

Appendix A

Camden Bereaved Families Framework

Introduction

Some of our communities and young people across the borough have experienced traumatic, violent events in recent years. In Camden the overall crime rates continue to fall. This does not diminish the significant impact of acts of violence on the people surrounding the victims or victim's families.

People experiencing bereavement and trauma because of violent events may face a wide range of challenges in addition to the direct pain and suffering that results from the tragic loss of their loved one – for example:

- Feelings of being unsafe because of a threat of retaliation/ further acts of violence
- Fears about the safety of other children/siblings or friends of the victim
- Greater fear of crime within the wider community
- Negative impact on mental health
- Financial worries
- Worries about the security of housing and other services

This paper sets out a procedural framework for officers and operational partners when such events take place in Camden and to ensure families and communities remain supported and protected in the most challenging of circumstances.

Our Offer

- We will ensure the family has a small, dedicated team who will work closely with them to coordinate support, maintain relationships, and to ensure that their needs are met
- We will listen to the needs of families and the wider network and ensure services speak with one voice.
- We will work flexibly with families, listen to their needs, and ensure that solutions are tailored to their needs

Principles

The following principles for all services and stakeholders will be:

- Safety of young people, families and communities is paramount
- Safeguarding mental health is as important as safeguarding physical well-being
- Financial worries for immediate family should be treated seriously and dealt with promptly where possible
- Actions to support bereavement should help build confidence in communities and alleviate fears of crime
- All people/ families should be treated as individuals with different cultural/ personal/ emotional needs. There will be no 'one size fits all' approach to supporting families
- Officers will be empowered to do things that could usually be very difficult and exceptional. This will require support in removing blockages, bypassing usual procedures, making decisions and acting quickly to deliver the outcome the family needs.

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The Framework (High level summary)

Actions within the first 24 hours:

- Appointment of a dedicated worker to coordinate support to the family
- Comprehensive check of relevant databases e.g. MOSAIC, Northgate
- “Gold” meeting (led by the Police)
- Identify Executive Director, Director sponsored start up meeting with Head(s) of Service
- Head of Service and officer team meeting, commence action log
- Reassurance to the community, and addressing any issues with the site/ coordination with Police over removal of cordon and any resulting community impact

Actions within the first 48 hours:

- Deploy a Trauma crisis team – trained community volunteers who can help immediately

Actions within the first week:

- Ensure the family has access to the resources they need – e.g. transport for getting to and from appointments, money for funeral/ remembrance, advice on changes to benefits and support if applicable, emergency temporary rehousing if required
- Schedule Director weekly check in briefings

Actions within the first month:

- Ensure trauma informed practice has been deployed in ongoing family support

Actions at 3 months:

- Speak to the family about restorative justice

Longer term actions and considerations:

- In the longer term, statutory services may close their involvement if families do not wish to be involved. In this situation, Heads of Services will inform each other to ensure there remains a lead service who continues to understand the picture of need.
- Rehousing can take a long time in these cases, so we need to ensure we continue to understand the families requirements (i.e. they may not want to move in the first few months after the incident but later down the line they may prefer to)

A more detailed version of the framework with supporting questions to inform the support activities at each stage is attached at figure 2.

Every circumstance of bereavement will be unique therefore this framework is intended to be an enabling, cutting across organisational boundaries and encouraging teams to work together to support families at their most vulnerable time.

We recognise the need for a sensitive, human approach and flexibility when working with families to ensure they can stay safe following a bereavement. For example, families requiring relocation might not make this decision immediately, and siblings may not be considered at risk until later in their life which makes a longer-term approach vital in ensure people get the support they need.

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Internal communications/ joining up the work

This framework requires services to work together in a coordinated way whilst providing support for bereaved families. This is essential to ensure that we are not delivering mixed messages or asking families to deal separately with multiple agencies. The framework recognises the importance of ensuring front-line colleagues have the support they need and that senior colleagues are assured that relevant action is undertaken and their role is to remove barriers to making progress if necessary. Finally, executive leaders and politicians should be reassured that the most vulnerable people in our community are being fully supported at this time.

Regular updates on the work related to bereaved families will be reported to the nominated Executive Director and Director who has responsibility for overview of the family's circumstances. At relevant points the Chief Executive will also be kept updated and any significant issues flagged at the earliest opportunity. These updates will be shared, where appropriate, with relevant officers who are liaising with the family/community on a regular basis.

