

Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Ref No: FR09 (17/18)
September 2017	Key Decision: Yes
Children's Services Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - Administration	Part I
Report by Executive Director Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education and Director of Family Operations	Electoral Divisions: N/A

Summary

Children's Services operates a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as part of the critical 'front door' to provide triage and decision making for safeguarding and child protection matters within the County. The MASH operationalises the statutory requirement to make contact to referral (threshold) decisions within 24 hours as outlined in *Working Together 2015*. The MASH also undertakes all initial child protection Strategy Meetings and is the front door for Early Help and Prevention Services. The current configuration of the administration function within the MASH is resulting in delays to the 24 hour threshold decision making requirements.

The MASH receives its administrative support via the County Council's 10 year contract with Capita, which delivers a variety of back office support functions including IT Services. There is an element of additional resource which has been funded by Children's Services to support an increase in demand since the contract commenced.

It has been confirmed that there are areas for improvement in the MASH. In addition, the split ownership of the service means there is limited flexibility and agility in work allocation, how processes are designed and how the County Council responds to fluctuations in demand. The County Council is unable to meet its statutory decision making timescale requirements whilst the current arrangement is in place.

A decision is sought to insource the administrative function in order to create one single line management and accountability for the MASH. Bringing the administrative functions in-house will involve transferring the team of approximately 15.5FTE administrators, and 1FTE Administration Manager, currently employed by Capita, to the employment of the County Council under TUPE regulations.

Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member approves the in-sourcing from Capita of the administrative function for the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The County Council's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was established on 1st April 2016 as a development of the Children's Access Point. The statutory function of the MASH is making contact to referral decisions within 24 hours and undertaking all initial child protection strategy meetings alongside being the front door for the Early Help and Prevention Service. The MASH enables members of the public, and professionals, to raise concerns about the welfare of children. This may include children identified as potentially being in need of support or at risk of suffering significant harm. The MASH is the 'Front Door' for the multi-agency partnership. It enables those agencies in the MASH to lawfully, and securely, share information so that a true and balanced risk assessment can be made. Agencies within the MASH include the Police, the Health service, Children's Social Care, IPEH (Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help), Housing and WORTH (Domestic Abuse service).
- 1.2 The MASH currently operates with administration provided by Capita which was outsourced in 2012. West Sussex is the only authority where an external partner operates part of the MASH function (i.e. where part of a service is outsourced).

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is to bring the administrative function of this MASH service back 'in house' so that the entire service sits within Children's Social Care. This will ensure that the MASH will be able to fulfil its statutory threshold decision making function on critical safeguarding matters within 24 hours, as is required in *Working Together 2015*.

This will ensure that the County Council:

- Is able to meet their statutory function, as outlined in *Working Together 2015*, and provide decisions on referrals within 24 hours.
- Is solely accountable for dealing with matters of children's safeguarding.
- Will be able to identify, manage and action any safeguarding risks through prioritisation and direction of resources without having to operate through a contract.
- Will be able to look at options for increasing integration of the two functions in order to increase resilience and flexibility in responding to variable demand.

3. Resources

3.1 Implications for Human Resources

There are currently 15.5FTE administrators and 1FTE Administration Manager employed by Capita who provide support for the MASH. The transfer of this work to the County Council will mean that the staff employed on this service will transfer to the employment of the County Council under TUPE

regulations. Consultation on the process for managing this transfer is in progress subject to the approval of this decision.

The intention is that opportunities for improving the level of integration between the two services will be considered following the transfer of the service back in house.

3.2 Implications for Finance

The County Council is working closely with Capita to ensure a smooth transition of the service. The revenue implications will mean a shortfall of around £85k per annum. In the short term this will be met by holding non-critical posts elsewhere in the Directorate vacant, with the longer term intention of a further review of the MASH staffing structure to realise the efficiencies achieved by this proposal.

A broader review of the County Council's back office contract will be the subject of a decision planned for the Autumn. It is not considered that the pressing requirements for MASH reconfiguration can await that larger exercise. The impact on the contract of the proposals for the MASH administration arrangements will however be included as part of that review.

Factors taken into account

4. Consultation

4.1 The following technical and subject matter experts were, and continue to be, consulted throughout the due diligence process: County Council Human Resources, Capita Human Resources, County Council Legal, Capita Business Services, Children's Services. Input from these sources is included in the business case.

4.2 There will be a formal consultation with affected Capita staff.

5. Risk Management Implications

5.1 A potential risk of delegated authority is that of reduced transparency of decision making or inappropriate decisions being taken. This is mitigated by strong governance, roles and responsibilities and a clear Change Control process as set out within the contract.

