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**TRANSFER PROTOCOL**

**London Borough of Sutton**

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## 1. Scope & Context

The purpose of this protocol is to clarify the arrangements for all children and young people receiving a service from Sutton Children’s Services whose case is transferring between teams across the Service and transfers in from other boroughs. Please note this document sets out to clarify transfer of case responsibility between teams and does not address the issue of request for service between teams. Clarity on requests for service can be gained within local policy and procedures and the threshold document Continuum of Need.

Sutton Children’s Services is constructed into various children’s teams which includes, Early Help and Integrated Youth Justice, Locality Teams, Children and Young People’s Disability Service, Court and Adoption Service and Children Looked After and Leaving Care Team.  Although every attempt is made to minimise changes in social worker and service for each child and their family, children’s individual and changing needs mean that different services may be required at different stages of the child’s journey. It is therefore inevitable that on occasions, children’s cases will need to transfer between teams in order to respond to their changing needs. It is in this context that it is essential for practitioners and managers to be clear about the transfer points and the processes which should be followed to ensure a consistent, effective, service for vulnerable children.

Children’s First Point of Contact Service (CFCS) - is the single point of entry to access teams within the Local Authority. They play an integral role in the application of threshold to contacts entering the Local Authority across the tiers of need from 2 to 4

Transfers are always to be made in the best interests of the child, on their journey, and the overarching principle of this process needs to be one of being child focussed. Impact is to be minimal and transfers are to be seamless and timely, in order that drift is not created in the continued execution of the child’s plan.

This protocol focuses on the transition of cases from the above services, providing clarity on expectations with regard to roles and responsibilities timescales and escalation in the event of the need for resolution.

The protocol covers the following services/teams in Sutton Children’s Services:

* Children’s First Contact Service (CFCS)
* Early Help and Integrated Youth Justice Service (EHIYJS)
* The three Locality Services (Red East, Blue North and Green West)
* Court and Adoption Service
* The Children and Young People Disability Service
* Children Looked After and Leaving Care Service
* In the spirit of effective transitions post 18, also to adult teams where appropriate

## 2. Principles

Transfer of cases will be conducted in a timely fashion, according to defined standards ensuring as much continuity as possible for service users.  The child's experience within the service should be the central concern.

Transfer arrangements will always be mindful of the need to ensure the safety of children.  It is essential that good quality information is passed from the originating team to prevent gaps in knowledge and to ensure that the welfare and protection of the child is paramount.

Children, young people, their parents/carers and agencies, should be advised of any plans to transfer cases between teams. Wherever possible, case transfer should include a handover meeting with the child/young person and their parent/carer.

When cases meet the criteria for transfer, this should be treated as a priority, with every effort made to ensure smooth and timely transfer.

At no point should a child subject to a child protection plan or a looked after child be left without an allocated social worker. If difficulties are experienced in transferring cases between any teams due to capacity, this should be escalated to the relevant Head of Services to resolve in the best interests of children. In the rare or unlikely event that HOS cannot resolve matters, then the case needs to be escalated to the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care who will make the final decision based on representations from the respective Heads of Service.

## 3. Brief Remits of teams

* **Children’s First Contact Service (CFCS)**

Triage and assess risk to children, from contacts made to the Local Authority, signposting and transferring to the relevant team as appropriate.

* **Early Help and Integrated Youth Justice Service (EHIYJS)**

Providing targeted early help (tier 2) support to children and families aged 0-18 to prevent escalation in need and risk. As well as working with Young People aged 10+ at risk of offending, edge of care and school exclusion (tiers 2 to 4).

