



Children's Prevention, Family Help and Safeguarding

Guidance for stepping up families

1 Purpose of guidelines

Some families held by Early Help Services may need a higher level of intervention because of an increase in concerns for the child's safety and welfare and may need to be stepped up to Children's Safeguarding and Social Work (CSSW) for a statutory social work service.

These guidelines set out what actions should be taken by Early Help managers and MASH managers in order to step up families in a timely and efficient manner.

2 Criteria for stepping up families

Families should only be stepped up where there are new safeguarding concerns or evidence that the child's needs meet the threshold for a service from CSSW.

Should family workers or Early Help Lead Professionals have new concerns for children they are working with, they should discuss these concerns with their Early Help manager who should provide direction and decide whether or not to escalate the family. **The MASH should only be contacted directly by workers where there is an immediate risk of harm.**

When considering a higher level of intervention (ie. Step up to CSSW), Early Help managers should consider the following factors:

- Is the child/young person now at risk of significant harm due to abuse or neglect?
- Are the child's needs being met by Early Help Services and, if not, what is the impact of this on the child now and/or what would the impact be for the child in the future?
- To what extent is the family engaging effectively in the Early Help plan?
- Does the situation need a child and family assessment by a qualified social worker?
- In what timescale does change need to happen for the child?
- What are the consequences for this child if the situation does not change?
- Why can the child's needs not be met under the current level of Early Help support?
- Has a discussion taken place (when appropriate) with the family about stepping up?

If families are to be stepped up due to lack of engagement by the family with Early Help services, it must be demonstrated that the child's needs are such that they meet the threshold for a CSSW service and that all reasonable attempts have been made by Early Help services to engage the family and seek agreement for

intervention. Early Help workers can get further guidance on strategies for engaging families from the CSCP.

<https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/media/3153/cscp-multi-agency-guidance-on-working-with-non-engaging-families.pdf>

Management oversight and sign off is a requirement where families are being stepped up due to lack of engagement, especially cases involving unborn babies and children under 5 who are not attending nursery and are not seen by the professional network on a regular basis.

3 Daily discussion meeting

The daily discussion meeting has been set up to allow CSSW and Early Help managers to discuss individual families and make decisions about whether thresholds for services have been reached and which is the best service for the family. The Early Help team manager or service manager should attend the meeting to present the reasons for escalation.

- The daily discussion meeting is the forum for discussions on families where Early Help have assessed that the family should be stepped up to CSSW unless the family needs to be stepped up in an emergency (see below). The family should be presented by the allocated family worker and / or the team manager who should also summarise their understanding of the lived experience of the child / ren (VOC). If the family worker or team manager is unable to attend the meeting, the allocated service is responsible for sending a member of staff to the meeting and representing the VOC. The family worker / team manager should be careful to distinguish between the VOC that is gleaned directly from the child / ren and what information is mentalised and is speculative. The difference should be clearly recorded in the minutes.
- The meeting should consider whether there is evidence that the family meets the threshold for a service from CSSW based on the criteria listed in section 2. Evidence should be given that concerns and risk have increased.
- For each family discussed, the meeting should also consider whether there is a need for Early Help interventions to continue and for the service to remain involved with the family where a clear role is identified.
- The meeting can also be used by Early Help Services and CSSW to explore high-risk Early Help families where there is evidence of safeguarding concerns in order to agree the next steps.

- For those families that do not meet the threshold for step up, the meeting can agree clear actions for further exploration by Early Help services and a date set for the family to be reviewed if required.
- The MASH team manager or senior practitioner is responsible for chairing the daily discussion meeting and recording the minutes and decisions of any families presented by MASH. While the Early Help manager or Service Manager is responsible for presenting and recording the VOC for Early Help families, the MASH manager should also consider the children's lived experience in their decision making.
- The Early Help manager or Service Manager is responsible for noting the actions and decisions for any families presented by the Early Help service and adding to the family file as a case note. The notes should also be sent to MASH via e-mail.
- The step up episode on MOSAIC should be completed by the Early Help team manager or service manager as soon as possible after the daily discussion meeting (by the end of the day at the latest) so that the MASH team can ensure timely progression of the family (see appendix 1).

