

# Children's Social Care Transfer Protocol

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Revised March 2016

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the agreed process and points of transfer for children, young people and their families that require a children's social care intervention. It sits alongside the Early Help Step Up Step Down Protocol and the LSCB thresholds document.

## **1 Children's Social Care Transfer Protocol**

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the agreed process and points of transfer for children, young people and their families that require a children's social care intervention. It includes the transfer points from:

- MASH/Referral and Advice to Early and targeted help.
- MASH/Referral and Advice to Integrated youth Services.
- MASH/Referral and Advice to Fostering Assessment Team re Private Fostering.
- MASH/Referral and Advice to Assessment Team.
- Assessment Team to Safeguarding and Family Support Teams.
- Assessment Team to Children in Care Service.
- Safeguarding and Family Support Team to Children in Care Service.
- Assessment, Safeguarding and Family Support and Children in Care to Leaving Care Team.
- Children in Care to Safeguarding and Family Support Team.
- Process for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children.
- Process for No Recourse to Public Funds cases.
- Children in Care Teams to Leaving Care Service.
- Transfers to Post Order Support Team.
- Transfers to Adoption Team from Assessment Safeguarding Team as part of parallel planning and regarding relinquished babies.

It is essential that social workers and team managers ensure they are clear and informed about this protocol to secure effective transition points that reduce drift and delay in case planning and interventions.

## 2 Principles

Transfer of cases will be conducted in a timely fashion; the child's experience, needs and journey should always be at the heart of decisions to transfer cases.

Clear requirements and expectations will be agreed and delivered by the transferring team. Good quality information will be passed from the transferring team to the receiving team to prevent gaps in knowledge and to ensure that the welfare and protection of the child is paramount.

All managers will commit to attending the transfer meetings to secure consistency of approach. Children and young people and their parents/carers and agencies should be advised of the transfer process and timings.

Transfers will take no longer than 2 weeks from initial identification. Once the case has been presented to the Transfer Meeting the receiving Service has 2 weeks to identify Team/SW and then for the handover meeting to take place within the next 5 working days

Children looked after will always have an appropriately qualified worker allocated to them.

If capacity is proving challenging, this will be escalated for review and problem solving alongside the Deputy Heads of Service and Head of Service when required.

One family-one social worker principle applies. Exceptions to this may be looked after children that become pregnant and the need for a separate referral in relation to their child, instances involving child-on-child abuse within the family home and some gang related affiliation whereby the young person is placing siblings at risk.

Cases will sit within the Service they should and any volume/demand pressures will be managed within that Service.

### **This model is predicated on the following principles and processes:**

- Thresholds for intervention are clearly understood and applied by MASH/R&A.
- Allocation of assessments is timely and outcomes secured proactively.
- Transfer between the Services is not blocked.
- Work is allocated within the Service it is aligned to without fail. This is to ensure any pressures are clearly seen.
- Statutory requirements and court directions are always adhered to.
- All CP and CIC cases will have an allocated social worker.
- All CIN cases will have an appropriately qualified worker.

- Step Down to Early Help and targeted support is effective and secured in a timely manner through robust planning taking no longer than 2 weeks to formally transfer. This is enabled by effective step down process overseen by DHoS in Safeguarding and Family Support Service.
- Records must be up to date as per the Case Recording Policy which is located on Tri-x.
- All cases should have a case summary/transfer summary identified that outlines the key points, actions and future actions required, please see attached template in appendix A.
- Chronologies and genograms must be up to date as per the Case Recording Policy, having taken into account previous family historical knowledge and information from checks with other local authorities where appropriate.
- Children and young people's voice must be clearly evidenced.

## **Transfer points**

### **MASH and Referral and Advice:**

Business function will be to:

- Manage and monitor the receipt of requests for support or protection.
- Secure the thresholds of the front door in line with the agreed partnership threshold document.
- Make decisions within 24 hours of receipt of the requests for support or protection.
- Transfer and allocate child and family assessments appropriately to Assessment, Children in Care, Fostering Assessment Team (Private Fostering), Safeguarding and Family Support
- Ensure those children requiring protection are quickly identified and responded to allocating Section 47 investigations within 24 hours and no later.
- Offer advice, support and appropriate signposting to partners.
- Refer back or onto other services when appropriate.
- Encourage and foster the use of Early Help Assessments across the partnership.

