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Title:	Welsh Government –
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Police Forces across Wales have been asked to provide a note on the current landscape, as they understand it in relation to the development and work of multi-agency safeguarding hubs. What follows is summary of each forces understanding of the current position.

Dyfed Powys Police

The Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board covers the geographical footprint of the Dyfed Powys Police Force.

Dyfed Powys Police have previously held discussions with partners to introduce a regional MASH within the Board’s geographical area. The discussions led to the Regional Board commissioning a review of varying MASH models and scoping what may be suitable for consideration within Mid & West Wales. The review resulted in a report that was considered by the Board, where a consensus was reached by the four local authorities that no MASH model was suitable for the needs of Mid and West Wales at that time – the report being presented in 2016. No further work has been taken forward since that time within the region to further consider MASH options.

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Within the Dyfed Powys Police Force, work is ongoing to consider a wider remit and expansion of the current Central Referral Unit (CRU). The CRU deals with all safeguarding referrals from the Dyfed Powys Police and links externally with safeguarding partners, including the four Local Authorities and two Health Boards. The expansion of the CRU into a 'Vulnerability Hub' within Police HQ could present an opportunity to achieve a virtual MASH, with Police linking to Local Authority based safeguarding teams within the four counties. The biggest challenge around a MASH model is the lower level of demand across a very large geographical area and difficulties that would be experienced with some agencies to service a MASH within each Local Authority area. This needs to be considered against a view that one regional MASH would not provide the solution for all agencies within the region.

Gwent Police

Gwent Police is current running a pilot MASH with one Local Authority (Newport). This is based within the civic centre and has been running for just over a year, the pilot timescales have been extended in order for a full evaluation to be carried out around the demand and multi-agency partnership working. Historically there has been no appetite from the remaining four Local Authorities to form one MASH for the Gwent region. Scoping of this took place some years ago prior to the current pilot set up. It is hoped that once the full evaluation is complete, options can be presented to the Safeguarding boards for consideration of extending this pilot further afield.

In addition to the MASH, Early Action Together are running the below programme within the Newport MASH and alongside social care partners within Blaenau Gwent

Against Objective 4 of the Early action together programme. A whole system response to vulnerability by implementing ACE informed approaches for operational policing and key partners

The Programme is seeking to identify how policing and partners can be better integrated to identify and respond to vulnerability at the earliest opportunity.

Working with partners in Newport and Blaenau Gwent (the pathfinder areas) we have identified opportunities for system change that will provide an integrated response for safeguarding alongside offers for early intervention and support.

We have developed early help offers in the two pathfinder areas that build into existing systems and co-locate Police alongside Social Care partners to improve early information sharing and collaborative decision making. Our vision is to work with Education and Health to further strengthen multi agency safeguarding arrangements in the pathfinder areas.

Alongside this approach the programme, through the Police and Crime Commissioner has funded early intervention and support provision for families who have come into contact with Gwent Police but who do not meet statutory safeguarding thresholds. Family Support Workers and Prevention Social Workers have been funded to support families at this early point of contact with services. Prior to this approach these referrals would have been NFA'd and no support offered; the

introduction of the Early Intervention Projects enables early offers of support to families to meet their needs.

Both projects went live in May 2019 and we are awaiting the first set of data following implementation. A shared set of outcomes and performance indicators have been agreed with partners to demonstrate impact and outcomes for families and this information will be reported to the Early Action Together Project Board on a quarterly basis.

The projects seek to 'prove a concept' in relation to early intervention and prevention and will be evaluated by the National Research Team.

To date the programme has focused on the pathfinder areas. 2019/20 provides an opportunity to work with the other three Local Authority areas in Gwent to share learning from the pathfinder areas and better understand existing safeguarding and early intervention arrangements, police demand and what opportunities there are through the programme to further enhance multi agency arrangements.

North Wales Police

North Wales Police trialled a MASH in Wrexham in 2014. Once funding was withdrawn and there was an expectation for partners to invest/contribute further, partner agencies gradually withdrew from the MASH until it ceased to exist. The experience left the local authorities with a tainted view of MASH as a concept.

In the absence of any appetite by partners for a MASH, North Wales Police have set up a Central Referral Unit which is police only and which dealt with 16 vulnerability referrals 2018/19. In virtually all cases where a review occurs as a result of Domestic Homicide, Child Practice Review, Adult Practice Review or Coroner's inquest, information sharing is highlighted as being found wanting.

North Wales Police are consistently being picked out by the HMIC for its lack of a MASH. The Head of PVPU (current and previous) has been advocating for several years that a MASH is required in north Wales.

The regional children and adults safeguarding boards held a joint business planning day in January 2019 to agree priorities and set work plans for 19/20. Scoping the feasibility for a MASH was put forward by the head of PVPU but this was unanimously rejected by Local Authorities including the Chairs of both boards.

South Wales Police

Current Landscape

At present, there are a total of 3 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) established within the South Wales Police area which cover the following Local Authority areas: Cwm Taf (Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr), Cardiff and Bridgend. Although each

MASH operates slightly differently, they all bring together key professionals to facilitate better quality information sharing, analysis and decision-making to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, with a particular emphasis on early intervention, prevention and support. These partners include, but are not limited to: education; children's services; adult services; drug and alcohol services; the Health board; probation services and third sector providers such as Women's Aid and Barnardo's.

South Wales Police believe that MASH's are an effective model in which to safeguard vulnerable adults and children in a multi-agency setting and lead to better safeguarding outcomes for those at risk of exploitation and abuse. As such, South Wales Police aim to safeguard within the setting of a MASH's in all local authority areas, however, this is dependent on the views of individual Local Authorities and other partners. South Wales Police have commenced dialogue with all Local Authority areas which currently do not have a MASH, with a view to establishing their appetite to implement one in future.

Development of MASH's

The National Police Chief Council (NPCC) lead for MASH's is ACC Jonathan Drake of South Wales Police, who has commissioned a working group to create a guidance document which will assist areas without a MASH in establishing one. This working group consists of police subject matter experts throughout England and Wales, all of whom have experiences in setting up MASH's and are able to share effective good practice. This guidance document will be produced later in the year.

On a more local level, the Welsh Government have agreed to commission the scoping of an independent review on the effectiveness of MASH's which would seek to compare a pilot area to a control area, as well as conducting a literature review of existing academic evaluation. A multi-agency working group, consisting of a number of experts across different disciplines, is meeting in June to put forward a scope for this evaluation to take place.