

Children & Families Branch

Stuart Ashley
Assistant Director

Children & Families Branch - Journey of the Child

- The purpose of this presentation is to explain and clarify the journey of the child as they move through children's social care
- The different team functions of the service are explained and how those teams work with the most vulnerable children and families

Early Help

- ‘Help for families at the earliest point a problem arises’ = **pre-social care**
- Agencies working in partnership to **promote prevention and early intervention** – pooled resource / avoiding duplication
- Use early help assessments to identify what help the child and family require to **prevent needs escalating**
- Services should form a continuum of support

Family Support Service - part of Hampshire's early help offer

- **Transformation project** during 2016/17
- Bringing together the work of **children's centres, early help and youth support services** to provide combined, **integrated support targeting vulnerable families with children aged 0-19**
- Provides interventions and supports practitioners to increase confidence and capacity to work with families

Front Door to Children's Social Care



WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD?

If you are worried a child is being harmed or is at risk, please contact the Children's Reception Team.

Tel: **0300 300 0117**
at any time, day or night (24 hrs)

In an emergency ring 999



KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY



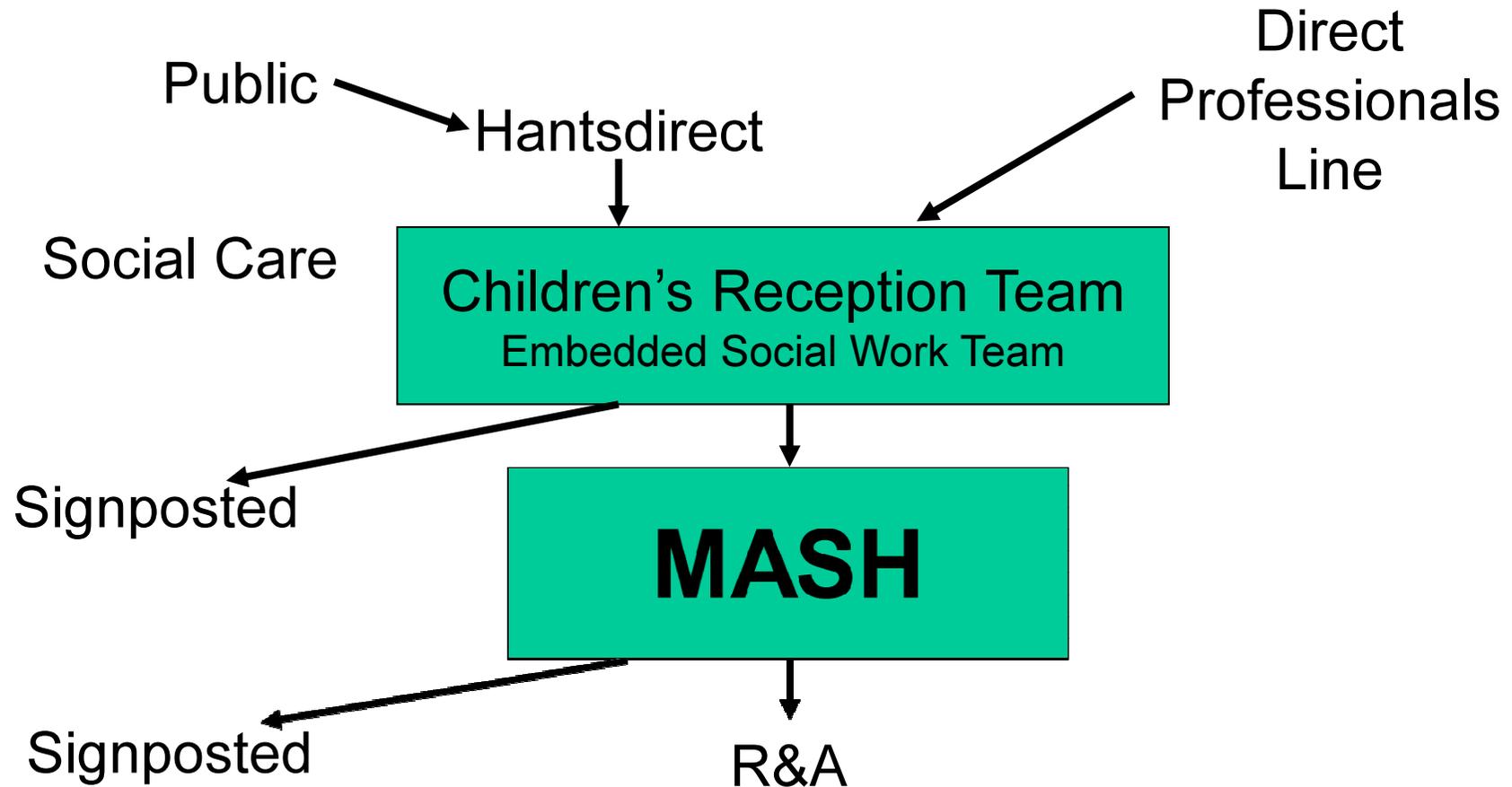
Hampshire
County Council

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

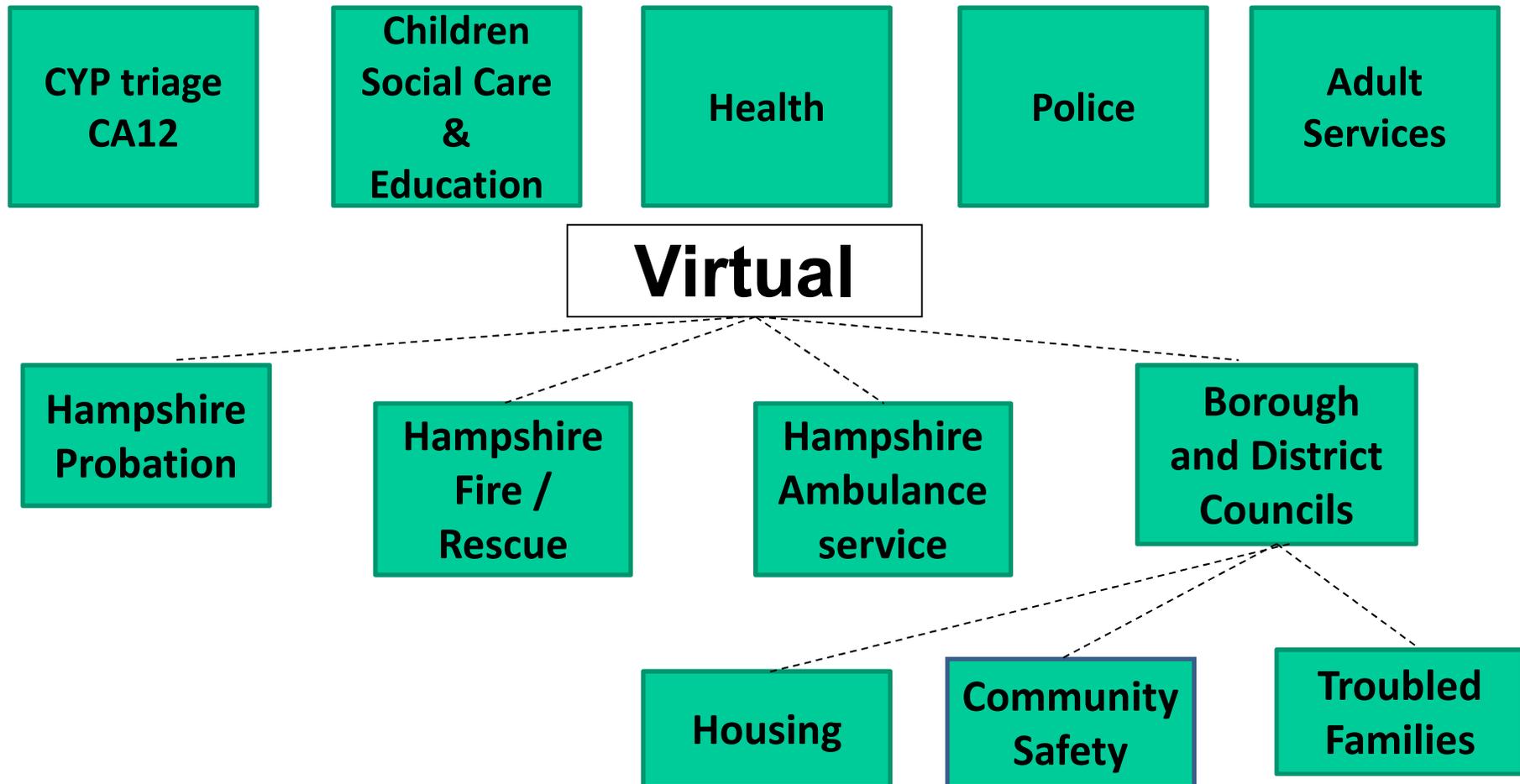
- The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (**MASH**) provides **triage and multi agency assessment of safeguarding concerns** in respect of vulnerable children
- It brings together **professionals from a range of agencies** into an integrated multi-agency team
- The MASH team makes **assessments of information and decisions** - response can be signposting, or if complex need or child protection (risk of significant harm), progression for social work assessment
- MASH provides a **co-ordinated approach and better informed decision making** that ensures that vulnerable children are protected