4 Urgent cases

Should unexpected concerns arise of a safeguarding nature that cannot wait for discussion at the daily discussion meeting to take action, the allocated Early Help worker should report the matter to the Early Help service manager or team manager who is responsible for ensuring a decision is made on whether to escalate concerns to the MASH.

The service manager or team manager should ensure that they have the discussion with the MASH team manager or senior practitioner. If their decision is to step up the family to the MASH, this should be clearly recorded on the child's file and the record should include details of concerns held and decisions taken to escalate so that the MASH can complete the step up in a timely way.

5 Notifications

Notifications are created following any Police Merlin or new information that may be received by MASH on an open Early Help family. This assists in providing a clear record of any new concerns and a record of decision making. The information is recorded on the *Notification received by MASH on allocated EH case* form on MOSAIC by the screening officers. **Notifications must be fully completed by**

MASH screening officers before tasking to Early Help and must not be sent as an open episode.

In the event that new and significant and / or safeguarding information from a professional or family member is shared with Early Help, written details of the information and the Early Help management view on any further actions that need be taken should be sent in writing to the MASH who will then create a notification.

The information should be sent to the email LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk and should include:

- the child's name
- person and family ID
- details of the incident/summary of the new information
- details of the professional or family member who shared the information.

The Early Help family worker or team manager should take personal responsibility for sending written details to the MASH; other professionals or family members should not be encouraged to contact the MASH directly themselves.

It is important that Notifications are completed in order to provide a consistent recording of any new concerns or information for families, which can be viewed by both MASH and Early Help as not all MASH or Early Help case notes are accessible across the services.

Notifications should be screened by MASH workers and if they have a green RAG rating are passed **(via e-mail alert as well as MOSAIC)** to the Early Help manager and allocated Lead Professional.

Should MASH screen a notification on an open Early Help family and believe that the family may reach the threshold for step up to CSSW, a discussion should take place between the MASH team manager or senior practitioner and the lead professional and Early Help team manager or service manager to decide how to proceed.

The family should be referred to the daily discussion meeting or a decision to step up made immediately if urgent. The decision to step up should be clearly recorded by the MASH team manager or senior practitioner on the notification and the step up episode should be completed by the Early Help team manager or service manager.

If professionals who are working within a Team around the Family contact MASH directly to raise new concerns of a safeguarding nature, a discussion should take place between the MASH team manager or senior practitioner and the Early Help team manager or service manager to decide whether step up is required.

- If step up is required then the Early Help manager should complete the step up episode on MOSAIC.
- If the family will not step up then a notification should be completed and the decision between MASH and Early Help should be clearly recorded on the notification. The MASH team manager or senior practitioner should send the relevant Early Help team manager confirmation via e-mail that the notification has been added to the family file.

However, Early Help managers need to remind professionals working in the Team around the Family that concerns should be raised with the lead professional in the instance.

6 Resolving professional differences

Where agreement cannot be reached on whether the family should step up from Early Help to CSSW, either at daily discussion meetings, urgent case stage or notification stage, the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership escalation procedure should be followed; for further details please see:

<https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/media/3152/cscp-escalation-policy-resolving-professional-differences-sept-2021.pdf>

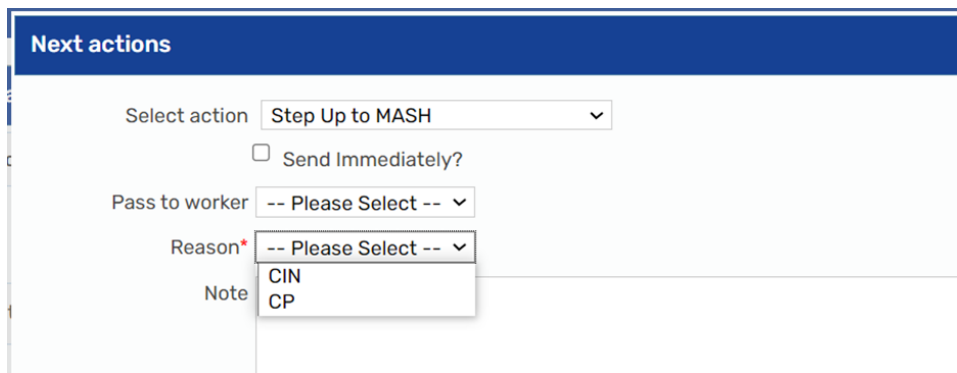
Appendix 1: Step Up to MASH CP & CIN Process

