

# Cwm Taf MASH

## Annual Performance Report

### Year One

### 2015/16



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## Section 1: Introduction and Background to Cwm Taf MASH

### **Purpose of this Report**

The purpose of this report is to explore how the Cwm Taf MASH has performed against its initial strategic aims and objectives and to reflect on whether it has made a difference to multi-agency safeguarding and to positive outcomes for children and adults at risk in its first year of operation.

This report will also summarise the Cwm Taf MASH activity and evidence early outcomes during its first year, including the benefits realised and the challenges it has sought to overcome.

These findings have informed recommendations for further development and improvement of the MASH for Year 2 and onwards.

It is important to note from the outset that some of the aims and objectives that were identified during the development of the MASH are very broad and cannot be achieved by the MASH alone. The Cwm Taf MASH is an important element in the process of safeguarding to support the investigations and care and support plans that are maintained outside of the MASH function.

It is recommended that the strategic priorities for the coming year are outcome-focused, linked to the activities of the MASH. A performance framework will be developed, setting out operational targets for each area of the MASH business, including robust audit and quality assurance processes for MASH cases. It is recommended that consideration should be given to improvements linked to prevention and early intervention, response times; and the reduction of repeat referrals.

### **Background and why Cwm Taf MASH was needed**

The failure of agencies to work together effectively to safeguard children and adults at risk has been highlighted in numerous serious case reviews. The Munro Review of Child Protection (2011) recognised the key role of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards in fostering multi-agency working. Although these reviews have been focused upon children and young people, the findings are equally as relevant to agencies with responsibilities for safeguarding adults at risk.

In a more local context, there have been Serious Case Reviews into child and adult safeguarding that have demonstrated a lack of information sharing, for example a review from RCT (Child MM) and domestic violence homicides which demonstrated a lack of information sharing both across and within agencies.

Similarly, Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) inspections indicated inconsistency in thresholding and decision making. For instance, the "Report on the Inspection of Children's Services Rhondda Cynon Taf Council (May 2013) which found on inspection that: *"There was inconsistency of thresholds and decision making*

*between the teams and with partner agencies. Staff in the three localities felt disconnected from one another and from the wider workforce".* Cwm Taf MASH has been able to demonstrate that this issue has been resolved for RCT CBC Children Services, as thresholding is now carried out by one team as opposed to three, and the next step is for RCT CBC and MT CBC to work closer together to improve consistency across the local authorities.

Furthermore, the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 focuses on collaboration and a multi-agency focus being essential to effectively safeguarding children and adults at risk, and a partnership approach to this should adhere to best practice as outlined in the Welsh Government Working Together for Wales framework (2012).

### **What is the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)?**

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) have become an increasingly prevalent structure across England and represent a concerted partnership response aimed at ensuring the protection of children and adults at risk.

Whilst regional variations exist, a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub is generally a 'sealed intelligence hub', staffed by professionals from a range of agencies and is the "front door" for the receipt and assessment of adult and child safeguarding referrals from professionals.

Through the phased co-location of key statutory partners, including the police, probation, health, education and local authorities, a more timely and holistic approach to the identification, assessment and management of safeguarding, child and adult protection enquiries can be achieved.

### **The Implementation of Cwm Taf MASH**

The proposal to develop the Cwm Taf MASH was recommended following the tragic death of a child within the Cwm Taf area. The key recommendations included a need for improved sharing of information between agencies to enable a more **efficient and effective** safeguarding service to be provided to the communities within Cwm Taf.

The development of the MASH was commissioned by the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Boards.

The Cwm Taf MASH has been fully operational since 7 May 2015. The MASH (located at Pontypridd Police Station) was set up to enhance safeguarding practice, with agencies working together in one place, sharing information via a bespoke data sharing platform (Mhub) and making collaborative decisions. MASH activity comprises:

- Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Adults at Risk Safeguarding
- Domestic Abuse (MARAC)

Cwm Taf MASH Partners are:

- Cwm Taf University Health Board
- South Wales Police
- Merthyr Tydfil CBC and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC:  
Adult Social Services  
Children's Services  
Education  
MARAC  
Emergency Duty Team (EDT)
- National Probation Service
- Wales Community Rehabilitation Company

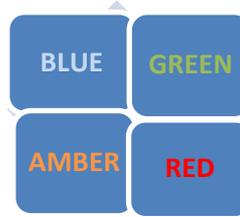
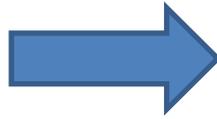
The following also have links to and support Cwm Taf MASH:

- Barnardo's Advocate (since November 2015)
- DRIVE Project (since March 2016)
- Mental Health Officer (South Wales Police)

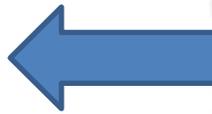
A MASH Executive Board was set up to provide governance and oversee the ongoing development of the MASH, and to ensure it continues to achieve its goal to improve safeguarding and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.

### Cwm Taf MASH: Core Functions

1. Acting as a single point of entry for all safeguarding referrals – gather all notifications in one place
2. Enabling thorough research of each case to identify potential risk – opportunity to address that risk in multi-agency environment
3. Sharing information between agencies – supported by a joint information sharing protocol
4. Triaging referrals – by use of the agreed RAG ratings
5. Facilitating early intervention for children and adults at risk – with the aim to prevent the need for more intensive interventions at a later stage
6. Managing cases through co-ordinated interventions



**Vulnerable people and their families  
are able to live safe lives free from the  
risk of abuse and neglect**



## Section 2: Cwm Taf MASH – Year One Evaluation How is Cwm Taf MASH making a difference

### **Strategic Aim and Objectives of Cwm Taf MASH**

The original strategic aim and objectives that were set for MASH related to the following themes:

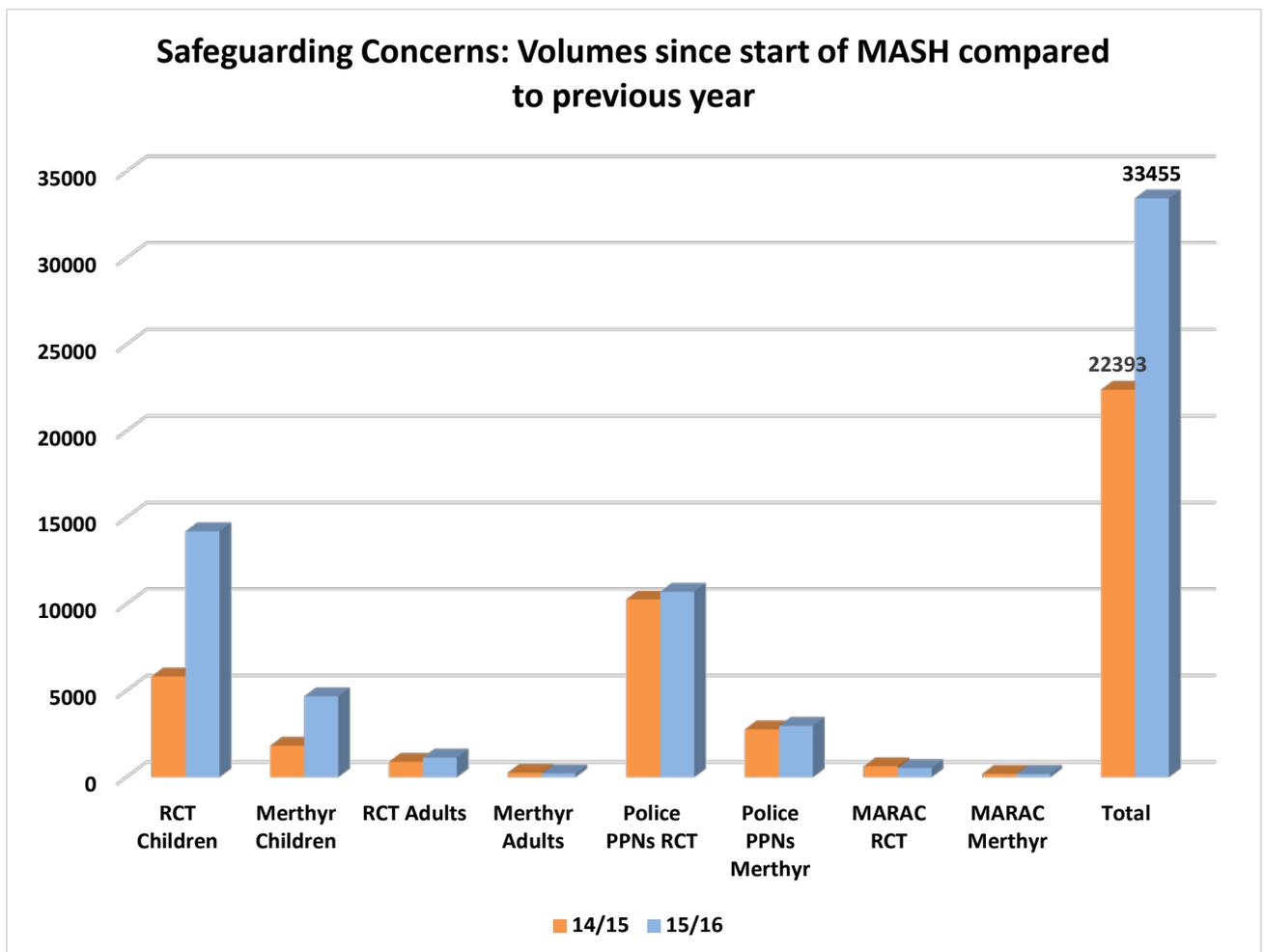
- Strategic Aim: That children and adults at risk living in the Cwm Taf area are able to live safe lives
- Objective One: Improved coordination and consistency of threshold/decision making when a concern is raised
- Objective Two: Improved response times leading to earlier interventions
- Objective Three: Reduction of repeat referrals

### **STRATEGIC AIM: Children and Adults at risk Living in the Cwm Taf area are able to live safe lives**

- MASH responds to this strategic aim by providing a front end service that is the single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns. Effectively the MASH is the 'Front Door' for safeguarding within Cwm Taf.
- The MASH was designed to improve on the efficiency and effectiveness of previous safeguarding approaches. It does this by bringing all statutory partners under the same roof. This enables prompt information sharing and collective decision making as soon as a safeguarding concern is raised. As a result of this upfront multi agency disclosure the timeliness of providing quality information to partners outside the MASH is enhanced, enabling earlier intervention and effective joint planning and actions.
- A total of 33,455 safeguarding concerns (also known as "contacts") were recorded by Cwm Taf MASH in Year One. These safeguarding concerns were received from a range of professionals including Social Workers, Teachers, Care Home staff, Health Visitors/Doctors, emergency services and third sector organisations. Referrals were also received from members of the public via the local authorities' contact centres/one stop shops. In comparison, 22,393 referrals were recorded in the previous year (before MASH was operational) which demonstrates an increase of 33%.
- This uplift in the reporting of safeguarding concerns is comparative with the findings of other multi agency safeguarding hubs (for example Nottinghamshire

MASH and Manchester MASH who both reported initial increases in referrals when their hubs commenced). Improved coordination and awareness of safeguarding, and the fact that all safeguarding concerns are now received in one place, are deemed to be the main contributory factors for this increase.

- Due to early awareness-raising of the MASH and the process changes that MASH has brought about (including improved safeguarding referral forms that are more succinct and easier to complete), organisations outside of MASH are more willing to submit concerns. This is due to agencies having a clearer understanding of what happens when a referral is made, and a recognition that there is better communication since the start of MASH. Education and Health professionals for instance have provided feedback that demonstrate examples. See Section 3 Communication and Feedback.
- The chart below shows the breakdown of concerns into the MASH and the comparative data from the year before.



- **These volumes reflect Children and Adults Safeguarding Board data for the same period which confirms an increase in Child Protection and Adults at Risk referrals.**
- **MARAC referrals decreased in Year One of MASH compared to the previous year, and this may be attributed to earlier risk assessment**

**and decisions actions within MASH (including daily domestic abuse discussions involving all relevant partner agencies).**

\* Sources: Mhub data; South Wales Police data; MARAC; RCT and Merthyr Tydfil Local Authorities data; and Cwm Taf UHB data. \*14/15 (period 01/04/14 to 31/03/15) \*15/16 period (01/04/15 to 31/04/16)\*Mhub data: 07/05/15 to 31/03/16

**OBJECTIVE ONE: Improved coordination and consistency of threshold/decision making when a concern is raised**

This objective has been achieved by having agreed structures that support the effective dissemination of information between all partners, cutting across both functional and statutory domains. This enables the nature of the concern to be explored in its widest context with all interested partners contributing within a single meeting and thus allowing professionals to better understand the root cause of the problem and to provide the most efficient and holistic response utilising the skills and abilities of all concerned.

To enable a consistent response within the MASH, the principle agreed was to have dedicated decision makers who had the seniority and experience to make the correct decisions.

**Children**

- All child safeguarding concerns that are referred into MASH are triaged/thresholded by a single agency (RCT or Merthyr Tydfil Children Services within the MASH). These concerns are received primarily via a referral form on email (the “C1” and “A1” safeguarding referral forms) and telephone referrals from professionals.
- The MASH triage agency will flag urgent and emergency child protection referrals and these are dealt with in line with the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008) i.e. “*whether a child is at imminent risk of harm and whether emergency protective action needs to be taken*”. Before MASH, as there were 4 district triage teams allocating this work, this risk assessment process took longer to action and therefore response times and intervention was slower.
- MASH has made the decision-making process more efficient as child protection concerns are now RAG rated by Children Services in the MASH and entered onto the information sharing system (Mhub) which allows partner agencies to disclose relevant safeguarding intelligence promptly. MASH aims to share information within 2 hours for Red rated incidents, and 24 hours for Amber rated incidents, and a strategy discussion is held within MASH (usually on the same day). An explanation/breakdown of the RAG rating information is explained later in this report.

- The All Wales Child Protection Procedures stipulate that a strategy discussion “*should happen at the earliest opportunity within 24 hours of the decision to hold it*”. Since MASH, strategy discussions are more efficient as they are usually held within 24 hours and include other agencies/departments rather than just Social Services and Police (e.g. Health and Education representatives are part of the discussions). This means that there is improved compliance with the AWCPP to protect children who are deemed to be a risk of significant harm.
- At the MASH strategy discussion the decision on whether to proceed to a Child Protection Section 47 investigation or whether to agree other child protection/safeguarding enquiries (e.g. Proportionate Assessment or further strategy meeting) is agreed upon. This decision making will usually include a district Team Manager (decision maker) who is external to MASH. A Section 47 enquiry is initiated to ascertain whether the child is at risk of abuse, neglect or harm, and identify the appropriate safeguarding actions.