Referral Pathway to Children's Social Care



MASH



**Contacts c73,000 via Hantsdirect
+ police CYP forms**

**Referrals c20,000 via the 'front
door'.**

**Child and Family Assessments
c15,000**

S.47 Assessments 3967

New child protection plans 1581

(Issue Proceedings c130)

New children in care 686

Referral and Assessment (R&A)

- The **7 Referral and Assessment teams** deal with all **new referrals** to children's social care from **MASH** in respect of children and families in Hampshire
- R&A complete **Child and Family Assessments** (within 45 days)
- Where the child might be at risk of significant harm the R&A team will undertake a **Section 47 child protection investigation immediately**. This may be conducted jointly with the police
- R&A may **redirect cases to Early Help** as a result of their assessment, where appropriate
- **Or**, where the need for **longer term ongoing social care intervention** has been identified, cases will transfer to the appropriate **Children in Need team**

Children in Need (CiN)

- A **Child in Need** Plan results from social work assessment and analysis that determines that a child is 'in need' under **s.17 Children Act 1989**

Section 17 (1)

"It shall be the general **duty of every local authority** –

- To **safeguard and promote the welfare of children** within their area who are in need; and
- So far as is consistent with that duty, to **promote the upbringing of such children by their families**
- By **providing a range and level of services appropriate** to those children's needs



Children in Need (CiN)

The 16 CiN teams work with children;

- To promote the welfare and reduce any unmet needs of children
- Work with multi agency partners to create change within the family
- To manage those at high risk of harm through child protection plans to ensure the risks are reduced
- Where risks cannot be safely managed to put the matter before the courts to remove the child

Child Protection

- If the needs and risks increase or the child **has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm**, a **Child Protection Investigation must be carried out**. This duty arises from s47 Children Act 1989
- Children's Services notify the police and agree whether a **joint or single agency investigation** will be undertaken
- Partner agencies (such as Health) are contacted to obtain as much information as possible
- **Child is seen as soon as possible** (always within 24 hours) and (where appropriate) spoken to alone
- Child may be formally '**joint interviewed**' by a trained social worker and police officer

