Check visit to the IFD, in March 2018 the IFD was subject of an Ofsted Monitoring visit. The letter published by Ofsted following the visit can be accessed at <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50004420>

Recommendation/challenges	Implementation Status - Complete - Partially complete - Not Started	Actions Taken / Progress	Impact of Recommendation
<p><b>Recommendation/challenges 1:</b> The volume of referrals is significant. Members were informed that approximately 450 requests for service per week are received by the Integrated Front Door.</p>	<p><b>Partially complete</b></p>	<p>There are a number of strategies being put in place to safely reduce contacts to the IFD. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction of daily Domestic Abuse meeting</li> <li>- Development of an electronic referral form</li> <li>- Launch of the CPIS (Child Protection Information System) in November 2018</li> <li>- Commissioning of Community Matters contract for provision of early help services to commence January 2019</li> </ul>	<p>Since July 2018 we have seen a reduction in contacts of approximately 100 per week. The number of contacts to IFD remains high.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- July average 484 per week</li> <li>- August average 401 per week</li> <li>- September average 380 per week</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation/challenges 2:</b> Concerns exist relating to the high rate of re-referral of cases in Wirral compared to statistical and geographical neighbours</p>	<p><b>Partially complete</b></p>	<p>The re-referral rate has been at 24% during 2018-19, which is higher than statistical neighbours.</p> <p>An action plan is in place to reduce re-referrals. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monthly audit of all re-referrals</li> <li>- Introduction of IFD Morning Meeting where all re-referrals will be discussed for information sharing and decision</li> </ul>	<p>An action plan has been put in place and is reviewed through the multi-agency IFD Board.</p>

		<p>making (December 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of a new contact record which creates a court report workflow, will address a data issue as currently all requests for S7 and S37 are processed as a single assessment, this is not required.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Recommendation/challenges 3:</b> Members were told that capacity can be challenging at certain times, for example, due to staff absence, such as leave, sickness and training. There are also periods when there are spikes in workload, for example, prior to school holiday times when schools are concerned that in their absence needs may increase</p>	<p><b>Partially complete</b></p>	<p>Capacity within the IFD has been increased since the Reality Check visit. This includes additional Social Worker, Advanced Social Work Practitioner, IFD Office Manager, and additional business support. This increase has been achieved through the reallocation of resource from the Early Help Team.</p> <p>An Interim Service Manager with substantial experience of front door services has been in post since December 2017, making significant improvements to practice.</p> <p>Additional capacity and permanent Head of Service will be secured through current restructure.</p>	<p>Improving capacity and management grip within the IFD has led to a strengthened team which is able to operate effectively. Ofsted Monitoring Visit, March 2018 found that <i>“Experienced and knowledgeable social workers and managers respond to all contacts in a timely way.”</i></p>
<p><b>Recommendation/challenges 4:</b> Requests for service to the Integrated Front Door are triaged and RAG rated. The nature and context of the concerns received determine a</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>	<p>The RAG rating approach was discontinued in January 2018 when systems were reviewed by new senior management. Timescale for progressing all referrals is 24 hours as per Working Together statutory</p>	<p>Throughput in relation to contacts is 24 hours in line with Working Together.</p>

<p>required response time (Red – less than 4 hours; Amber – less than 24 hours; Green – less than 72 hours). Performance data suggests response times for dealing with requests for service identified as red or amber threshold were acceptable. The target time achieved for contacts which are RAG rated green (lower priority) is approximately 85%. This potentially sees capacity deployed to higher level cases as they come in, but also indicates that contacts and referrals to the front door by professionals across the wider Children’s workforce still require a better understanding of thresholds.</p>		<p>guidance.</p> <p>All contacts are subject to an initial screening by a qualified social worker which enables prioritisation to be made.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation/challenges 5:</b> Members were shown some performance data during the visit and request that further consideration be given to identifying a range of performance data which would enable scrutiny members to monitor performance relating to the safeguarding of children on an on-going basis.</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>	<p>The performance data set was reviewed by the multi-agency IFD Board which provides governance and oversight. A new data set was agreed and is published on a monthly basis. Reports are available for managers on demand.</p>	<p>Improved oversight of performance. Improved management grip as recognised by Ofsted in the March 2018 Monitoring visit <i>“Managers in the IFD have access to a live desktop performance report, which enables them to ensure that work is progressing in a timely way. Recent changes to recording practice have streamlined the way that contacts are recorded.”</i></p>

<p><b>Recommendation/challenges</b>  <b>6:</b> It is suggested that members visit the Integrated Front Door / MASH again once the service has transferred to the new location at Solar Campus.</p>	<p><b>Not started</b></p>	<p>The IFD Team has relocated to Solar Campus and would welcome a further Reality Check visit if deemed appropriate.  It is worth noting that in addition to the Monitoring visit conducted by Ofsted in March 2018, there has been another scrutiny visit to IFD conducted by Department for Education Advisor, in August 2018.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
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