Early Help families can be stepped up to MASH following:

- Early Help Team making the decision to step up to MASH
- New information received by MASH on allocated EH family that needs to be stepped up to SW service (*Notification received by MASH on allocated EH case*)

The **Early Help Manager** should send the outcome of **Step Up to MASH** from the last recorded EH workflow step to the **MASH Manager**. This can be sent from *all EH workflow steps* and can also be '*sent immediately*' from any incomplete workflow step to avoid any delay in being sent to MASH.

Reason for step up can be either **CIN** or **CP**.



Next actions

Select action: Step Up to MASH

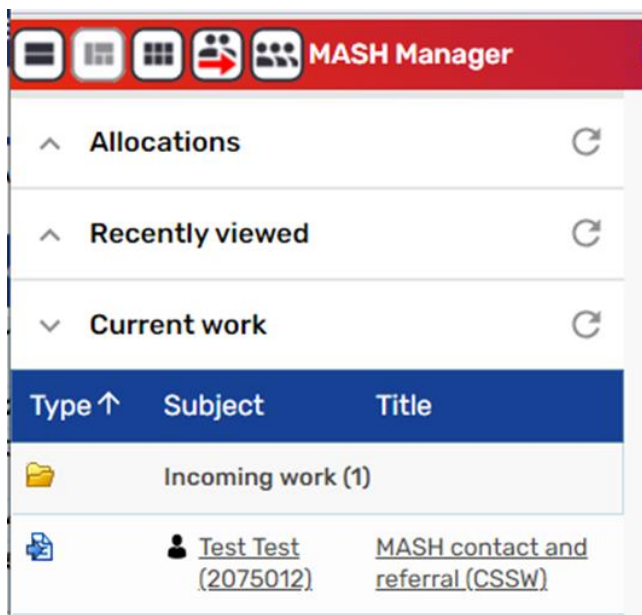
Send Immediately?

