**Children Services Improvement Updates – Integrated Front Door**

* **What has changed?**

We are introducing a single front door for all Children, Families and Partners wishing to contact Children’s Services in West Sussex.

Currently all telephone enquiries for social care are received through our customer service centre and then sent to our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for processing. For Early Help, enquiries are reviewed via locality teams. All referrals and general email enquiries are received directly into the MASH.

In the new way of working all enquiries/referrals for both Social Care and Early Help will come through our single front door referred to as the Integrated Front Door (IFD), this will be the only public contact point for Early Help and Children’s Social Care. The IFD for West Sussex Children Services will ensure that all enquiries and referrals are triaged upon receipt and directed to the appropriate service to support with the query, providing a seamless process with children receiving a service proportionate to their needs in a timely way.

This expertise of the team comprises of qualified Early Help specialists, qualified Social Care specialists, qualified managers, Customer Service Centre Agents and social care referral advisors.

The new contact details for the IFD which goes live on 29 January 2021 are as follows:-

Telephone number: **01403 229900**

Out of Hours Telephone number – **03302 226664**

Email address: **WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk**

* **Why have we changed?**

The Integrated Front Door model will allow Early Help and Social Care team to provide a holistic view at the front door of the child/family. Children’s Services would create one pathway to support and publicise one number for all worries relating to children regardless of risk and complexity. This will simplify the process for the public and professionals and potentially reducing unnecessary social work interventions as we shift the focus to ask if the child’s needs can be met by Early Help.

Children will only enter the MASH system of triage if the threshold is not clear from the initial screening. The aim is to move children more quickly to the right level of support without the need for extensive checks, delays and multiple contacts.

By having a dedicated triage team (IFD) focussing on the enquiries and referrals at first point of contact we can become more effective and efficient with the services we deliver.

* **What does is mean for me?**

All enquiries and referrals will be triaged by the dedicated IFD team ensuring support from the appropriate service is provided swiftly.

* **What does it mean for the children, families and partners?**

Children, families and partners will receive the right level of support for their needs as and when they need it within a timely way.