Services involved

The services involved in implementing the bereavement framework need to be flexible and responsive to the individual circumstances arising from a violent incident. The response would need to involve a flexible multi-agency team expected to be made up of officers from the following teams:

- Transformation Team / complex families/ family support
- Community Safety
- Schools
- Early years
- MASH
- Housing Needs / Landlord Services (*whilst also being mindful that not all families will be tenants*)
- Community outreach workers
- Police
- Financial advice services
- Registrars
- CAMHS/ mental health
- Place based services
- Community safety
- Communications/ media team

It is recommended that services function with a lead individual liaising with the family and the range of services 'wrapping around' them to provide supportive and effective help (team around the family with one established lead).

The individual identified to lead the support to the family will play a key role in building trust. This will be especially important if they have experienced negative interactions with the police/services previously. The officer will not be expected to address all of the families concerns (e.g. safeguarding, housing and education etc) but will act as a single point of contact (SPOC) into services for the family, acknowledging that in some instances it may not be appropriate to provide the same level of support in the case of an adult murder compared to a young person's murder, for example in the case of liaising with the police.

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The officer will ensure there is a bespoke approach to the family, rooted in what their needs are at any given time rather than using a blanket approach. They will need to be identified at the earliest opportunity (during the Head of Service meeting held during the first working week after the incident). This will provide the family with early contact and be reassurance through a single point of contact.

Each family will be facing different circumstances and find different elements of their tragic circumstances difficult. In order to support the family according to their needs, it is important that each service listens and liaises with the lead worker so they can take an approach that is most supportive to the needs of the family. To help services develop this approach a number of questions for services to ask have been developed:

Figure 1 – Questions/ challenges for services

Transformation team/ complex families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What agencies need to be involved? Does the family know the role of everyone supporting them? • Has a dedicated worker been assigned to support the family?
MASH ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is information being shared in a secure way to help safeguard any vulnerable young people? • Was the victim known to any services and can lessons be learnt from the incident? • If the victim is not known what extra support is required?
Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information can be shared with the community to help them feel safe? • How can people be encouraged to come forward and feel safe in doing so? • Can Police presence on the street be increased to reassure the community? • Are siblings and friends of the victim at any further risks? • Are risks of retaliation being managed? • Are we aware of previous interactions between the family and the police? This will help us better understand the history/relationship they will have with the police
Housing Needs / landlord services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the family safe in their home? Might retaliation attacks be an issue? • Does the family <i>feel</i> safe in their own home? • If Agree any discussion or action on rents or service charges outstanding to the council will be paused at this time A tailored approach outside of normal procedures may be required
Registrars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the family need support registering the death/ liaising with coroners services? • Is a speedy funeral preferred for religious reasons?
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do siblings/ classmates need access to counselling, trauma and support services? • What steps are needed to keep siblings and classmates in school at this time? • How can we reassure young people that their attendance at school is safe?

¹ Process for MASH referral attached at Appendix A

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could journeys to and from school provoke feelings of being unsafe?
Early years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do parents/ carers need support or respite in looking after younger children at this time?
Community outreach workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do family members/ witnesses need given access to counselling/ trauma support? • Does the community know how to contact victim support services or access further information? • Is there misinformation being shared amongst the community? How do we tackle this? • Can we draw on community leaders to act as a single point of truth in terms of the incident? • Based on community feeling, and the family wishes is any further reassurance is needed? <i>(in the past this has taken the form of a large community meeting or a drop-in)</i>
Financial advice services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the family know how to access financial support in case their ability to work has been affected? • Need to identify if there are possible changes to entitlement to benefits following the loss of the family member .Assessment needed and plan for sensitive handling of this issue .Need to ensure family do not become subject to over payments by benefit agencies that lead to further problems for the family • Can the family access financial support (if needed) for funeral costs?
CAMHS/ mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do immediate family and friends need fast-track access to counselling and trauma services? • Do family and friends need support navigating the system?
Place based services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a memorial been set up? Are there any risks to the community from this? • Has an environmental visual audit taken place recently to identify areas that may feel unsafe? • What does the site look like, and is there any improvements or cleaning that needs to happen as soon as possible (coordinated with the removal of any Police cordon)
Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can patrols be increased to help the community feel secure? • Are there any safety concerns related to memorials?
Communications/ media team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we need to speak to the press to ensure messages are accurate and reassure local residents • Does the leader/ portfolio holder/ MP wish to make a statement? • Do the family need support dealing with intrusive media enquiries? <i>(suggested guidance attached at Appendix B)</i>
VCS/Community organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the family already have a link in with the VCS/community organisation? • Would the family prefer to liaise with the VCS connection rather than the council? • Have we checked in with ward members and community leaders to encouraged them to continue to feedback any impact on the community?

