



## **Important reminder about the use of the Safeguarding Hub**

### ***The right help for the right child at the right time....***

#### **When and why to contact the HUB**

It is absolutely vital that we all work hard to ensure children receive the right support at the right time. A referral to the Safeguarding Hub for very low level needs or those that require support at an Early Help level is unnecessary and will cause a delay in the child's Early Help response being initiated. Not only is it unnecessary, but causes delay and backlog in the Hub. This in turn could mean, in some cases, an urgent child protection response is delayed.

It is essential that, unless a referral is related to an urgent matter of child protection, professionals working with children should utilise the expertise of their organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead<sup>1</sup>, as well as referring to the Threshold document, and, additional supporting tools (e.g. Graded Care profile, CSE and DA screening tools etc). This will then help determine if a referral to the Safeguarding Hub is required, or if the child can be supported through other ways such as Early Help.

If the Child's needs can be met at an Early Help level and/or you need support and advice about Early Help, please complete an Early Help Assessment or speak to your local Early Help Officer for support. All details can be found on the [LSCB's website](#).

#### **How to contact the Hub**

If it is believed that a child is in need of safeguarding support beyond Early Help, the concerns should be submitted to the Hub on a Single Contact Form (or STRATA), with consent of the parent. The form has been much improved since January this year, and can be easily access on the [LSCB website](#).

It is encouraging that we have seen the rate of referrals coming in via Single Contact Form or Strata increase slightly from 2016 to 2017, however in the last 6 months, there has still been less than 40% of referrals submitted via this route

Phoning into the Hub for non-urgent cases simply creates a backlog and not only can cause a delay for urgent referrals to be responded to i.e. those children in need of immediate protection, but, the phone call will still result in the request to submit the concerns on the Single Contact Form/ STRATA.

It is important to note also that due to the volume of calls being received about non urgent cases, only urgent phone referrals will be responded to from 4.30pm Mon-Thursday and 4p.m on Friday, with callers for non-urgent matters being required to call back the next working day. This will ensure that all calls that day can be dealt with in the required timescales and ensure all urgent matters are responded to a quickly as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Your Designated Safeguarding Lead, should still be consulted with for urgent referrals unless they are not available

#### ***DID YOU KNOW.....***

***Over the last 6 months, the rate of work coming into the Safeguarding Hub has continued to rise, but not with a corresponding rise in children and young people whose needs meet the threshold for Social Work.***

***For example, we have seen 6994 referrals to the Hub from 1 January 2017 to 31 May 2017: an increase of 7% (or 470 children) since the same period in 2016.***

***This has not seen a corresponding increase in referrals that come to the Hub that are in need of a Social Work service, but in fact we have seen a decrease. In the January to May period last year, 65% of the work coming to the HUB did not meet the threshold for Social Care or required the hub to undertake a multi-agency assessment to establish the next steps. This year that has risen to 76%.***



### **Professional Consultation Calls**

It is fully recognised that professionals can and will struggle to determine the best course of action for some children, we know it is not an exact science. As such of course, we want to ensure we can offer support by way of professional consultations. This process is being trialled at present. However these should only be requested once a discussion has taken place with your Designated Safeguarding Lead, and the thresholds document has been considered. If you are still unsure, please do ring for advice. We will take a scenario from you about the concerns (it is important at that stage we do not go into the individual child's details as this would be a formal referral and could cause unnecessary delay by creating a full referral, when the advice may well be that the risks and needs presented can be addressed via Early Help or single agency response). The outcome of your call will be one of the following:

- The scenario is clearly an urgent matter requiring transfer the case to Business support team who will action it accordingly to be progressed urgently through the Hub
- The scenario is clearly an appropriate matter to be referred to the hub, but not urgent and thus the caller will be advised to submit a Single Contact form/STRATA referral
- If it becomes apparent the scenario is at an Early Help level, advice will be given to the caller that they should contact their area Early Help Officer for ongoing support to take the matter forward.

**Is your safeguarding training up to date? Cumbria LSCB offers an extensive free training programme to providers of children and young people's services. For the full programme click [here](#)**