### **Assessment Teams:**

- Duty cover. One week on and three weeks off.
- Back up to duty when required.
- Child and Family Assessments.
- Children and Young people, including those with complex needs, requiring Child in Need plans to secure short term outcomes up to and including completion of the Child and Family Assessment (maximum 45 working days).
- Children and Young People, including those with complex needs, requiring Initial Child Protection Conference.
  - Children and Young People, including those with complex needs, requiring Looked After status up to and including the 4 week LAC Review. Fortnightly attendance at transfer meeting with CIC Service, chaired by DHoS from either CIC/SFS. Transfer taking no longer than 2 weeks from identifying CIC social worker, including handover meeting within this period taking place and transfer summary on the file. It is important to note that timely transfer is dependent upon early referral to Transfer Meeting so as to give the receiving Service as much notification as possible and time to plan. The point of transfer should wherever possible be the first LAC Review or Initial Court Hearing.
- DHoS will review the need for increased frequency of transfer meetings to/from CIC/SFS in light of any changes in demand or capacity in either SFS/CIC service.

- Unborn babies whose siblings are currently subject to Care Proceedings.
- Unborn babies whose mother has a LAC status.
- Unborn babies (0-25 weeks) requiring a LPM and initiation of Care Proceedings post birth will transfer to SFS for issuing of application through the transfer over process overseen by DHoS.
- Unborn babies (26 to birth) requiring a LPM and initiation of care proceedings post birth will remain in Assessment teams for issuing of application.
- Children requiring a LPM and initiation of Care Proceedings.
- Section 37 reports as requested by the courts.
- Step down to Early Help and Intervention or IYSS when appropriate through Step down process taking no longer than 2 weeks to formally transfer and overseen by DHoS in Safeguarding and Family Support Service on a weekly basis.
- Transfer of children and young people with CIN, CP plans or interim Supervision Orders to Safeguarding and Family Support through a transfer over process, taking no longer than 2 weeks to formally transfer and overseen by DHoS. The transfer meeting takes place on a weekly basis.

#### **Safeguarding and Family Support Teams:**

- Children and Young People, including those with complex needs requiring the implementation of a Child in Need plan.
- Children and Young People, including those with complex needs requiring the implementation of a Child Protection plan, including receiving requests from other authorities. Transfer in requests are received by MASH and overseen by DHoS for Safeguarding who allocates work on a rotational basis.
- Children and young people requiring Looked After status, including those with complex needs, up to and including the first LAC review if rehabilitation not possible within a three month timescale will be transferred to CIC. Fortnightly attendance at transfer meeting with CIC Service, chaired by DHos from either CIC/SFS. Transfer taking no longer than 2 weeks from identifying CIC social worker, including handover meeting taking place and transfer summary on the file.
- DHoS will review the need for increased frequency of transfer meetings in light of any changes in demand or capacity in either SFS/CIC service. ➤ Permanence Planning (identified at 4 week review, second review latest).
- Children and Young People requiring an LPM and initiation of Care Proceedings.
- Unborn babies (0-25 weeks) requiring a LPM and initiation of Care Proceedings post birth
- Section 7 reports as requested by the courts.

- Children and Young People subject to Supervision Orders (12 months)
- Step down to Early Help and Intervention or IYSS when appropriate through step down process taking no longer than 2 weeks to formally transfer and overseen by DHoS in Safeguarding and Family Support Service on a weekly basis.