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Working with the Police and the GOLD process:

- In the event of a murder, the Police will inform the Council at the earliest opportunity. It is expected this will be in the form of a phone call, in order that senior stakeholders (via the Director of Resilience or the Head of Community Safety) and community members can be informed.
- The Emergency Duty arrangements sit outside of critical incidents, but the Duty Director of Resilience and Duty/Deputy EPOs are available for early communications if the Director of Resilience or Head of Community Safety can't be reached.
- The Police will usually have appointed a Family Liaison Officer (FLO), and communication with the family will be channelled through the FLO to reduce the risk of overwhelming the family.
- At the initial stage, Community Safety will take the coordinating lead on behalf of the Council, liaising with Youth Services, Housing and other services as appropriate.
- Network check on the family will be done by services, to gain a better understanding of our current relationship with the victim and their family.
- Heads of Services will meet within the first working day to review the situation. This might include: Community Safety, Youth Services, Early Help, Neighbourhood Housing, Housing Allocations, and Social Services.
- The Head of Service (HoS) meeting will agree what actions need to be taken and which service will take the lead coordinating role in approaching and supporting the family on behalf of the Council. This might include risk assessments, offers of temporary accommodation
- An alternative to the HoS meeting may be a strategy meeting, usually led by Social Services. In this case, the convener of the meeting will ensure that Housing and Community Safety are included in the invitation and HoS are kept abreast of agreed actions to ensure the lead role is clearly allocated.
- Police will liaise with Community Safety to ensure early communications with residents and anything related to the site, including coordinated removal or police cordons.

Working with the Community and reassurance:

- Community leaders (VCS organisations, ward members etc) will be informed by the Council at the earliest opportunity.
- Community Presence Officers will visit the area over the week to provide ongoing assurance.
- Community Partnerships team will be in contact with local VCS and faith groups.
- Ward members and community leaders are encouraged to continue to feedback any impact on the community.
- Consideration will be given to community feeling, and the family's wishes in deciding whether any further reassurance is needed. In the past this has taken the form of large meetings or drop-ins for residents to meet the police and council services.

Figure 2 below outlines the steps/actions of the protocol and key questions that could be asked by officer supporting the family at certain points following the incident. Because each circumstance will be unique, there are fewer defined actions than key questions as we would expect services to develop a bespoke approach for each family's different circumstance.

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A sample timeline for services supporting families facing bereavement to consider has also been developed below at Figure 3. This is the type of timeline that could be developed following an incident and with this protocol being utilised.

Other resources

The Mayor of London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) has recently produced a '[Serious Violence Incident Checklist](#)' that authorities and other agencies can use to coordinate their responses following a violent event. The checklist outlines practical measures that can be deployed by multiple agencies to work together to provide a cohesive, united front within the community following a traumatic event.

Camden has good relationships with housing counterparts across London so that issues of rehousing out of borough can be addressed. There are already strong relationships across agencies working together following this type of incident. We will use the Violent Reduction Unit's (VRU) checklist in our engagement with partners and other organisations for further discussion. This will enable ongoing review and learning from our response to events that have such a significant impact on our communities. It is proposed that the review is overseen by Camden Community Safety Partnership Board.

The Bereavement Framework along with the VRU's checklist will provide an outline of practical measures to support families who experience violent events; reduce the risks of further incidents; break the cyclical impact of violence on families and; keep the family, associates and wider community surrounding the victim safe.

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Figure 2. Framework and key questions