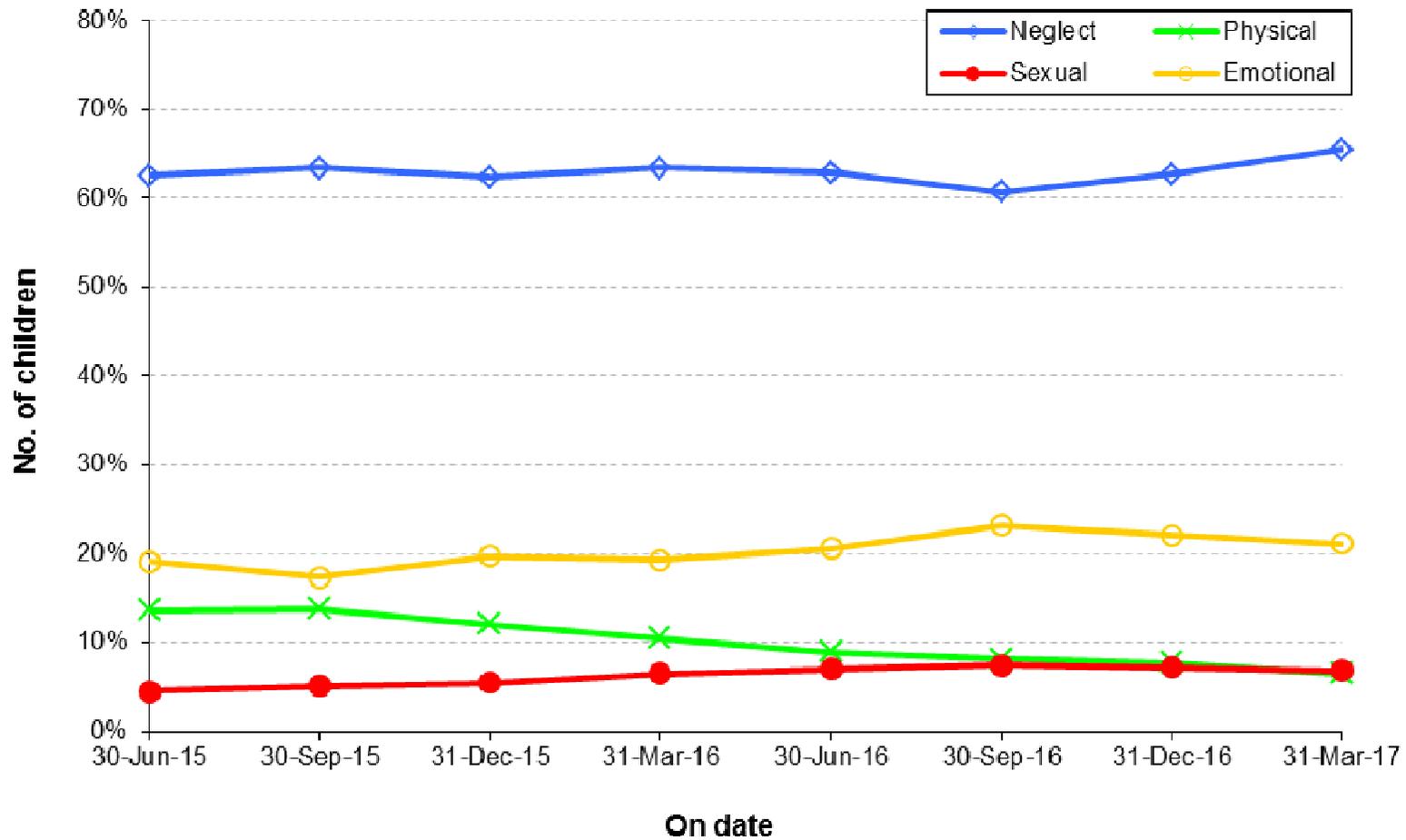
Child Protection

- **Following the investigation** a decision is made by Children's Services as to whether a **Child Protection Conference** should be convened
- The conference **involves all key family members** and involved professionals. Information and risks to the child are shared
- A decision is then made as to whether a **Child Protection Plan** is required to keep the child safe
- 4 categories of risk that can lead to a plan – **neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse**
- If a Child Protection Plan is required, a core team of professionals will work with the child, led by a social worker

Child Protection

- The Child Protection plan is **reviewed initially at three months and at regular intervals thereafter** until the risks are reduced to acceptable levels
- At the end of March 2017 there were approximately **1265** children subject to Child Protection Plans in Hampshire
- Each child is visited by their social worker **every 10 working days** as part of keeping the child safe
- If the risks cannot be reduced consideration is given to commencing **legal proceedings to seek the Court's decision** on removing the child