5.2 Operational risks caused by the transition of staff and work exist specifically within the MASH. There is a risk that staff morale could be impacted during the process of change and this could have an impact on service delivery. The process for managing the transfer will involve regular, open and transparent communications and consultation with staff and Unison throughout. This will be supported by HR teams from Capita and the County Council working in partnership. In addition the service will be supported by additional resources from Children's Social Care if the need arises.

5.3 Operational risks are being mitigated by an extensive transition plan, jointly owned by Capita Business Services and Children's Services. The plan details what would happen if extra support was required during the transition, how

long it will last and who has responsibility for service delivery during transition. It will be approved and signed off by all parties.

6. Other Options Considered

- 6.1 The MASH administrative function remaining as part of the contract would not provide the flexibility that is sought for the future and the Council would not be meeting the statutory requirements in terms of contact to referral decisions in 24 hours.
- 6.2 The possibility of more services being included as part of the contract has been explored, and is not being progressed at this point.

7. Equality Duty

- 7.1 There will be no immediate impact to the way the services are provided as the functions are to be transferred exactly as they are, with no personnel, process or operational changes made before transfer.
- 7.2 Management of the transferred services will become the responsibility of the County Council thereafter. For example, if Children's Services take a decision to make changes to the function, the roles and the processes, the impact will need to be assessed at that time.

8. Social Value

- 8.1 None

9. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

- 9.1 None

10. Human Rights Implications

- 10.1 None

Avril Wilson
Executive Director
Children, Adults, Families
Health and Education.

Annie MacIver
Director of
Family Operations

Contact: Megan Muddell, Senior Advisor Planning and Change, 0330 222 2164.

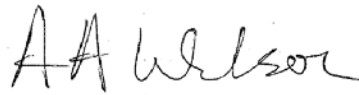
Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

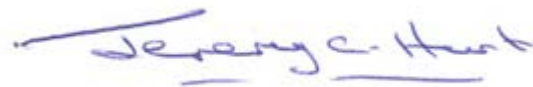
Agreed



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Executive Director Children, Adults,
Families, Health and Education

Date

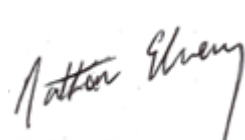
20/09/17
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Cabinet Member for Finance and
Resources

Date...20/09/17.....

Action Authorised



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Chief Executive

Date.....20/09/17.....

Nathan Elvery
Chief Executive

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20 September 2017

Jeremy Hunt
Cabinet Member for Finance and
Resources

Dear Mr Hunt,

Finance and Resources Portfolio - Urgent Action Procedure: Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - administration

I am writing to seek your agreement to an officer authorising the above matter that requires an urgent decision and I enclose a copy of a report prepared by the Executive Director Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education and the Director of Family Operations.

The report recommends the approval of in-sourcing from Capita of the administrative function for the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

The decision is now urgent because vulnerable children are at risk of harm due to insufficient numbers of assessments being undertaken within 24 hours. There is evidence to suggest that the performance of the MASH is declining. Therefore this is causing unacceptable risk to children in the system.

If you agree with an officer authorising the above recommendation, I should be grateful if you would kindly sign both the endorsed copy of this letter and the endorsement at the end of the report and return them to me. A copy of this letter has also been sent to the Chairman of the Performance and Finance Select Committee as required under Standing Order 61(3).

The decision will be reported through the Executive Decision Database and the Members' Information Service in the usual way.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nathan Elvery'.

Nathan Elvery
Chief Executive

Agreed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'AA Wilson'.

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Executive Director Children, Adults,
Families, Health and Education

Date

20/09/17
.....

Jeremy C. Hunt

.....
Cabinet Member for Finance and
Resources

Date.....20/09/17.....

Action Authorised

Arthur Gray

.....
Chief Executive

Date.....20/09/17.....

Nathan Elvery
Chief Executive

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20 September 2017

Mr Pieter Montyn
Chairman
Performance and Finance
Select Committee

Dear Mr Montyn,

Finance and Resources Portfolio - Urgent Action Procedure: Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - administration

I am writing to consult you on a letter that I have sent to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, which is enclosed for your records. As this is an Executive Decision, consultation with you as Chairman of the relevant Select Committee is necessary as the call-in procedure does not apply to urgent actions.

If you agree with the proposals, I should be grateful if you would kindly endorse this letter as Chairman of the Performance and Finance Select Committee under Standing Order 61(3).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nathan Elvery'.

Nathan Elvery
Chief Executive

AGREED

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Mu'.

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Chairman of the Performance
and Finance Select Committee

Date
20/09/17