First 24 hours

Action to Take	Questions to ask
Appoint a dedicated worker to coordinate support to the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What professionals will be needed to work together to support the family (including those already working with the family)? • What action needs to be taken to protect siblings and associates of the victim? Do we need to consider emergency temporary accommodation or extra security for their current house? • What steps need to be taken within the community to help residents living near where the incident took place feel safer? • Do the family know that re-housing options may be available to them? • Is the school of the victim, and the schools attended by siblings and associates of the victim aware of the situation? • Is a speedy funeral preferred for religious/ cultural reasons? • Is the family aware of bereavement/ support/ counselling services available to them?
Comprehensive check of relevant databases e.g. MOSAIC, Northgate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the history of our involvement with the victim/their family?
"Gold" meeting (<i>led by the Police</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the shared plan of action between all agencies present?
Head of Service meeting (<i>will happen within first working day</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What actions need to be taken and which service will take the lead coordinating role in approaching and supporting the family on behalf of the Council? This might include: risk assessments, offers of temporary accommodation
Reassurance to the community, and addressing any issues with the site/ coordination with Police over removal of cordon and any resulting community impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the community feedback and feeling, and who is best placed to contact them? • What does the site look like, and how might this impact local residents? • How long is any Police cordon likely to be in place, and are they coordinating contact with the Council out of hours to ensure a clean of the area is organised as soon and as tactfully possible?

First 48 hours

Action to Take	Questions to ask
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<p>Deploy a Trauma crisis team – trained community volunteers who can help immediately</p> <p>Did we confirm we have this haven't heard of it being used ?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which agencies have made contact to support the family? Is everyone working together in a cohesive way that makes sense to bereaved family members? • Are support worker (s) aware of how the family, associates and wider community may recognise/experience/celebrate a death? • How safe does the community feel? Are increased patrols sufficient? What other steps can be taken (if needed) to make communities feel safer following an event.
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First week

Action to Take	Questions to ask
<p>Ensure the family has access to the resources they need – e.g. transport for getting to and from appointments, money for funeral/ remembrance, helping family travel to memorial events, advice on changes to benefits and support if applicable, emergency temporary rehousing if required (ascertained at the earliest opportunity)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the wider community need help (e.g. training and support) afterwards – not just the school, but in community spaces “community healing”? • Look at mental health resources and understand the pressures for the wider community – is there a wider network of people who need access to resources – e.g. friends and associates of the victim, witnesses etc.? • How do we deal with the family of the perpetrator if they are also a young person/ victim of criminal exploitation? What about their safety? The impact on other children in their family? • Is an environmental visual audit appropriate (EVA) appropriate to identify spaces in the community that might not feel safe?

First month

Action to Take	Questions to ask
<p>Ensure trauma informed practice has been deployed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any anniversaries/ birthdays that agencies need to be mindful of? • Are memorials causing any issues? Are we working with the family to get their views on managing a community memorial?