### **Outcomes for Children**

- The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children Board performance data (Quarters 1 to 3 cumulative) confirms that more child safeguarding referrals proceeded to child protection investigations (Section 47) during Year One of MASH (for both RCT and Merthyr Tydfil). However, less than half of these Section 47 investigations led to initial child protection conferences.
- This suggests that thresholds for proceeding with child protection investigations have lowered since the start of MASH, and that there may be increased “risk averse” decision making. However there may also be other reasons for this so in order to determine the reasons for these performance outcomes the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children Board’s Quality Assurance and Standards Group (QASG) are conducting an audit of the “fallout” cases during 2016/17.
- The presence of the Police Missing Persons Coordinator, Barnardo’s Advocate and pro-active team within the MASH allows for early discussions of risk and more intensive work to be done which is proving to be invaluable within the teenage age bracket and those individuals displaying risky behaviour.

### **Adults at Risk**

- As with the processes for children, all Adults at Risk safeguarding concerns that are referred into MASH are triaged / thresholded by a single agency (RCT/Merthyr Tydfil Adults Services or Health currently). These are received primarily via the “A1” safeguarding referral form on email (which speeds up the process of the referral) and telephone referrals from professionals/third sector organisations, Care Homes Police and members of the public via the contact centre/one stop shop.
- The MASH complies with the Wales POVA procedures (Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse 2012) and deals with Stages 1 to 4 of these procedures from Alert to Strategy Discussion stage. As with the procedures for

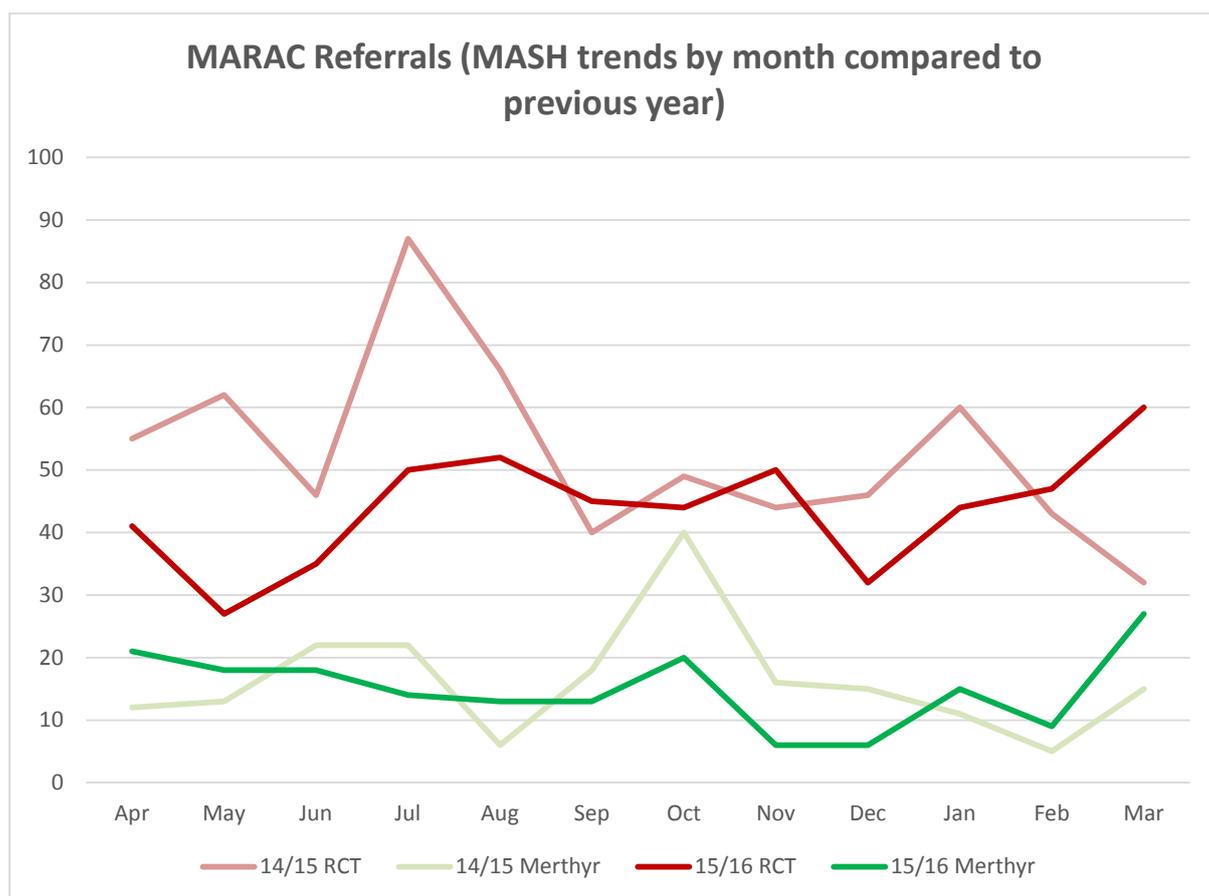
children, the RAG rating system is used for incidents that meet the threshold/legal gateway for information sharing which allows partner agencies to disclose relevant safeguarding intelligence.

### **Outcomes for Adults**

- During the first year of MASH, 57% of RCT referrals progressed to formal investigation and 85% of Merthyr Tydfil referrals proceeded to formal investigation. (**RCT formal investigations increased from 75 in 2014/15 to 89 in 2015/16; Merthyr Tydfil investigations increased from 34 in 2014/15 to 63 in 2015/16**). The variation in the increase will be explored further as part of the joint thresholding/process review improvement work in Year 2.
- During the first year of MASH 150 out of 156 RCT adult protection cases had the risk reduced or removed at closure (96%); and 76 out of 80 Merthyr Tydfil cases had the risk reduced or removed at closure (95%). This compares favourably with the previous year's Welsh Government data (see Appendices, POVA Welsh Government monitoring form returns).
- Adults Services Complaints received in Year One of MASH = 1. There is no benchmarking data available from previous year to compare.

### **Domestic Abuse**

- 707 MARAC referrals were processed in the MASH during its first year. This is a 15% decrease compared to the previous year (825 referrals) and this may be attributed to earlier risk assessment and decisions actions within MASH (including daily domestic abuse discussions involving all relevant partner agencies) .The graph below shows the timeline month by month which shows that apart from the last month (March) there has been a general decrease in MARAC referrals for both RCT and Merthyr Tydfil areas.



