

## Children's Services

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# Case Transfer Policy

## General Principles

In an organisation of our size it is necessary to work within a logical structure that ensures an effective use of resources and allocation of related work. All those working within children and families are working within one service and have a responsibility to ensure that the service users experience their involvement with that service as seamless.

This policy seeks to set out the key responsibilities in the transfer process and provide an initial framework. It is expected however; that it will be applied in a spirit of co-operation and negotiation between social work professionals where individual service user's needs and their overall experience of the service will be the priority. As a starting point the following principles should be used as a guide in all cases transferred between teams (excluding the MASH):

- The transfer of case responsibility should be dependent on the young person's needs and best interests.
- Case should not to be transferred whilst in proceedings.
- Case should not to be transferred if a Young Person is missing.
- Case not to be transferred if placement is in crisis.
- Case not to be transferred if child protection s47 investigation is ongoing.
- Young people's education should not be disrupted by case transfer
- Life story work is a corporate responsibility.
- The transfer should be planned and carried out in a timely manner.
- Good communication is essential.

## MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) to Family Support

All case transfers from MASH to Family Support will have the agreement and sign off from a MASH manager.

All complex cases that are transferring to Family Support will have a case discussion with the intaking team manager, this will be recorded on LCS as a transfer case note by the MASH social worker. A case will be considered complex if MASH have put in place an interim safety plan. This discussion will be recorded by the MASH worker as "MASH case transfer" on the child's case notes.

All other cases will have the reason for the case transfer to FST clearly recorded in the C&F assessment.

## **MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) to Children and Families Practice**

Case transfers from MASH to CFP happen in two ways. Either as a result of C&F assessment or as an outcome from a contact where the parents are agreeing for CFP support. Whichever route the transfer will be completed via assignment of the case to the relevant team on Early Help. The decision for transfer will be clearly reflected in the C&F assessment or the contact record which CFP managers will have access to. All transfers to CFP have been signed off by a manager in the MASH.

## **MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) to S.T.E.P (Support Teenagers and Empower Parents)**

S.T.E.P take referrals from MASH only. Case transfers from MASH to S.T.E.P happen in two ways, either following a 'full' C&F assessment on LCS or what is known as a 'paper' C&F assessment. A paper C&F assessment is a scaled down assessment whereby the children do not need to be seen prior to the case transfer. Ahead of the case transfer the referring worker will have spoken to the S.T.E.P Team and agreed for the case to be picked up by S.T.E.P, a discussion will take place regarding which type of C&F assessment is completed depending on the complexity. Parents will need to consent to a transfer to S.T.E.P. All assessments will have been signed off by a manager in the MASH and overall responsibility of deciding threshold has been met for statutory S.T.E.P support will sit with MASH managers.

## **Children and Families Practices to S.T.E.P**

Case transfers from CFP to S.T.E.P will go via the MASH. The CFP worker can contact S.T.E.P directly for a case discussion, a contact will need to be created on Early Help and progressed to LCS to be signed off by a manager in the MASH. MASH will complete either a full C&F assessment or a paper C&F assessment and a discussion will take place between S.T.E.P and MASH regarding which type of C&F assessment is completed depending on the complexity. Parents will need to consent to a transfer to S.T.E.P. All assessments will have been signed off by a manager in the MASH. Overall responsibility of deciding threshold has been met for statutory S.T.E.P support will sit with MASH managers.

## **S.T.E.P to Family Support Teams**

Families who require longer-term statutory intervention (level 4) after 15 weeks of S.T.E.P intervention will transfer to the Family Support Team. This will be discussed with the locality manager's in the first instance and a transfer date agreed before the process is completed on LCS. If a paper C&F was completed at the time of the transfer from MASH to S.T.E.P then an updated C&F assessment may be required and will be completed by the Family Support Team. If a child is at risk of significant harm and a Section 47 investigation is required before the 15 weeks, or safeguarding concerns have arisen which require siblings to be open to the FST then the case may transfer before the 15 week timeframe.

## **S.T.E.P to Children and Families Practices**

This process may be referred to as a "step down", this will happen when it has been identified that a family is no longer in need of support from a statutory service. S.T.E.P will contact the team manager at CFP to discuss the referral and the process will be completed on LCS, wherever possible the intaking CFP will be invited to attend the final mapping meeting.

### **Children and Families Practice to Family Support (step up)**

Families who meet the threshold for statutory intervention (level 4) while open to CFP can transfer to the Family Support Team in two ways. Firstly, if the escalation in concerns relates to the issue that was investigated by MASH prior to transfer to CFP, then this case can be discussed with the locality FST for transfer without a further C&F assessment. If the reason for escalation in concerns relates to a different issue to the original concern assessed by the MASH, the family will be re-referred to the MASH for a C&F assessment. This will be led by the MASH worker with the support of the allocated CFP worker who will know the family.

### **Case Transfer Family Support to Children and Families Practice**

This process may be referred to as a “step down”, this will happen when it has been identified that a family is no longer in need of support from a statutory service. There will have been a C&F assessment in the 12 months prior to transfer and wherever possible the intaking CFP will be invited to attend the final Family Support Meeting.