Pass to worker: -- Please Select --

Reason*: -- Please Select --

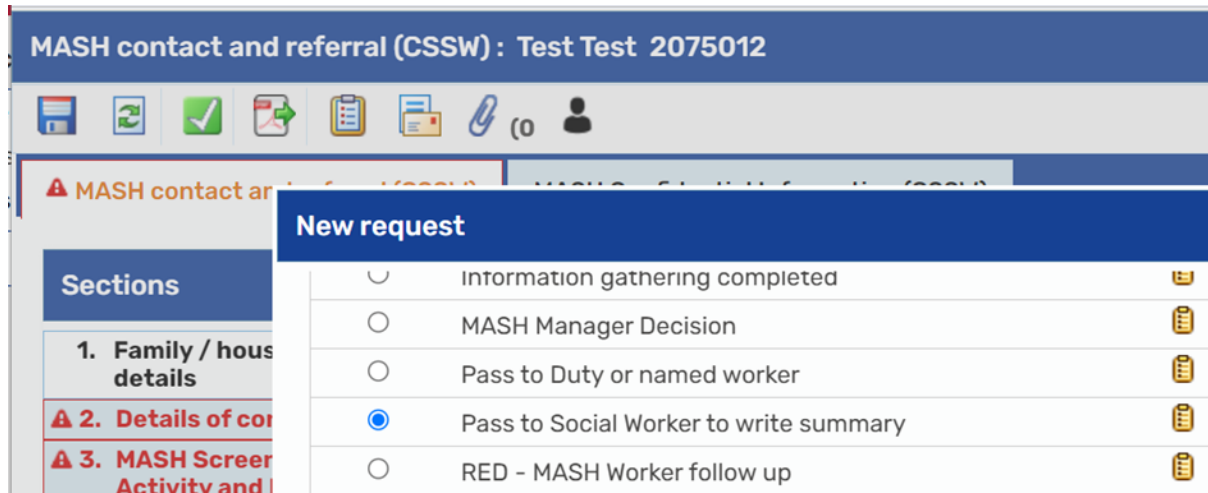
Note: CIN, CP

The **Step Up to MASH** next action will send a **MASH Contact and referral (CSSW)** workflow step to the incoming work folder of the MASH Manager.

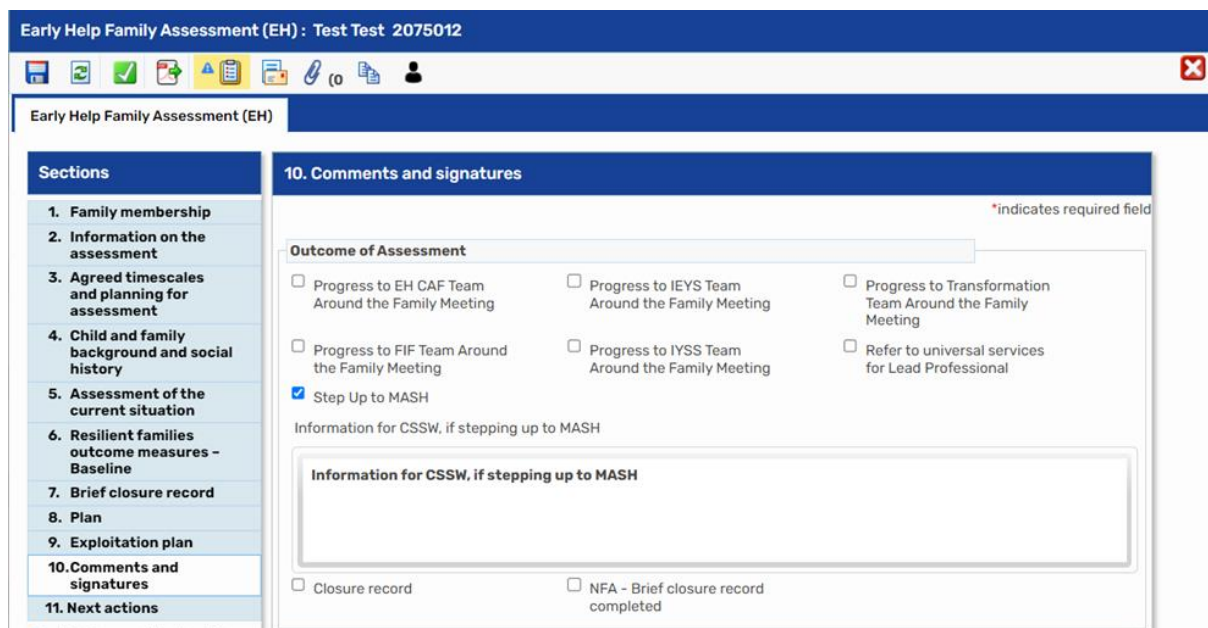


Type	Subject	Title
Incoming work (1)		
	Test Test (2075012)	MASH contact and referral (CSSW)

The MASH Manager will start the **MASH Contact and referral (CSSW)** and send the request **'Pass to Social Worker to write summary'** to MASH SW worker to notify the MASH SW to complete relevant sections of the MASH Contact and referral (CSSW).



Contents recorded as **'Information for CSSW, if stepping up to MASH'** in the Early Help forms as shown below....



will prepopulate into the **MASH Contact and referral (CSSW)** form as ***‘Further details about this contact’*** to provide background information to MASH manager and MASH Social worker as shown below.