Three months

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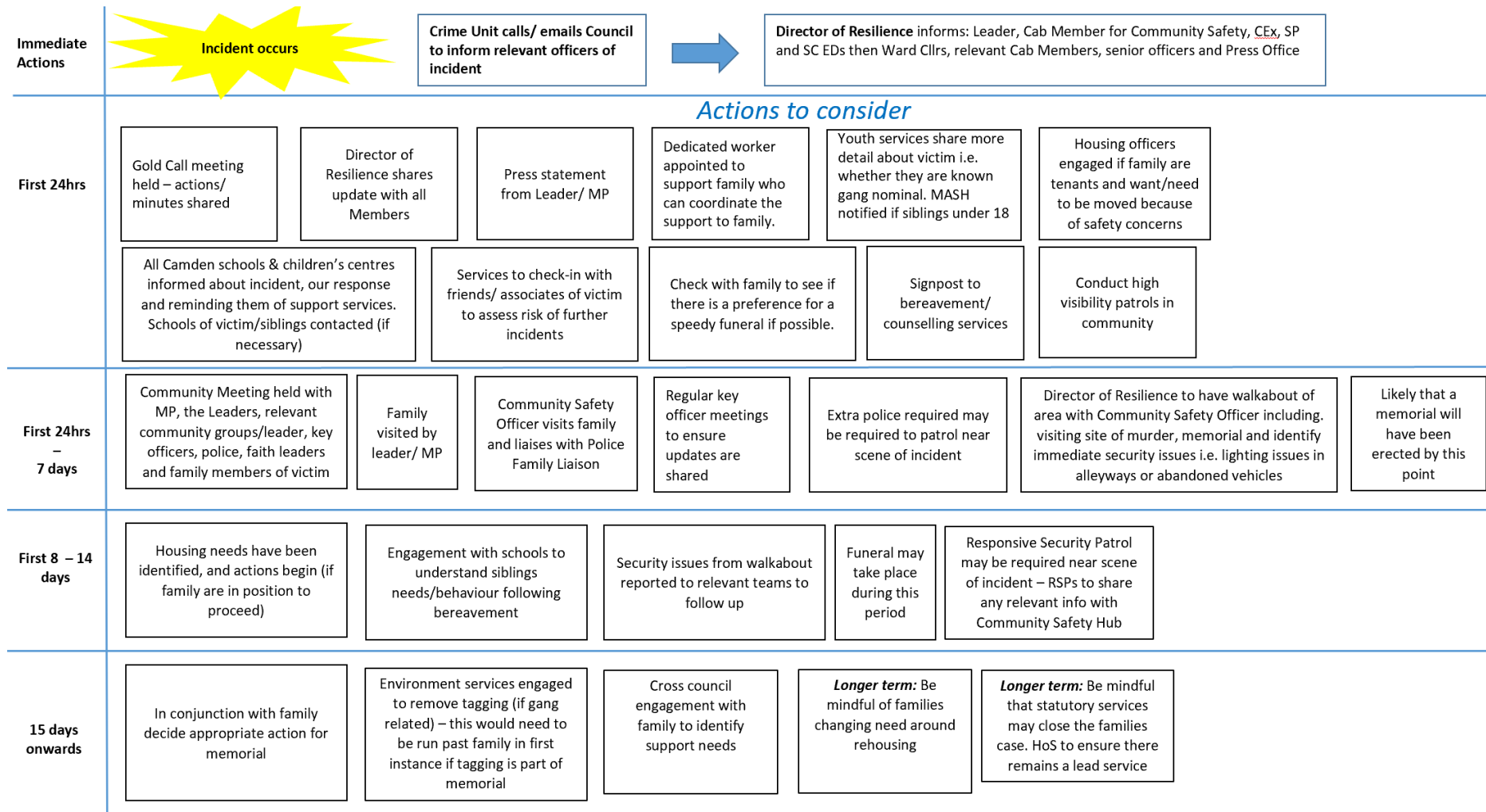
Action to Take	Questions to ask
Speak to the family about restorative justice – do the family understand what is involved? Do they want this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been the longer term impact of the traumatic event on the community? Is any ongoing support needed? • Is it feasible for a longer-term memorial in place of a temporary one? • Do young people have a safe space to go to talk about the incident?
Discuss if any concerns re housing if appropriate and required (if not already discussed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the family require a permanent relocation? • Where would they feel safe moving to? Would they be happy to move out of borough if a suitable property became available?

Longer Term

Issues to be aware of
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term, statutory services may close their involvement if families do not wish to be involved. In this situation, Heads of Services will inform each other to ensure there remains a lead service who continues to understand the picture of need. • Rehousing can take a long time in these cases, so we need to ensure we continue to understand the families requirements (i.e. they may not want to move in the first few months after the incident but later down the line they may prefer to)