Current CP Plans : by Category



Disabled Children Team (DCT)

- To identify the children (0-18 years) to whom the Disabled Children Team (DCT) Social Workers will provide a **specialist intervention/service**
- To identify where there is a need for an integrated response from specialist education, health and social care
- To provide a social work function where the child/young person has a **clearly identified disability, whether they are born with a disability or become disabled as a result of an illness, accident or injury**
- To undertake child protection investigations and care proceedings just as in Children in Need teams

Disabled Children's Team (DCT)

Supports / interventions include:

- Residential and respite
- Short breaks
- Direct Payments
- Personal budgets
- Education health and Social Care Plans
- Transitions to Adult services

Children in Care (CIC)

- Many reasons why a child may become looked after by the LA
- Some will have had **harmful experiences**, including **neglect, physical and sexual abuse**, while others may be in care because of the illness or death of a parent
- The significant majority of **children in care are because of parental difficulties** – not the child's. They are separated from their family because it is unable to provide the quality of care needed.
- Parents can ask for their child to be looked after by the LA (**voluntary**) or the Court can grant a **Care Order** to the LA
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) will become Children in Care on arrival in UK

Children in care (CIC)

- Children in Care are **usually cared for by foster carers**, the majority HCC carers, others through private (high cost) Independent Foster Agencies (IFAs)
- Extended **family members sometimes** look after a child, which is often a preferable arrangement so they are not then placed with strangers
- A **small number are placed in children's homes**, again either in-house or through higher cost private providers
- There are **5 CiC teams** supporting circa 1400 children
- They provide regular statutory visits, assessments of needs, placement reviews and ensure the full range of the child's needs are being met



Care Leavers

- When Child in Care reaches **18 years of age** their support comes directly from the **care leavers service**
- Care leaver teams offer **practical, emotional and some financial support** to ensure young people have suitable accommodation, contact with their families and previous foster carers, access to education, training and employment and access to health services
- New legislation (May 2017) local authorities to support care leavers **up to the age of 25**
- Some care leavers go on to **university**, some find **employment**, but for some adulthood is exceptionally difficult and they require **intensive support** from the teams



Fostering

- **Fostering is caring for somebody else's children** in your own home. It is not adoption, but it can mean looking after a child for a week, a month, a year or sometimes longer
- Foster carers help children to thrive in a **caring and safe environment**
- As a foster carer you are **part of a team around the child** which includes social workers, health visitors, doctors and teachers all of whom work to the child's care plan
- It may include the child moving on to an **adoptive placement**, or **reuniting** them home or providing **long term care**

Adoption

- Adoption offers **permanence to children** who need a loving and secure family and who are unable to live with their birth parents
- When a child is adopted they **legally and permanently become part of the adopter's family**
- Adoptions are arranged by an adoption agency that is legally permitted to arrange adoptions – **Hampshire County Council**, as a Local Authority, acts as an **adoption agency**
- The adoption is made legally binding by the court on the making of an Adoption Order
- The **Adoption Order is permanent and transfers parental responsibility from the birth parents to the adopter(s)**

Residential

- Some children cannot live easily in a family setting
- **Significant investment** in the residential estate – unlike most LAs
- By end of August 2017 – **8 new children's homes**
- **Smaller homes** – 4 children in each
- Closer to school and families
- **Pillars of Parenting** – Quality of care across the homes
- Members most welcome to visit

Activity data

Table 1 contextual information	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	Mar 2013	Mar 2014	Mar 2015	Mar 2016	Mar 2017
Open social work cases (a)	6572	6999	6822	8020	7818	8732	9000
Contacts in month with reason listed as child / young persons concern (the figure in brackets denotes the number of children to whom the contacts relate) (b)	2912 (2694)	2815 (2331)	3069 (2497)	3145 (2779)	3186 (2709)	3589 (3082)	7401 (5806)
Children with Child Protection Plan (c)	726	797	942	1110	1355	1441	1265
Children in care (full time) (d)	1082	1103	1121	1267	1341	1305	1440