

1. Stockport Children's Social Care Case Allocation Process – May 2020

- 1.1 Case allocation needs to be in line with the principles of being in the best interests of the child and family concerned as well as considering the needs of the individual worker so that they are able to support the child and family effectively.
- 1.2 It is essential that when children are either being newly assessed to determine what their needs are under section 17 or sec 47 of the Children Act 1989, or require a new worker to be allocated due to changes in circumstances, that this is done in a way which minimises disruption to the child. It should ensure that wherever possible there is continuation of knowledge of the child, builds on existing relationships and that the new worker has the right skills, experience and capacity to meet their needs.
- 1.3 Team Leaders are responsible for prioritising children's needs and determining the level of risk when allocating children to the appropriate worker. When allocating a child to a social worker the team leader must check whether the child or relevant members of the family have any records on the Early Help Module or Liquid Logic including but not exclusively:
- MASSH Referral / Contact Record which should include family/carers consent to initiating a child and family assessment under section 17.
 - Triage information completed by the First Response team worker
 - Relevant documents from any children's social care involvement including key documents such as:

Case summary
Chronology
Last assessment
Relevant Child's plan
And
Anything relevant to previous care proceedings, or pre-proceedings activity
- This task is important to ensure that the team leaders has a clear view of the presenting issues, the historical concerns and to formulate any key tasks the new social worker needs to complete and consider in their initial work with the family.
- Where the family/child has been previously open and closed less than six weeks ago from the current referral the assessment should be allocated to the social worker who previously held the case wherever possible. If this is not possible due to the member of staff not being available for whatever reason the team leader who had oversight of the case should remain involved to provide consistency of knowledge and relationships.

- The team leader responsible will then progress the allocation from EHM to Liquid Logic for a child and family assessment and allocate the child to a social worker. The allocation must take place within 24 hours of the decision for a referral to proceed for a social work assessment to be completed.

1.4 Factors to be taken into account at allocation:

- Which locality/team/social worker previously held the case
- The workers current case load i.e. case numbers and level of complexity
- The workers professional experience i.e. newly qualified
- Other duties and responsibilities carried by the worker
- Whether the social worker has recently returned from long term sickness absence
- Training, development needs of worker
- Specialist skills and preference of worker
- The gender, race, disability, cultural needs of service users i.e. any particular needs of young person; child needs positive male/female role model etc.
- Geographical considerations of case i.e. number of out of area cases.
- Conflict of interest i.e. worker may have personal links or knowledge of family which preclude them from managing case
- Views of worker regarding case
- Joint working: In the event of a case requiring two workers a Primary Worker must be identified and given lead responsibility
- Any potential risk to worker i.e. female worker with a male service user who has a history of sexualised behaviour or visa versa
- Consideration should be given of the individual workers ethnicity or diversity if there are concerns about hate crime or harassment on the basis of discrimination or religious, political or culturally held beliefs.

1.5 Prior to a case being allocated the team leader must ensure that the social worker is provided with the details of the child and family through a one to one discussion. It is expected that when a case has been allocated and there has been previous involvement with children's social care the social worker or team leader discuss the case with the previous social worker and/or team leader.

1.6 The team leader is responsible for the inputting of allocation details on to the referral record on Liquid Logic.

1.7 The team leader will record a clear reflective manager's decision to evidence the rational for the allocation on the child's case record which will include any key actions to be completed with clear timescales within Liquid Logic.

¹ *This is not an exhaustive list*

2. Statutory Cases

- 2.1 All Statutory cases i.e. Looked After Children, Child Protection (including Section 47 investigations), Children subject to proceedings but not on orders, and supervision orders, will be allocated to a qualified Social Worker.
- 2.2 At the point of allocation, the team leader will agree and record, on the case file, the plan of work and expected outcome. The team leader will monitor the progress of the work undertaken via the normal reviewing process and also in supervision.
- 2.3 The team leader when considering allocation to agency social workers should be aware that Stockport Family do not allocate Court Proceedings or Looked After Children to agency staff. The rationale around this is in line with the values of Stockport Family and restorative practice. The Stockport family model focuses on relationship-based practice and as agency staff are temporary and able to give minimal periods of notice this can lead to disruption of relationships and the need to reallocate in the middle of key proceedings. Team Leaders when allocating Children and family assessments should consider these factors when allocating cases and avoid allocation to agency workers in these circumstances.
- 2.4 The responsible team leader should be aware that pre-birth assessments should not be allocated to student social workers. Where possible pre-birth assessments should only be allocated to ASYE social workers when these can be co allocated with a more experienced social worker or senior practitioner.
- 2.5 In circumstances where appropriate a student / unqualified social worker can be co allocated a statutory case. However, it is the responsibility of the allocated social worker to complete the required statutory duties.