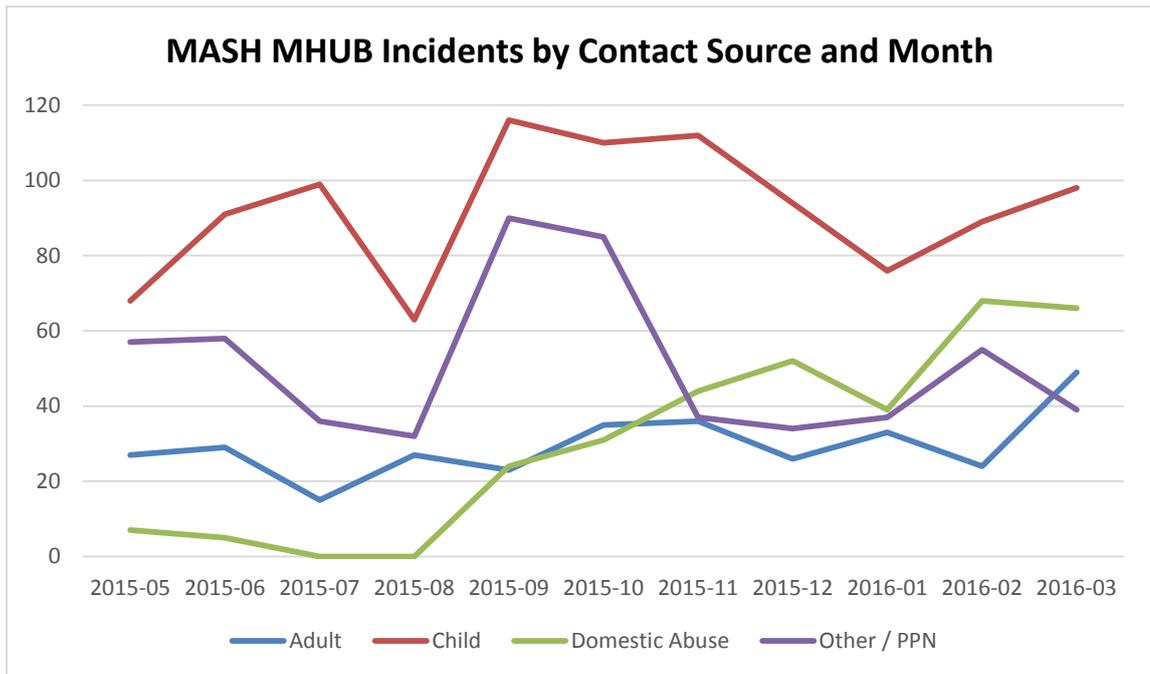
- In September 2015 the MASH introduced daily strategy discussions to discuss domestic abuse related referrals. Information sharing and early intervention measures take place at these discussions and allow agencies an opportunity to discuss associated child protection and adult protection issues, dealing with all of these in one strategy discussion as opposed to separate meetings. This is a more efficient way of working for all agencies involved in terms of time saved, improved response times and better risk management.
- MARAC meetings have continued to take place twice monthly for both local authorities, although as a result of the MASH daily discussions these meetings are more succinct due to key decisions and actions having already been agreed/implemented. However, it is felt that there is still some duplication and consideration needs to be given as to whether this is an efficient way of working.

### **Partner Information Sharing**

- Due to the development of the Mhub system, all agencies now have access to a holistic multi-agency view of a family or individual. Complex family dynamics cross cut all areas of business and it is important for agencies when making decisions to understand all the issues.

- In year One of MASH, there were 2236 incidents created where information was shared between partner agencies.

The chart below breaks this down further and shows that the highest number of Mhub incidents related to child referrals. There was a **peak in incidents during September 2015**, when the daily domestic abuse discussions commenced in MASH. These discussions will often reveal child concerns that would not have been picked up prior to the multi-agency domestic abuse discussion approach in MASH.



- Early identification of trends also shows that there is a difference between local authorities in the ratio of child protection incidents being created on Mhub.

Merthyr Children Services: 3% of total MASH referrals are entered onto Mhub

RCT Children Services: 6% of total MASH referrals are entered onto Mhub.

**Action to address the above:** The MASH Executive Board has agreed that a priority for the newly formed MASH Operational Committee is to implement joint thresholding across local authority areas in 2016/17.

**OBJECTIVE TWO: Improved response times leading to earlier interventions**

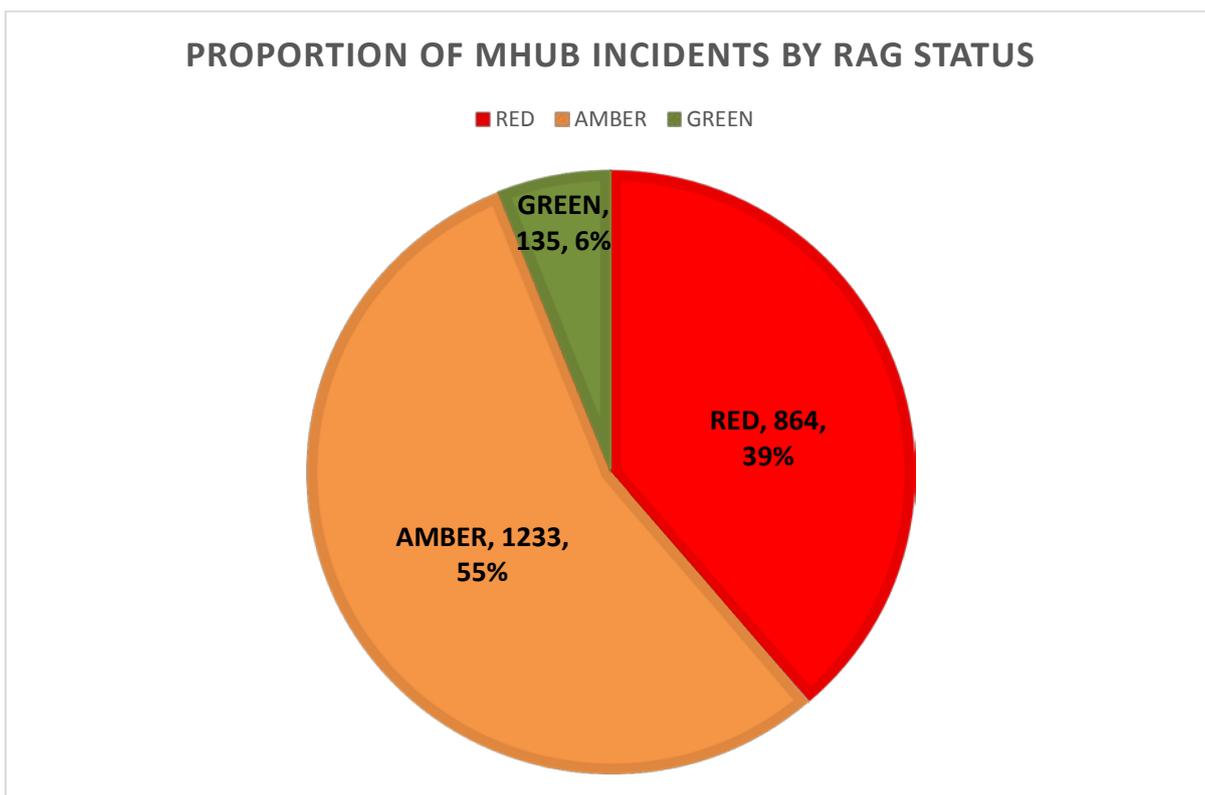
The statutory procedures that have directed safeguarding within Cwm Taf are predominately the:

1. All Wales Child Protection Procedure (AWCPP) – Child Protection

2. Protection Of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) – Adults
  3. Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference – Domestic Violence
- To provide direction, these procedures outline timescales for the completion of each phase of the procedure. For both POVA and AWCPP the guidelines require initial assessment to be carried out within 7 days. MARACs within Cwm Taf have traditionally been scheduled on a two weekly basis.
  - To improve response times the MASH now provides the facility for all safeguarding concerns that have reached threshold to be discussed on a multi-agency basis within 24hrs, with partner information sharing requested within 2 hours for a very urgent (red) incident and 24 hours for other incidents. This now provides a better picture from a wider partnership perspective at a far earlier point than had previously been routinely experienced.
  - Due to the early collation of partnership information allowing better assessment within the MASH, the need for further subsequent strategy meetings has also been reduced (see Section 4 for further details) and provides safeguarding teams with more information at an earlier point that had previously been possible. This should perhaps be considered alongside the Child Protection Section 47 audit in 2016/17 for further analysis.