MASH contact and referral (CSSW) : Test Test 2075012

MASH contact and referral (CSSW) | MASH Confidential Information (CSSW)

Sections

1. Family / household details
2. Details of contact
3. MASH Screening Activity and Findings
4. Decisions and actions
5. Informing interested parties
6. Next actions

indicates completed section

Notice of other agency contact with child / young person
 Request for services
 Other agency check

Is the child / family already known?
 Yes No

Has an Early Help Assessment previously been completed with the family?
 Yes No

Further details about this contact

Information for CSSW, if stepping up to MASH

Once the MASH SW has completed the relevant sections of **MASH Contact and referral (CSSW)**, they then complete the request (*‘Pass to Social Worker to write summary’*) received from the MASH Manager and in turn send a request for **‘MASH Manager Decision’** back to the MASH Manager for their decision and authorisation of the MASH Contact and referral (CSSW).

The MASH Manager will authorise the MASH Contact and referral, choose the appropriate next action, assign it to the appropriate worker and finish the workflow step.

MASH contact and referral (CSSW) : Test Test 2075012

MASH contact and referral (CSSW) | MASH Confidential Information (CSSW)

Sections

1. Family / household details
2. Details of contact
3. MASH Screening Activity and Findings
4. Decisions and actions
5. Informing interested parties
6. Next actions

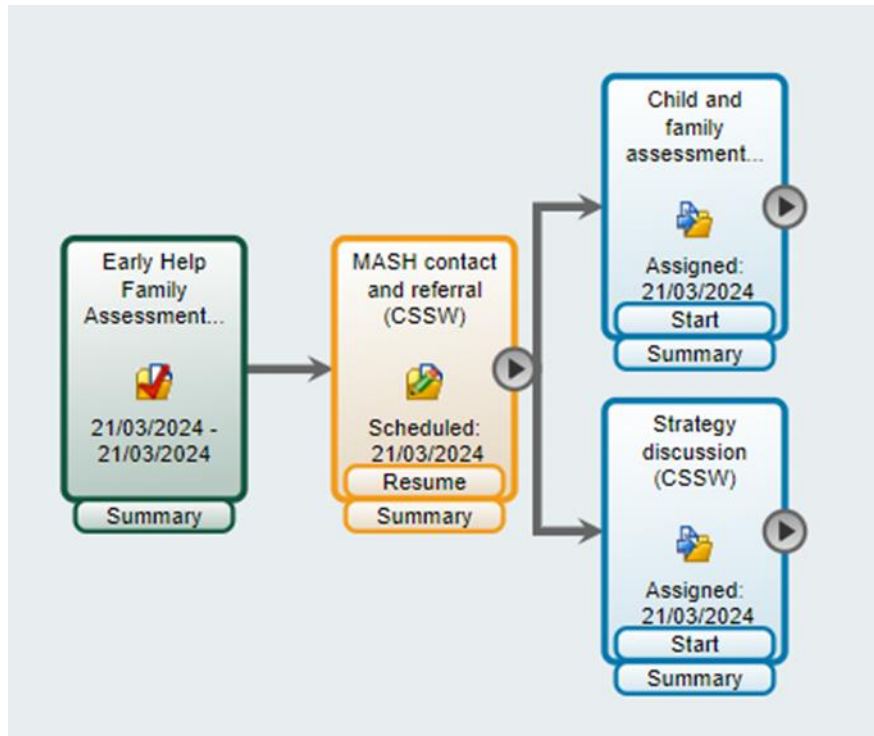
indicates completed section

6. Next actions

Next Actions

Next actions		
Next action	Assigned to	Reason
Strategy discussion (CSSW)	MASH Manager	
Child and family assessment (CSSW)	Duty Manager - Children with Disability Team	

1. **For CP cases** – Two next actions are required:
 - 1.1. **‘Strategy Discussion’** which is sent to *MASH Manager/Duty Manager of receiving team* and
 - 1.2. **‘Child and Family Assessment’** which is sent to the *Duty Manager of the receiving team*.



2. **For CIN cases** – One next action is required:
 - 2.1. **‘Child and Family Assessment’** which is sent to the *Duty Manager of the receiving team*.