### **Case Transfer Meeting Family Support to Children in Care and 16 plus**

In advance of the Transfer Meeting, the Corporate Parenting team will receive a list of children ready to transfer, highlighting progress of the case and ongoing work. The transferring Team should have completed the checklist of expectations prior to considering transfer (Appendix A).

In specific and extraordinary circumstances, cases can transfer before the checklist has been completed. Authorisation for this to take place needs to be agreed by the Head of Service for both areas.

The case transfer meeting is the primary vehicle for coordinating transfer activity and a manager or deputy from each team should attend to ensure good communication and continuity. The meeting will be held monthly and will be minuted and chaired by Children In Care (CIC) and 16+ Team or Deputy Manager. The meeting provides an opportunity to give a clear indication of all potential transfers and what are the key areas of concern, support and tasks to progress. This meeting will help co-ordinate activities and resolve issues around those cases pending.

Essential information regarding the case should be shared at the transfer meeting by Family Support Managers including where the child is placed, the care plan, siblings and contact details, whether they have a SEN, dates set for meetings such as childcare reviews, etc.

Clear dates for relevant handover should be decided and joint visits if possible, to take place prior to transfer should be agreed and set at the transfer meeting. Handover meetings should be recorded on case notes on LCS using the case note tab “case transfer meeting”. Some tasks can also be negotiated where some tasks are completed by the transferring team, but transfer can occur to prevent drift and enable the care plan to progress.

### **Transfer of cases from Children In Care to the 16 + Team**

Young people will transfer to the 16 plus team at the age of 16. There will be a case transfer meeting between the CiC and 16 plus team which will be recorded on LCS in case notes under the case transfer meeting tab. This meeting will be attended by a manager from each team and the current case holding social

worker. There will be a handover meeting with the young person including the CiC social worker and the newly allocated worker from the 16 plus team.

### **Case Transfer from 16-25 Team and Family Support Teams**

If a young person leaves care before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and requires ongoing support, they will be transferred to our Family Support Team if they have been assessed as a Child In Need following a Children and Families Assessment. However, the young person will remain with 16-25 team if there is a four-month period of the young person reaching 18 years. This is as a result of their entitlement to a leaving care package of support and it not being in the young person's best interests to move between teams and experience a change of allocated worker.

### **When cases should be taken to Transfer Meeting**

*Section 20 cases* – Cases should be brought to case transfer meeting following the 1<sup>st</sup> Child Care Review *to avoid delay in transfer*. Cases should transfer either following the 2<sup>nd</sup> Child Care Review or once the plan has been agreed that a return to the family home or other extended family is not achievable or in the young person's interests.

*Section 38 & 31* - These cases should be brought to the monthly transfer meeting once the date for the final hearing is scheduled or as early as possible to agree a date for the case transfer. If the final hearing date is delayed then the case should be brought back to the case transfer meeting and an alternative date of transfer agreed. The new social worker should try and attend the final hearing where possible and should be made aware of the plan at an earlier stage.

*Adoptions* – Similar to Section 38 & 31 cases, these cases should be brought to the monthly transfer meetings once the date for the final hearing is scheduled or as soon as early permanency has been identified as a parallel plan.

### **Pre Transfer Requirements**

In line with the checklist (Appendix A) prior to all transfers the file should be audited by the CIC and 16+ Team or Deputy Manager and any amendments made. The Family Support Social Worker should also make sure that all relevant information is uploaded on the child/ren's LCS file and ensure LCS is up to date including the legal status, chronology and case summary.

Life story work is a corporate responsibility and while it will have greater significance at particular times in a child's care, workers should be mindful to capture and record key events decisions and involvements' that will add value to the story book.

### **Young people remanded to custody s.20**

In addition to the standard s.20 information above, the remand review will need to be arranged, dates agreed for the CCR and remand sentence planning undertaken prior to initiating the LCS case transfer post 13 weeks.

### **Cases where the plan is Adoption**

By the second Child Care Review, once the final hearing dates are known or once early permanency has been identified the Family Support Team Social

Worker will make a referral to Adoption Connects. This is to ensure family finding begins and joint working between the Family Support Teams and the Children In Care Team will commence.

### **Disagreements between teams**

If there are any disagreements between teams, both Team Managers will attempt to resolve the concerns in a timely manner, to avoid drift and impacting adversely on a Child/Young Person. The responsibility for the Child/Young Person should be retained by the current transferring team until this matter is resolved. If the disagreement cannot be resolved within 1 working day, the Team Managers will refer to their respective Heads of Service to avoid drift

## **Appendix A - Family Support to Children in Care/ 16 plus case file check list**

- Personal details up to date
- Legal status correct
- Adoption pathway in the correct place
- Court documents uploaded
- Later life letter for adopted children
- CPR up to date
- Case summary clear and up to date
- Child in correct placement and not in draft
- Children placed at home with parent – this has been signed off by ADM and have placement with parents agreement on file
- Supervision and management oversight evident?
- Stat visit clear and shows voice of child
- Chronology up to date
- Care Plan – what is it? Up to date and is clear what the plan is
- Has court agreed any ongoing work? If so what, by who, when etc
- Contact arrangements for child with birth family
- Health and education tabs up to date