### **Risk Assessment: RAG Rating System**

- The Mhub data sharing system facilitates the ability to prioritise all referrals by use of a RAG rating. This supports the effective flow of information within the MASH. However the RAG rating system applies to Monday through to Friday working week only and going forward may require further consideration of weekend incidents.
- In Year One, 39% of all incidents shared on Mhub were deemed to require an urgent response (RED) within 2 hours.
- Most Mhub incidents (55%) were considered to require a less urgent response (AMBER) with a twenty four hour timescale for information sharing; and 6% were GREEN (72 hours).
- This is baseline information for MASH and will be monitored/reviewed going forward. Questions such as whether the RAG timescales for information on the RAG rating system are realistic and necessary have been asked, and this should be addressed by MASH Executive Board in 2016/17.

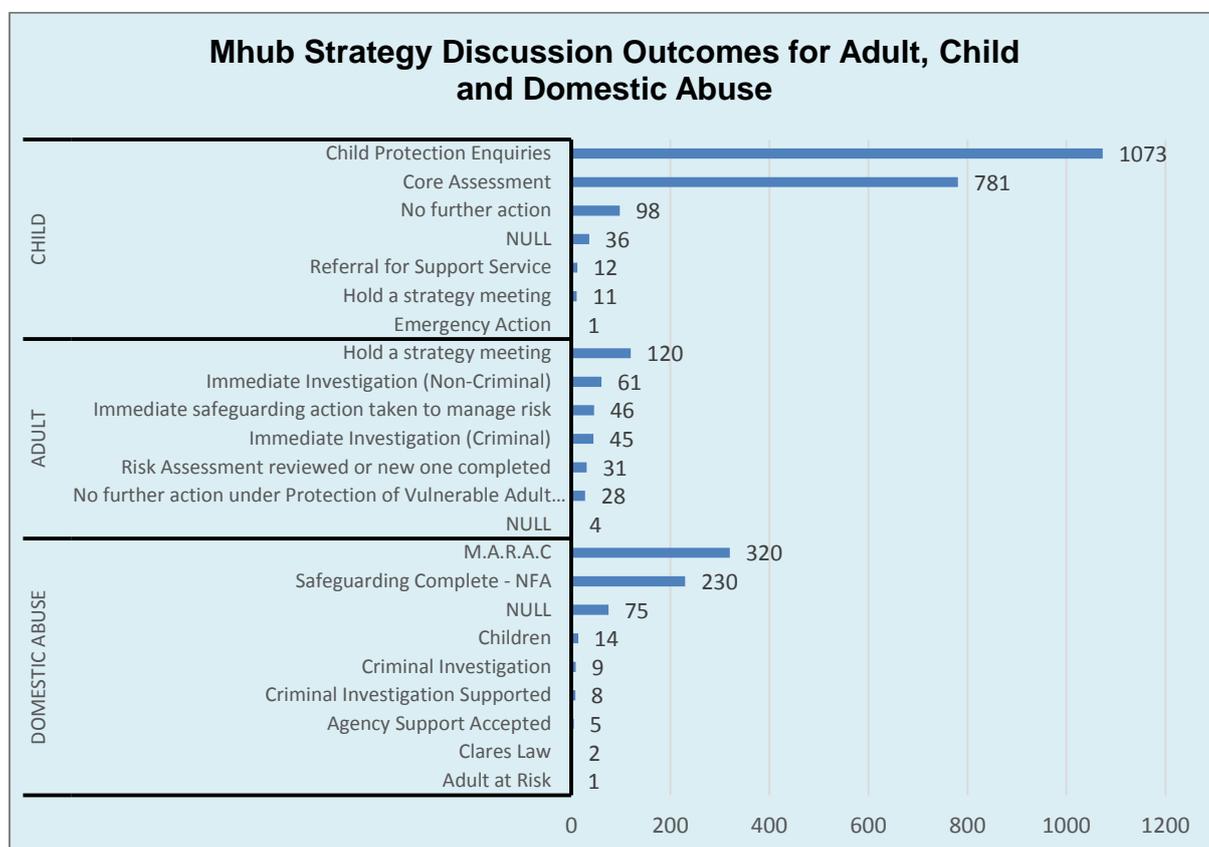


### **MASH Strategy Discussions**

- Since MASH, risks are managed more effectively to improve outcomes for children and adults at risk. Strategy discussions have aided this. For example, MASH strategy discussions allow attendees to agree who is the most suitable agency(s) to take forward safeguarding action/s. Before MASH was established, agencies would frequently act in isolation without these discussions taking place. For example, a child concern would often be discussed via telephone between Children’s district Social Services practitioners and the Police, with discussions recorded separately and no overarching report available to identify multi-agency actions/decision making.
- Child Protection enquiries represent the highest decision / outcome from MASH strategy discussions. This concurs with the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children Board data which demonstrates a high increase in child protection Section 47 investigations. This suggests that decision making from the MASH strategy discussions is more risk averse than prior to MASH. However, we should also consider that due to wider information sharing which includes more partners, there are additional risks being identified at an earlier stage (before MASH the majority of strategy discussions would have only comprised of Social Services and Police – since MASH they also include Health, Probation, Education etc).
- The highest outcome for Adults at Risk is to proceed to strategy meeting. Adults Social Services have indicated that they will be target setting to improve efficiencies by reducing the number of strategy meetings in 2016/17; with the objective being that MASH strategy discussions should provide more informed and timely decision making (enabling more prompt action to be taken).

- MASH strategy discussions allow for escalation and de-escalation of concerns. The MASH has examples where Health Professionals have been contacted during a telephone conference at the strategy discussion, and timely information gathering has prevented the need for further investigation of a concern (for example, an actual example where a paediatrician has confirmed that child injuries are accidental, averting unnecessary intrusive action for the child and family).
- Due to earlier intervention at MASH there has been an increase in strategy discussions which has resulted in a reduction of formal strategy meetings for Child Protection. There are also associated cost and time benefits (see Section 6, MASH Benefits).

The below chart shows the split of MASH decision making outcomes in Year One:



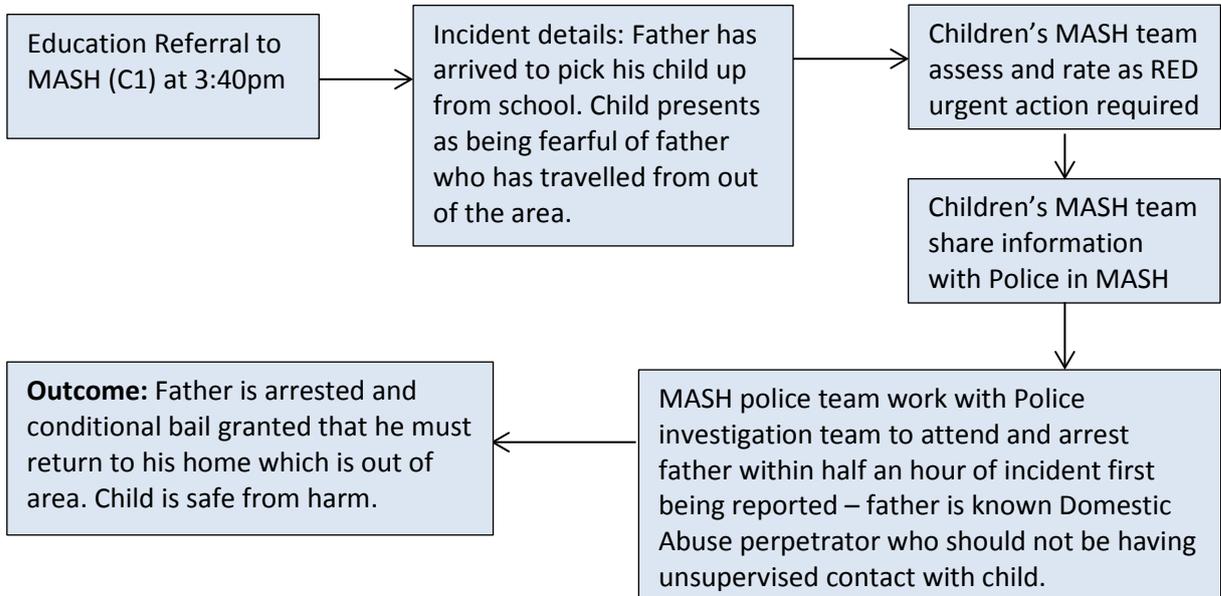
**Narrative:**

- With regards to Child Protection, where “NFA” is selected as an “outcome” above, the relevant sign-posting provision will be in place, i.e. Information, Advice and possibly Assistance will be offered.
- Where there is a “Null” outcome this is where no outcome has been recorded on Mhub.

