



Title:	Unallocated Cases Guidance.
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Service Area:	Children's Statutory Social Work and Youth Justice Case Work See the separate guidance for Targeted Family Support
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Scope:	This document provides guidance on: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Definition of unallocated cases.2. Service priorities for the allocation of work.3. How to manage unallocated cases.4. Reviewing unallocated cases.5. Management Oversight.6. How to identify the unallocated cases.
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Lead:	Tracey Nurse: Head of Service , Sue Parker Principal Social Worker and Wilf Fearon, YJS Operational Leadership
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Approved: Helen Blackman Director of Children's Integrated Services. Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director of People and DCS	Date: 6th April 2020 10th April 2020	Review: April 2021 April 2021
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1.	Definition of unallocated cases
	Any child who has an open referral/under assessment for more than 24 hours is deemed as unallocated, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Protection• Children Looked After

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children in Need• Order Statutory Youth Justice Court					
2.	Service priorities for the allocation of work					
	<p>To ensure that we prioritise those children who have the greatest potential needs for support, when there are difficulties allocating children’s casework promptly, cases should be prioritised, as follows, Children Protection and Youth Justice Public Protection (priority 1), Children Looked After (priority 2) and Child in Need (priority 3).</p> <p>Alongside these core priorities managers will consider factors that might increase risk and highlight the severity of the child’s lived experience. The Team Manager should be mindful of any characteristics which might elevate the risk and require a higher priority for allocation e.g. repeat referrals/ plan due to a similar pattern of concerns historically, SEND etc. In Youth Justice priority is given to those with highest levels of risk to themselves or others and the highest levels of vulnerability.</p>					
3.	How to manage unallocated cases					
	<p>All cases will continue to be worked on a duty basis whilst awaiting allocation to one worker. Team Manager must put management oversight in case notes as Manager’s Oversight or authorisation comments for signing off the referral on day 1 of being unallocated. This oversight will task the duty worker with an initial plan to support. If the case remains unallocated for 3 days the Team Manager will complete the following by cutting and pasting headings and adding to case note on Liquid Logic or Careworks as Manager’s Oversight.</p> <table><tr><td>Case Summary of reason for Children’s social care involvement/issues and concerns.</td></tr><tr><td>Action plan. (Including actions by other agencies, date of actions to be completed whilst being worked unallocated on duty).</td></tr><tr><td>Safety Plan (how we know child is safe during the unallocated period)</td></tr><tr><td>Date child will be next seen.</td></tr><tr><td>Date case will be reviewed by Team Manager (at a minimum of every 5 days whilst unallocated).</td></tr></table>	Case Summary of reason for Children’s social care involvement/issues and concerns.	Action plan. (Including actions by other agencies, date of actions to be completed whilst being worked unallocated on duty).	Safety Plan (how we know child is safe during the unallocated period)	Date child will be next seen.	Date case will be reviewed by Team Manager (at a minimum of every 5 days whilst unallocated).
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4.	Reviewing unallocated work and escalation					
	<p>If case remains unallocated for 5 days or more Team Manager must notify Service Manager immediately. The Service Manager should review the file and attempt to allocate within their service area or liaise with other Service Managers to attempt to achieve allocation. The Service Manager should also record Manager’s Oversight on Liquid Logic and inform Head of Service on day 10. The Head Service will also discuss with the Director of CIS to agree any emergency action and record this on the child’s file</p> <p>The Director of CIS will ensure the DCS is aware of the number of unallocated cases each month, identifying any patterns or resource implications.</p>					

	<p>We wish to maintain 100% allocation of statutory cases and certainly, this must be achieved for children subject to child protection plans. However, each Team Manager and Service Managers must balance their allocation decisions to prioritise the children most in need of safeguarding, support and monitoring to preserve their safety and meet their needs.</p> <p>A weekly report will identify unallocated children's cases with the length of time unallocated for the DCS and Director of CIS to inform resourcing decisions to support full allocation.</p> <p>On a fortnightly basis unallocated cases are reported to the Chief Executive to informing resourcing decisions.</p>
5.	Management Oversight
	<p>All Team Managers will complete case note "Manager's Oversight on all unallocated cases" as outlined above. This includes the visiting frequency and date on which the child was last seen. It is very important that Team Managers regularly scrutinise all the unallocated cases in their teams, at a minimum of 3 days initially then at weekly intervals. Oversight and planning must recorded in the case notes on Liquid Logic by the manager each time they review the work and risks.</p> <p>They must ensure that all new information on the case is reviewed and visits take place by duty social workers up until case allocation. This should also be recorded as a case note, Manager's Oversight.</p> <p>If a child's case cannot be allocated, the Team Managers must send a letter to the family and other involved agencies within 5 working days of the case arriving. This letter should include details regarding how to contact the team in the event of any issues and details of the visiting frequency by the team duty worker etc.</p> <p>Partner agencies, such as schools or health, should be informed that the case is unallocated and given the Team Managers name and contact details.</p> <p>Given that a child will be expecting to be contacted by their new worker we must keep them informed of our plans and ensure that they feel we are committed to supporting them and listening to what they say. To ensure that we keep children informed a similar letter will be sent by the Team Manager to the child if they are over 11 years of age and also to the parents so that they are fully informed of plans.</p> <p>See appendix letter templates for notification to agencies, families and children that a child's casework is unallocated and that services are being provided on a duty basis.</p>
6.	How to identify the unallocated cases
	<p>Daily electronic reports are available.</p> <p>The case allocation report, produced daily is based on the data from 7pm the previous day. This outlines the number and status of all open cases to Children's Social Care. This report provides information on a team by team basis, including the number of unallocated cases per team. Each Team Manager and Service Manager can therefore regularly monitor the numbers of unallocated cases in their respective teams/areas.</p>

	<p>Within the Youth Justice Service casework is nearly never unallocated as allocations are of the highest priority and stem from court orders with immediate allocation. The Youth Justice Service has an additional means of managing demands as they can vary National Standards with the agreement of the Local Management Board e.g. increase caseloads and decrease visiting frequencies to ensure allocation. However if a case was unallocated management oversight would follow the process above. Out of Court casework and allocations would follow the same process. YJS Heads of Service would report unallocated work to Director of CIS and Youth Justice Board Chair (DCS) if they occurred.</p> <p>The case allocation report is also accessible for dip sampling by all Senior Managers and Quality Assurance support.</p> <p>Monitoring the average time taken to allocate children's cases will inform resource planning and service structures to ensure children receive timely, high quality interventions and support.</p>
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See letter templates for:-

1. Letter to partners/agencies
2. Letter to the child
3. Letter to the family / carers