### **Children in Care Service**

- Step Relinquished babies at the point of identification to transfer to CIC with a parallel referral to Adoption team.
- Siblings of children subject to Care Proceedings or Permanency Plans that have not yet been finalised.
- Care Proceedings: CIC representative to be invited to the LPM convened by SFSS and accept formal case transfer at the first hearing. (There may be some exceptions if an Order is not made and if children are not Looked After but court proceedings are progressing).
- Looked After Children subject to Section 20 or Orders wherein reunification is no longer possible (identified at 4 week review, second review latest).
- Permanency Planning (identified at 4 week review, second review latest).
- Children in Care from the 4 week review.
- Once Adoption, Special Guardianship, Child Arrangement Order granted then the case will close to CIC Service.
- Supervision Orders granted for 6 months will remain in the CIC Service.
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
- Looked After Disabled Children and Young People.
- Children who cease to be Looked After by virtue of becoming subjects to CIN/CP plans or 12 month supervision orders will transfer to SFS. Fortnightly attendance at transfer meeting with SFS Service, chaired by DHoS from either CIC/SFS. Case transfer taking no longer than 2 weeks from identifying SFSS social worker, including handover meeting and transfer summary on the file.
- DHoS will review the need for increased frequency of transfer meetings in light of any changes in demand or capacity in either SFS/CIC service.

## Leaving Care Service

When CIC reach 17.5 years notification is sent to the Leaving Care Team Manager. A personal adviser may be allocated at this point, or 8 weeks before the transfer of the case.

To enable a personal adviser to attend a child's final LAC review before they turn 18, the Leaving Care Team Manager should be notified of the review date 3 months in advance.

The transferring social worker and team manager will complete a Case Transfer Checklist to request the transfer to a personal adviser. The pathway plan must have been completed and reviewed, and statutory visits need to be written and up to date. All key information including transfer summary, management oversight/supervision, genogram, chronology, whereabouts of passport, birth certificate, NI number and UKBA documents, if relevant must be on the case records and/or must be up to date.

The social worker should ensure an introductory visit is booked to introduce the Young Person to the personal adviser. Once the checklist and visit have been completed a formal handover meeting should take place between the social worker and personal adviser, which may involve both team managers' as required.

The personal advisers will provide support to former relevant Young People in terms of preparing them for independence.

This will include those:

- Young People aged 18-21 (who were relevant /eligible).
- Young People aged 21+ who remain in education/training.
- Young People aged 21-25 (who were former relevant) who re-present to the service as they want to return to education.

Personal advisers will maintain regular contact (1 in 8 weeks), review the pathway plan, provide support and advice in respect of ETE, housing, finances etc.



### **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children & Young People:**

Those under the age of 18 newly arrived will be supported by the Duty CIC Service to undertake a Child & Family Assessment and initiate the Looked After process. They will be supported in relation to their asylum claim and will be eligible for the same services as other Looked After children.

An age assessment will be completed by appropriately qualified workers on all children where their age is disputed.

If over 18 and the Young Person has leave to remain in the UK then they are entitled to full leaving care support. If the Young Person is over 18 and has exhausted all rights of appeal, or made a fresh claim to the Home Office and awaiting a decision, CSC will make a decision whether to refer Young Person to NASS for support.

### **No Recourse to Public Funds:**

A Senior Practitioner post has the lead to oversee all NRPF assessments and monitoring of cases going forward.

If a child has been assessed as requiring a Child Protection, Child in Need or Looked After Children intervention they will be allocated to Safeguarding and Family Support or Children in Care at transfer points identified.

If families are assessed as not requiring interventions as above they will be retained by the NRPF team and visited not less than every six months to monitor appropriate intervention in financial support.

If capacity is stretched within the NRPF team the respective Assessment Team on duty that week will be allocated the assessment monitors to complete on that occasion.

All NRTPF families are to be presented at the NRTPF panel, taking place fortnightly.

### **Children who have been adopted from care:**

Once children who were Looked After have been made the subject of Adoption Orders, they cease to be Looked After. The electronic case record should be ended at that point and recording only made in the new restricted access record as the adopted child.

Post Adoption Support social workers in the Fostering and Post Order Support Team will maintain access to the record which will also be open to access by Adoption Team staff and managers.

Post Adoption social workers will deliver Post Adoption services.

Once children who were looked after have been made subject to Special Guardianship Orders, they cease to be Looked After and such cases will be closed to the CiC Service. Post order support will be provided by the Fostering and Post Order Support Team.