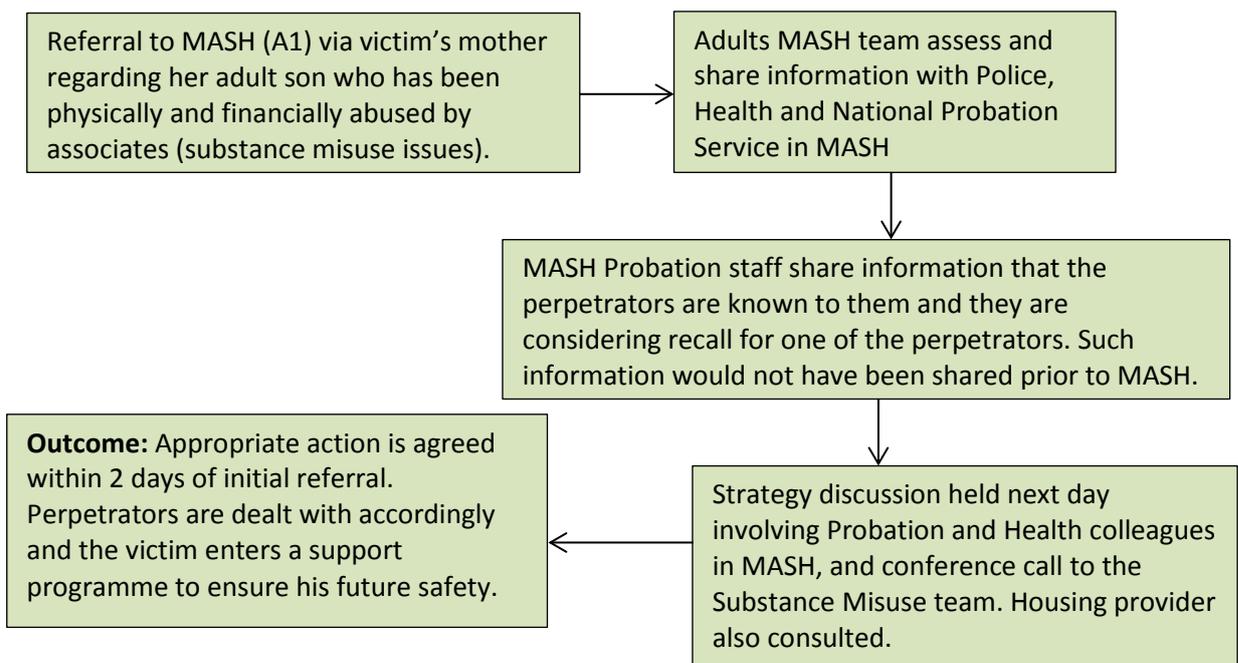
## MASH Case Studies

The following MASH case studies demonstrate improved response times and early intervention:

**Child** example of a RED incident where the MASH team has intervened quickly to safeguard a child at risk.



**Adult** example of an AMBER incident where MASH safeguarding has been prompt with a multi-agency approach.



### **Domestic Abuse Daily Discussion**

Victim of domestic abuse attended the school of her children and became upset whilst attempting to explain to staff why her children would not be attending school as they needed to go to family in Kent. She eventually disclosed the extent of the domestic abuse she had suffered the previous night by her partner.

School staff reported the incident to the police and the lady was asked to provide a statement in order for the arrest to be made. She initially refused to engage with police through fear.

The incident was thresholded in MASH, the PPN was risk assessed as HIGH. The case was discussed at the Domestic Abuse daily strategy discussion with Children's Services, Health, Police and other agencies present via conference call facility. The meeting chair identified help and support, with Hub interaction and partner agency working.

A domestic abuse officer attended the home address of the victim with a social worker from Children's Services within an hour of the meeting. Staff had concerns that victim suffers from mental health / previous self-harm.

The lady had a police officer and PCSO at the property on arrival as the domestic abuse risk assessor had identified this female as extremely vulnerable and asked units to attend for Police watch to be implemented.

The lady explained that she suffers from multiple sclerosis but was not suffering from any form of mental health issues or low mood at this point and was clearly capable of understanding the concerns.

After an extensive conversation she agreed that she would now be willing to support a prosecution and also allowed her young daughter who witnessed the assault to be video interviewed.

Whilst the suspect was still in custody the daughter was supported by Social Services for Hub staff to conduct an interview. The domestic abuse officer re-attended the property a short time later with an Independent Domestic Violence advisor (IDVA) for immediate support and a mobile phone alarm was issued.

The victim agreed to leave her home address and accept refuge space with Women's aid and was later rehoused in the Carmarthen area.

Suspect was charged and remanded for the offences of assault against his partner.

He is a serial perpetrator that has an extensive history of previous domestic abuse with numerous partners.

The victim was advised that any new partners could be the subject of a Clare's Law application for future safeguarding.

### **Education**

#### **Case Study One**

- Information received raising concerns that Mother was going on holiday with partner to Iraq.
- Due to Education Coordinator knowing the process for applications for Term Time holidays to schools, Primary School was contacted querying if an application had been received? Mother had collected a form that day. Further discussion at the end of the day identified that the form had been returned and the location for the holiday was logged as Kazakhstan.
- This information led to a catalogue of events that prevented the children being taken to a concerning destination.

### **Case Study Two**

- Three Incidents in MASH. Child was discussed at Domestic Abuse Daily Discussion and level of concern was raised due to the number of incidents discussed within a short period of time. Education Services – SEET had previously been involved however the case was closed. After discussion it agreed that initially the case could be reopened to ascertain if further work re healthy relationships etc. could be undertaken.
- Further discussion with SEET service unfolded that the case would not be reopened as it did not meet the criteria due to the young person not being ready to access education, employment or training. Discussion ensued with Head of Service for Engagement and Participation as the young person was at a point where services had an opportunity to provide support / intervention. Whilst the young person had left full time school (Post 16) and housing / CS could provide support it was felt that Education could still have a role to play. Agreement was made for a referral to be submitted to YEPS to work on healthy relationships and impact of DV.
- Without the Education Coordinator Post being in situ this referral may not have occurred - knowledge of the YEPS Service and work they could do enabled no missed opportunity. No update on outcomes from the YEPS Service as yet.

### **Risky Behaviour - Child**

Concern regarding a 15 year old female Child becoming challenging towards parents, not adhering to rules and boundaries, and running away from home. Further concerns relating to use of Social Media and being in contact with males both peer age and older. Child started to go missing and was meeting these males by chance in the community, and accompanying them to their homes. There were also some occasions where Child went missing overnight.

Joint work took place in MASH between Children's Services, South Wales Police, Barnardo's worker, the Child's school, Miskin Project and with CAMHS involvement also.