Figure 3 – Sample Timeline

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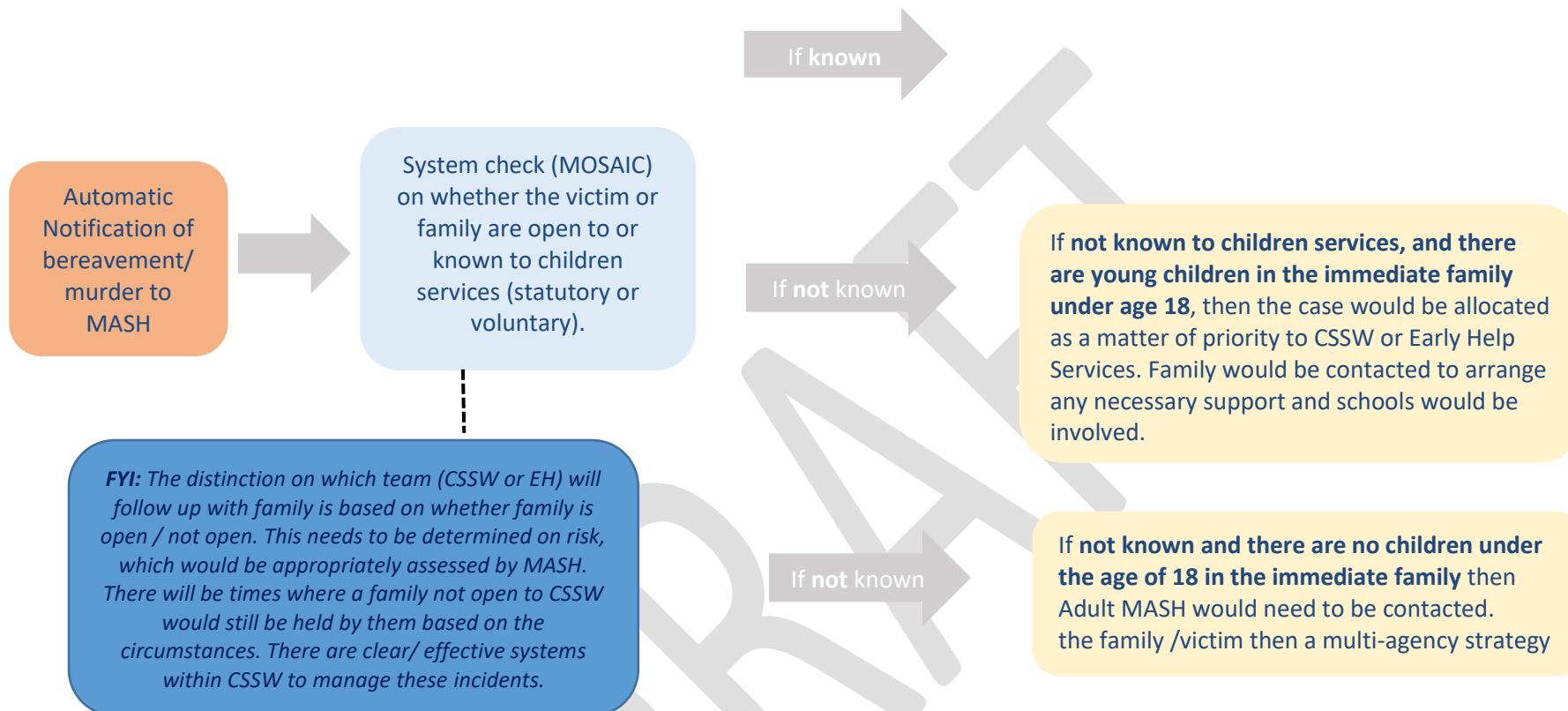


Appendix A – Process for MASH Referral

If **open or known** and a network of professionals are already engaged with the family /victim then a multi-agency strategy meeting of those professionals called to be chaired by Children Safeguarding and Social Work (CSSW). Purpose of the meeting is to co-ordinate support to the family.

In addition, if the victim is under the age of 18 a

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APPENDIX B - Support for bereaved families – media support

A death of a young person has the potential to be of interest to journalists. This means that the family or friends of the young person may well have journalists knock at their door or make phone calls in the days following the death asking for an interview or comment to include in their news report on the death. To help families manage media relations, communications advice and support will be offered by the council's team.

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This is a normal thing to experience but can be unsettling in the circumstances. It is up to you to decide if you want to give an interview or comment and it will always be your choice to accept or reject a request for comment.

A journalist will often still be able to run a story on the person who has died without you commenting, by basing their story on information put in the public domain by the police and through including the quotes of other people prepared to comment.

Here are some further key considerations in these circumstances:

- Accepting or declining an interview is a decision that deserves careful thought. Do not be afraid to take some time to consider the request, collect your thoughts, compose yourself and seek advice from other members of your family, friends, or support workers. You do not have to give an interview on the spot and it is perfectly acceptable to take the journalist's contact details and say that you will contact them if you wish to give a comment or interview. Remember a journalist's deadline is their concern and not yours.
- Providing a comment to one newspaper/ broadcaster may lead to further requests for comment from other newspapers/ broadcasters once it has been published. Consider whether you are prepared to receive this further media attention. Once you have given a comment and it has been published, it is unlikely that you will be able to stop other media outlets repeating your comments in their story.
- Remember that anything you tell a journalist could end up in the public domain and remain so for a long time on online news sites, by which time present contexts and societal attitudes may have changed.
- In some cases, there may be an ongoing police investigation into the death. Journalists are trained in media law and follow rules designed to stop them publishing information which could influence an inquiry or jury in court. However, it is worth bearing in mind the status of an investigation if you are giving an interview in these circumstances.
- You should note that anything you put into the public domain through social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can often be accessed and reported on by journalists.
- It's best to be polite but firm with journalists if you decline their request for a comment/ interview.
- In the unlikely event that you feel a journalist is genuinely harassing you, report the matter to the police by calling 111. **TO BE DEVELOPED (Media and External Relations team note) – We are considering including some further support in terms of signposting to advocacy organisations – eg Citizens Advice -and some information on the press complaints process.**