### **Transfer Standards:**

To enable the effective transfer of a case, the allocated social worker and their Team Manager must ensure that the following actions have been undertaken:

- A transfer summary should be produced for any case transferring within and between teams, which not only clearly identifies work undertaken but also identifies all dates for meetings and deadlines over the following eight weeks.
- All case recording is up to date, including an updated chronology, genogram, contact records, court reports, and records of visits, (CIN, LAC, and CP): LAC paper work, Statutory Review etc.
- All case recording on Framework i must be completed, up to date and all errors rectified prior to transferring the case.
- Supervision records should be up to date on Framework i.
- A copy of all current Legal Orders are included.
- In the case of a Child Looked After on a Care Order (under section 31 of the Children Act 1989) a copy of the birth certificate will be retained or for children (under Section 20) will have been requested.
- Financial agreements should be up to date and recorded on the transfer record.
- Cases transferring from Assessment team to Family Support teams must have CIN or CP Plans.
- Personal Education Plans must be completed within **10 working days** and available for the first LAC review process before being transferred to Family Support or CIC.

### **Cross Borough Cases**

- Cross Borough cases are referred through MASH. The documentation specified in the London CP procedures is reviewed and overseen by DHoS. Cases are allocated on a rotational basis. The DHoS will QA the documentation received and liaise with the CP Conference Team as appropriate. It is expected that the process from receipt of documentation to transfer in CP conference/CIN Meeting should take no longer than 15 days.

- Cross Borough cases must have an up-to-date assessment (having been completed and updated as close to the transfer request as possible, but no longer than 3 month prior to case transfer), a current plan, chronology, genogram, details of the professional network and previous conference minutes.
- The SFS Team allocated will identify a social worker who will attend the transfer conference or the CIN Review.
  - Decisions The final decision as to accepting case responsibility must be made during the Transfer Conference/CIN Review.
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### **Transfer Meetings:**

#### **Assessment Team to Safeguarding and Family Support**

- Transfer meeting is held weekly, every Wednesday, chaired by DHoS. Case transfer taking no longer than 2 weeks from transfer meeting, including handover meeting and transfer summary on the file.
- Cases should be identified by the Assessment Team Manager prior to the meeting who will collate and share information with the Safeguarding and Family Support Team Manager. The data must outline case status and useful transfer information.
- As part of the transfer handover, the prospective allocated social worker from Safeguarding and Family Support Team will attend the CIN meeting, ICPC, LPM, or Formal Pre-Proceedings meeting.

#### **Assessment Team, Safeguarding and Family Support to/from Children in Care**

- Transfer meetings will be held fortnightly on the first and third Monday of the month. DHoS will review the need for increased frequency of transfer meetings in light of any changes in demand or capacity in either SFS/CIC service.
- A Deputy Head of Service from Safeguarding and Family Support or Children in Care will alternate chairing and all Team Managers are expected to attend.
- Cases should be identified to business support prior to the meeting who will collate information which outlines case status and useful transfer information.
- Case transfer taking no longer than 2 weeks from identifying CIC/SFS social worker, including handover meeting and transfer summary on the file.

## Transfer Meeting for all Services

- The meeting will identify transfers and any remedial actions required to facilitate the transfer and this will also be recorded by business support colleagues.
- Any case identified for transfer at the meeting should expect formal transfer to the new team to take place in no longer than **2 weeks** unless an alternative transfer point has been agreed (eg a LAC Review/Court Hearing)
- Prior to the formal transfer date, the new worker and current worker should plan introductions to family and professionals and should also write to them all confirming transfer has occurred.
- This letter should include the new workers team and contact details.
- A Case Transfer Summary should be authorised and signed off by the respective team manager to be available for the transfer meeting.
- The transferring social worker to complete a checklist to ensure that all key documents are available. This check list could also propose dates for a joint visit and handover discussion with the new worker.
- The team manager transferring the case will audit the file and its contents, as will the receiving team manager prior to transfer and they will agree remedial actions required.
- Completion of assessments, review, care plans and pathway plans will usually be required although it is acknowledged there may be occasions when there are some exceptions agreed by the Deputy Heads of Service.
- The team forwarding the transfer will take responsibility for updating FWi with the new worker and team.

To be reviewed October 2016.