MASH Barnardo's worker commenced direct work with Child in November 2015. Several sessions of direct work were undertaken, ending in January 2016. It was agreed that the CSE element of the work would be undertaken by Miskin Project. Regular contact and support was offered to Child's parents. Return home interviews were conducted for missing episodes. Regular Risk Taking Behaviour protocol meetings were held. Plan agreed with parents and Education to deal with the reporting of missing episodes. Plan was also put in place for Child to attend school on a reduced time table to reduce missing episodes from school.

#### **Outcome**

No missing episode since 01.12.15.

Child is due to return to school full time following February 2016 half term.

Ongoing concerns around attitude and relationship with parents- however this is being managed and Child is not running away from home now.

Child will continue to be supported by CAMHS, Children's Services and Education

## **OBJECTIVE THREE: Reduction of Repeat Referrals**

MASH contributes to the reduction in repeat referrals through providing good quality information sharing and intelligence to the social work case teams promptly via sharing of the Mhub report and inclusion of the relevant practitioners in strategy discussions. This includes recognition of both repeat victims and offenders so that monitoring can be carried out to reduce the risk of abuse and harm.

### **Children Services (RCT) Repeat Referrals Data below**

#### **Referrals between 01/04/2014 and 31/03/2015**

Number of referrals during the year that were re-referrals	622
Total number of referrals during the year	3102
The percentage of referrals that are re-referrals within 12 months	20.05%

#### **Referrals between 01/04/2015 and 31/03/2016**

Number of referrals during the year that were re-referrals	908
Total number of referrals during the year	3765
The percentage of referrals that are re-referrals within 12 months	24.12%

The above shows that for RCT Children Services there has been a 4% increase in referrals that are re-referrals within a 12 month period.

### **Children Services (Merthyr Tydfil) Repeat Referrals Data below**

#### **Referrals between 01/04/2014 and 31/03/2015**

Number of referrals during the year that were re-referrals	218
Total number of referrals during the year	825
The percentage of referrals that are re-referrals within 12 months	26.4%

#### **Referrals between 01/04/2015 and 31/03/2016**

Number of referrals during the year that were re-referrals	132
Total number of referrals during the year	802
The percentage of referrals that are re-referrals within 12 months	16.5%

The above shows that for MTC Children Services there has been a 10% decrease in referrals that are re-referrals within a 12 month period.

Year One of Cwm Taf MASH was the baselining year and it is therefore difficult to evidence an improvement in repeat referrals in this short time frame. Any trends will be identified from 2016/17 onwards to fully evaluate this.

### **Actions for 2016/17**

- The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children Board Quality Assurance and Standards Group is conducting an audit of cases where there are repeat referrals and cases where there has been a Section 47 fallout to initial conference.
- Work will take place to analyse repeat referral data via CTSB Quality and Assurance Groups.
- Repeat referrals data is currently not a performance indicator for Adults at Risk, however 38% of referrals for RCT Adults Social Services were repeat referrals that have been referred in the past 2 years; however for Merthyr Social Services this figure was much lower (19%). The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Adults Board Quality Assurance Group is conducting an audit of these cases to identify any learning from this.
- As individuals are created on the Mhub system, any future search of the name automatically shows the number of incidents that this person has been involved in. Prior to MASH this level of scrutiny for repeat referrals was not available on a multi-agency basis and it means that all MASH agencies now have access to a system that can “track” repeat individuals on the system.

## Section 3: Communication / Feedback

### **Introduction**

During the first year of MASH, communications have been strengthened between agencies and continue to be developed via the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board's learning and development sub group. MASH is promoted via the Safeguarding website and Safeguarding Week also.

### **Information Sharing**

- New referral forms have been developed alongside comprehensive guidance documents. This has improved the source information from the referrer. (New Adults Services, A1; Children Services, C1; and Police PPN forms and MARAC referrals forms). These have been disseminated widely, via the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Boards and are available on the CTSB website [www.cwmtafsafeguarding.org](http://www.cwmtafsafeguarding.org)
- Referrals are usually made electronically via secure email (GCSX, CJSM) thereby speeding up the referral process into MASH.
- A Cwm Taf MASH Information Sharing Guidance document has been created and approved by the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Boards and issued to all MASH staff, and formal information sharing protocols (WASPIs) have been developed which all MASH agencies have signed up to.

### **Training**

#### **MASH has improved the approach to multi-agency training in Year One:**

- Expansive training and awareness sessions were undertaken for professionals leading up to the Cwm Taf MASH go live date which included care homes and schools throughout the Cwm Taf region.
- Existing training packages have been updated and presentations/posters created for awareness/training sessions. Through CTSB and the training sub-group, MASH training embedded into all relevant safeguarding training packages.
- A comprehensive programme of Cwm Taf multi agency training is available for all agencies to access.

## **MASH Consultation Surveys**

In July 2015, individuals representing a range of partner agencies were invited to participate in a baseline consultation survey to assess understanding and perceptions of Cwm Taf MASH.

Agencies surveyed were:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
- Cwm Taf University Health Board
- National Probation Service
- Community Rehabilitation Company
- South Wales Police

### **Summary of feedback was as follows:**

- 56 respondents in total.
- Over 60% of respondents felt that information sharing is either very effective or effective currently between Agencies.
- 90% of respondents felt they understand the roles and responsibilities of other agencies, either well or very well.
- 87% of respondents felt that risks are currently managed well between agencies.

### **Comments included:**

- 53 respondents commented on positive views around the MASH, including prompt response times and how closer working links, shared knowledge and experience improves safeguarding practices.
- Several respondents commented on the volume of work being underestimated and that system and process problems were causing delays.
- 51 respondents commented on how they felt MASH would make a difference to Children and Adults at risk. The vast majority of these replies were positive.

A further partner survey took place in July 2016 where respondents were asked for their views one year on.

### **Summary of feedback was as follows:**

- 86 respondents in total
- 69% of respondents felt that information sharing is either very effective or

effective currently between Agencies

- 95% of respondents felt they understand the roles and responsibilities of other agencies, either well or very well
- 87% of respondents felt that risks are currently managed well between agencies.

#### **Comments included:**

- Better information sharing and risk management as a result of MASH although some respondents felt there needed to be more consistency.
- Agencies working together makes safeguarding more dynamic due to information sharing from number of agencies.
- None-MASH staff not always receiving feedback from MASH/slowness of information being reported back to initial referrer (other respondents reported the opposite experience however)
- Difficulties with Mhub system being “unreliable”
- Resource issues have had a negative impact on outcomes.
- Governance arrangements need to be improved.

#### **Conclusion**

The overall responses from both consultation surveys demonstrate that most respondents feel that MASH has made a positive difference to Children and Adult safeguarding. There is helpful and constructive feedback, particularly in the second survey, which will be addressed further in Year 2 in a “You said We did” format.

#### **Feedback from Stakeholders:**

MASH provides the opportunity for all partners, both statutory and non-statutory, to share information and to receive this enhanced information in a concise and overarching report. This qualitative feedback is invaluable for partners outside the MASH, enabling them to play their part in keeping adults at risk and children safe.

- The Cwm Taf MASH Education Coordinator has received very positive remarks from teachers at local schools regarding the improved sharing of information and timeliness of responses. These include:
  - Ynysboeth Primary School who have said about MASH: *“I think it’s great. Like you said we don’t often get the feedback...”*
  - And other schools who have praised the improved coordination, such as: Penygraig Juniors, Ferndale Community School, and Penrhiwceibr Primary: *“Debbie, Thanks for keeping me in the loop at School”.*

- Health colleagues outside of MASH have reported that strategy discussions are more timely and that there is improved feedback since the commencement of MASH.

