

# London Borough of Sutton Children's First Contact Service Bite Size Briefing For Professionals

## What is the Children's First Contact Service?

The Children's First Contact Service (CFCS) draws together multiple referral routes into a simple single referral and assessment pathway to access services in the London Borough of Sutton. This replaces the existing multiple entry points into children's social care reducing any potential confusion, duplication or delay in accessing support. The Children's First Contact Service will be the new referral route for:

- Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - Referral Form
- Early Help Request
- Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) submission and feedback
- Children with Disabilities - Access point referral
- Parenting Plus Referral

These referrals will now be via one referral form - the [Children's First Contact Service Referral Form](#).

All referrals will be received directly by the CFCS Team. The new team consists of Children's Social Care specialists from the MASH, Early Help, Parenting Support and Children with Disabilities teams, they will be the first point of contact for support and services for families within Sutton.

The team will apply a consistent approach to assess and triage needs within the following thresholds:

- Tier 1: Universal (blue)
- Tier 2: Early Help / Early Support (green)
- Tier 3: Complex Multiple Needs (amber)
- Tier 4: Children in Acute Need (red)

For further information on Thresholds please refer to the [LSCP MULTI-AGENCY THRESHOLD GUIDANCE](#)

## **What is Children's Social Care?**

Children's Social Care are responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children through accurate identification of need and swift and easy access to the support and services that families need. This is done through effective and robust multi-agency working arrangements with Schools, the NHS, Police and other partners.

A key focus for Children's Social Care is to give support to families to empower them to achieve sustained positive outcomes, improving the function of the family and reduce the need for statutory interventions.

## **When is a CFCS Referral appropriate?**

When completing a referral you will be asked to rate how concerned you about the child from a rating of 1 – 10 with 1 (red) being seriously worried and 10 (blue) having no concerns.

Seriously worried: 1 (red), 2 (red), 3 (amber), 4 (amber)

Mildly worried: 5 (green), 6 (green), 7 (green), 8 (green)

No concerns: 9 (blue), 10 (blue)

In order to understand if the CFCS referral form is the most suitable action and how to rate your concern please refer to the LSCP (LSBC) Threshold document, as well as considering the services described below:

### **Level of Concern: Response Time: 2 hours, 24 hours & 72 hours (dependant on level of risk)**

MASH - The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a co-located arrangement of agencies integrated into multi-agency team. They share information appropriately and securely on children or young people in order to take timely and appropriate actions to safeguard children and young people. The team also provides information and advice across a range of child and family services.

RAS - The Referral and Assessment Service (RAS) team are made up of front line Social Workers who undertake Child and Family Assessments (CFA). They work with families who may need extra support to make sure they can meet their children's needs.

Locality Teams - Social care locality teams work with children and their families whose needs are assessed to be at complex tier 2 to tier 4 of the LSCP Threshold Document. Working within

early help and statutory frameworks the service aims to assess, intervene and reduce risk to children and young people.

### **Level of Concern: Response Time: 3 working days**

Targeted Early Help - Early Help services - when it is viewed without intervention the child will come to or return to the attention of social care. Interventions include Restorative Family Coaches, Children's Centres, Early Help Integrated Youth Services, Early Help Locality Team Support, Family Group Conferences and Parenting Plus Programmes (for Primary, Secondary and parents of children with ASD or ADHD).

EHAT - Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) submission and feedback. EHAT's are an essential tool for assessing need and professionals working with families are often best placed to undertake these when an issue first arises.

### **Level of Concern: Response Time: No response required**

Information and Advice - For professionals and families to provide them with the best chances to achieve their best outcomes in life. This includes the Local offer, LBS Website and Family Information Directory.

## **What happens after a CFCS Referral form is submitted?**

Once the referral form has been received, the initial step will be to understand if we are aware of the child and family. All requirements and information related to the case will be considered and an action plan will be agreed by the CFCS.

For more information about the CFCS or to discuss a case, please contact the CFCS team by telephone on 020 8770 6001 or email [childrensfirstcontactservice@sutton.gov.uk](mailto:childrensfirstcontactservice@sutton.gov.uk). You can also find more information about the [CFCS online](#).