



right help ● right time

Children and Families Hub: Frequently Asked Questions

What difference will this really make to children and families?

The Hub is part of our aim to help families by making sure they get the right help at the right time, and at the earliest opportunity. This means that any problems can be picked up and dealt with before they become too difficult.

Central to the Right Help Right Time approach is that children and families who need support from more than one agency have a lead worker. This lead worker works alongside the family, getting to know their circumstances and making sure that the support they need is co-ordinated.

The Hub aims to streamline some of the current processes, to reduce bureaucracy and bring the right support to children and families at the right time.

Will it cost more?

The Government plan committed investment to deliver the outcomes of Common Strategic Priority 1: Putting Children First: Supporting and Protecting Children. Some additional funding (2 posts) is needed to strengthen a team of existing staff who will work in the Hub.

This is part of a programme of investment in early intervention. There is clear evidence that helping families as early as possible and providing support at the right time can reduce the likelihood of problems escalating (and the needs for more serious interventions). If we offer the right help at the right time, we will improve long term outcomes for children young people and their families. This reduces costs to them, to services and to the whole community in the long term.

Why are you doing this now, just when there is so much else going on?

The Children and Families Hub was a planned development as part of the wider Right Help Right Time project. We have brought it forward, around six weeks earlier than planned, because we recognise that families will experience challenges from the response to Covid-19. Having the Hub in place as soon as possible is important to ensure families are supported and children are safeguarded in these unique circumstances.

Is this just the MASH (a referral to social care for children) in a new guise?

The Children and Families Hub is not the same thing as a referral to MASH. It is wider than this, and all requests for support will be looked at by a skilled team of staff, who will then decide which is the best agency, or best approach for the child and family. Of course, if a safeguarding concern where a child may be a risk of significant harm is identified, the request will be referred to the MASH team for assessment and a decision on next steps.

Will parents know if someone rings in about their child or family?

Yes. Practitioners making a request for service are required to discuss the request with parents/carers and ask for consent beforehand. The only exception to this is when a child's safety may be compromised.

If a member of the public rings in about a child or family, a worker from the hub will contact the parent(s) to let them know about the enquiry.

What sorts of questions or problems will this new service deal with?

The Hub will be able to deal with a variety of problems that families face. For example, perhaps a family needs advice on managing a child's behaviour, or maybe a family is finding it difficult to cope with relationship, or financial difficulties. While the Hub will not be able to solve all problems, it will be able to provide some advice or signposting as well as looking to find a lead worker for a family who needs one.

Families can also be directly signposted to the Parenting Support Helpline available Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm on 449481, email parentingadmin@gov.je

Will the Hub be available 24 hours?

No. The Hub will be open from 8.30 – 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30 – 4.30pm on Fridays.

If there is an urgent concern about a child's safety outside of these hours, you should call the Police on 01534 612612. Children's Social Work offer an on-call service outside of these hours through the Jersey General Hospital switchboard which can be accessed by calling the Hub and pressing option 1.

Who will be answering the phone? What qualifications do they have?

The phones are answered by people who have skills and experience in working with families and professionals, and who know what services are available in Jersey. They will come from a range of backgrounds, including parenting support, education, children's health, children's mental health and social work.

What will they do with information about families?

Information will be recorded on an electronic system so that the Hub team can consider the family's needs and provide the best response to meet them. Retention of data follows the requirements for compliance with data protection legislation (GDPR).

How do families know their information is safe?

Data is recorded on a secure electronic database and it is confidential. Access to a family's information is limited to those staff who require it to provide them with a service.

Who can refer into the Hub?

From Monday, 23 March 2020, the Hub will be open to referrals from practitioners from all agencies, including GPs and other health workers, schools, the police and charitable organisations. From the beginning of April, families and members of the public will also be able to ring in or send a request form or email.

What will be different for families as a result?

Families will get a more streamlined and speedy service, with reduced bureaucracy. The right help at the right time is our aim.

Can practitioners still use the old numbers and forms?

Previous numbers and emails are being diverted to the new Hub and for a limited period, the Hub will accept requests for service on old forms. The Hub will be strongly encouraging the use of the new electronic single form. We think that professionals will welcome the single form as it simplifies things and in the longer term as we develop the supporting electronic information system, it will reduce time spent on paperwork to release staff to spend more time working directly with children and families.