## **High Profile Visitor Feedback**

The Cwm Taf MASH is unique in its structure in that it recognises and has the ability to address the cross cutting issues experienced by individuals and families. As a result, the MASH has received visitors from across the UK and has been recognised as good practice.

Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister For Wales

*“The new MASH will make a real difference in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults in the Cwm Taf region. A truly joined up approach, MASH will provide a valuable service to make sure those at risk get access to the help and support they need.”*

Deputy South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, Sophie Howe

*“...Practice Reviews across the country have repeatedly told us that failure to share information has been a key factor when things go wrong. The Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub is a major step towards addressing this. We hope that by bringing partners and professionals together we will be better placed to protect people in Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. I pay tribute to the strong leadership and determination from the local authorities and BCU Commander Chief Supt Sally Burke. The MASH has already been highlighted as best practice and this is a tribute to everyone involved.”*

Wendy Williams, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary.

*“As a result of the development of the MASH, agencies are able to hold strategy discussions on a daily basis and to implement actions to protect individuals and families who are most in need. I was impressed by the manner in which all officers dealt with what must be a harrowing area of policing. They demonstrated professionalism, with great sensitivity, patience and understanding”.*

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Wales):

*“I was impressed to hear what the MASH team has been able to achieve through partnership and collaboration between agencies, setting a best practice standard for others”.*

In addition to the above, the following political figures have also visited Cwm Taf MASH. All have praised the MASH for setting good safeguarding practice:

Permanent Secretary at the Home Office;  
Shadow Home Secretary;  
Member of Parliament for Pontypridd;  
Assembly Member for Pontypridd

## **Organisation Visits**

Various police forces/local authorities from Wales and England have also visited Cwm Taf MASH as they are looking to establish hubs also. These have included:

- Cardiff Local Authority/South Wales Police
- Bridgend and Swansea local authorities
- Gwent Police with local authorities
- West Mercia Police and Herefordshire / Worcestershire Councils
- Dorset Police
- London Metropolitan Police Force

Cwm Taf MASH has also been recommended as a “good practice” MASH on the Police On-line knowledge area (POLKA College of Policing).

## **South Wales Police Awards**

In October 2015 Cwm Taf MASH was won two annual SWP awards in the following categories:

- Innovation Award (for Mhub design and development)
- Police and Crime Commissioner Partnership Award

## Section 4: Cwm Taf MASH Costs/Benefits

### Baseline Staffing Costs for MASH Year One

The following shows staffing costs for each agency within MASH:

Agency	Approximate Staffing Costs including on-costs where applicable	FTEs
RCT Children	£300,000	1 x Team Manager, 2 x Senior Practitioners, 4 x Assessors, 2 x Admin
RCT Adults	£262,000	50% Safeguarding Manager, 4 x Safeguarding Officers, 1 x Safeguarding Liaison Officer
Merthyr Children	£121,022	30% FTE Manager 1 x Senior Practitioner, 1 x Support Worker, 1 x Admin
Merthyr Adults	£119,233	30% Safeguarding Manager; 2 x Adult Safeguarding Officers
Education Coordinator (30 hours)	£35,500	1 post
MARAC Coordinator and MARAC Coordinator Assistant	£40,000	1.3 post
South Wales Police	£650,000	1 x Detective Inspector, 2 x Detective Sergeants, 12 x Police Officers, 2 x Risk Assessors
MASH Coordinator	£28,000	1 post
Cwm Taf University Health Board	£84,000	2 x Senior Nurse
National Probation Service	£35,000	1 post

Community Rehabilitation Company	£35,000	1 post
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,709,755</b>	

**Narrative:**

- All of the costs existed previously other than the new MASH Coordinator post and MARAC Coordinator Assistant. All other posts were re-aligned on the introduction of MASH and were not of any additional cost to each agency.
- Premises/accommodation costs in Year One were provided for by South Wales Police.

**Estimated Savings as a result of Cwm Taf MASH**

Below is a demonstration of estimated cost savings due to the reduction of strategy meetings (inclusive of both Child Protection and Adults at Risk data across the Cwm Taf area) since the implementation of Cwm Taf MASH in May 2015.



**Narrative: Estimated cost saving £45,094.**

This demonstrates **estimated** savings that are based on the following calculation with certain assumptions made, i.e.

- 288 Strategy Meetings (CP and AAR) between May 2015 and March 2016

- Hourly rates of pay
- Average Meeting Time Commitment (including travel and preparation) in hours
- Average distance Travelled to and from meetings in miles
- Mileage allowance (Essential User 1200 cc and over)
- Average Monthly Discussions prior to MHUB (Jan 14 - Apr 15) CP
- Average Monthly Discussions prior to MHUB (Jan 14 - Apr 15) AAR
- Average Monthly Meetings prior to MHUB (Jan 14 - Apr 15) CP
- Average Monthly Meetings prior to MHUB (Jan 14 - Apr 15) AAR

The calculation does not include any 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisation attendance or higher paid Health staff attendance via conference calling (e.g. doctors/consultants) so potentially actual savings will be higher.

Child Protection strategy meetings have reduced however Adults at Risk meetings have not decreased to date. However Adults Social Services have indicated that they will be target setting to reduce the number of strategy meetings in 2016/17.

### **Mhub Cost Benefits**

- As Mhub is a bespoke system, training for new users is supplied and more cost effective than externally supplied training.
- Initial costs of Mhub were associated with the procurement of the Mhub system and annual service and maintenance contract. It is expected that the annual maintenance/service agreement costs will reduce/be shared over time as further areas of South Wales Police and local authorities adopt the Mhub system (for example, Cardiff MASH are due to procure the system in 2016).
- In addition, by supporting Saadian to develop the product to other areas, Cwm Taf MASH will automatically benefit from other improvements. For example, the police force in Ottawa, Canada have bought the product, and we will benefit from their improvements.

### **Unintended Benefits**

In addition to the benefits already stated above, there are some notable “unintended” benefits from the development of Cwm Taf MASH, mainly:

- Due to the cross cutting issues discussed in strategy discussions, all professionals in the MASH have become more aware of their duty to report concerns from other areas i.e. Adult Services bringing an issue to the attention of Children’s Services.

- The MASH has raised the awareness of safeguarding to all agencies and has strengthened the understanding of roles/culture of other organisations.
- The introduction of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 – MASH has supported the introduction of the act by streamlining Information, Advice and Assistance, supporting early intervention and prevention.
- CSE data required by Welsh Government – MASH was the main contributor for this pilot database.

## Section 5: Recommendations / Next Steps

At the end of Year 1, Cwm Taf MASH partners have evaluated the progress of the MASH and have subsequently identified the key priorities for improvement and development for Year 2.

Year Two of MASH will focus on implementing these developments to further enhance the integrated approach to safeguarding. This will include:

- Commitment to continuously strive to build upon and improve our partnership delivery for the benefits of vulnerable people within the communities of Cwm Taf;
- Strengthening the governance structure and decision-making processes so that there is a clearer direction for the MASH going forward;
- Improvements to the MASH infrastructure to support the effective management and sustainability of accommodation, resources and systems;
- Establishing a performance and quality framework to demonstrate clear and positive outcomes for children, young people and adults at risk;
- Enhancing the operational delivery of the MASH, including information-sharing, safeguarding processes, and consistent thresholds for decision-making;
- Establishing the 'MASH Team' through a common vision, supported by effective internal and external communications and staff training and awareness-raising.

### Key Contact Details:

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