* **The three Locality teams (Red East, Blue North and Green West)**

Working at tiers 3 and 4 the Localities undertake initial assessments and determine level of need and risk to children aged 0-18. The teams work with Children who are subject to CIN and CP plans, alongside PLO work and some court work including initiating care proceedings, holding cases subject to Supervision Orders and completing private assessments for the courts namely section 7 and 37 reports

* **The Children and Young People’s Disability Service (CYPDS)**

0-18 service for children with complex health needs or disabilities which meet the criteria for specialist provision. The whole journey and service provision will be managed by the team up until the point of transition into adult services, which commences at age 17

0 - 18 service for children in receipt of short breaks

* **Court and Adoption Service**

Picking up cases from the initial hearing (particularly those where the child is looked after) the court team works with children for the duration of the care proceedings up until the final determination when the case will move on unless adoption is determined.

* **Children Looked After and Leaving Care Service (CLA/LCS)**

Responsible for our children and young people in long term care and those young adults leaving the care system and or those requiring additional support/signposting.

## 4. Transfer points

It is the originating team’s responsibility to ensure the file is in order prior to the transfer. Please ensure that you cross reference the content of the file with the checklist at the end of the document.

NB ***Drift in planning and continuity for children is unacceptable therefore though files need to be as comprehensive as possible and have key documents including visits, plans and supervisions in place, negotiations may need to take place regarding other documents to follow in order to avoid delay. In these instances these agreements should be made via the outgoing teams and by the receiving teams service managers.***

### 4.1 CFCS

**Contacts**

All transfers in requests are managed through Sutton Children’s First Contact Service (CFCS).

The transferring in borough will be asked to provide the following documents beforehand:

· Formal request in writing requesting case transfer

· Full details of the family i.e. names and family composition.

· An up to date Chronology.

· All child protection conference reports on the family, current plan & minutes

from the last core group meeting.

· Copies of any previous assessments completed on the family.

· Copies of any other relevant information or documentation pertaining to the

family.

· Confirmation of the families housing status in Sutton

Once these have been received a contact will be created in CFCS with all the provided documents attached. This will be overseen by the Manager to ensure that the request is appropriate. Once signed off the Contact is sent to the CP admin Team and an email is sent to the receiving locality managers to alert them in order that they can liaise with CP admin to convene the transfer in conference.

**Consent**

There is an expectation that referrers seek consent from families when making referrals to Children’s social care. When screening contacts and in deciding that a family would benefit from an intervention delivered by children’s services CFCS will make contact with the family to seek their consent for the assessment to be undertaken. If consent is declined under section 17 the family will then be sign posted to alternate services. All efforts will be made to contact a family for consent however it is recognised in some instances that this duty may need to move to the localities to follow up on.

Section 47 overrides the statutory requirement for consent. However, best practice dictates that we work in partnership with families at all stages unless it is considered that this will place the child at imminent risk. Therefore decisions regarding CFCS contacting parents for further information under such circumstances will be made on a case by case basis as it is recognised that clarity of information from the outset has significant consequences for the journey of the case.

**Open cases**

Information coming through CFCS on cases open to any of the statutory social work teams will be sent automatically to the teams to process. The information is uploaded onto mosaic and an alert is sent to the worker, the duty inbox and the manager.

New information received via a contact for cases open to the Targeted Early Help Service at tier 2 will be screened to establish if a statutory response is required. CFCS will be responsible for deciding if the information warrants a statutory intervention at tier 3 or 4 and will therefore follow their due process for either tier. If it is determined that a tier 3 intervention is required then consent from the family will need to be ascertained. If this is refused then a dialogue with Targeted Early Help will need to take place regarding their continued involvement. Where the information received is screened and remains Tier 2 the information is uploaded onto MOSAIC and an alert is sent to the worker, Team Manager and Deputy Service Manager.

If a safeguarding process is required under section 47 then the contact will be transferred in the usual way as a Red to the Locality where the young person resides with an alert being sent to the Targeted Early Help Service at the same time. The Targeted Early Help Service will be involved in relevant meetings and decision making and will keep the case open until decisions are made following the strategy meeting/outcome of the section 47 investigation where the determination of the ongoing long term work will be agreed.

**Contacts which meet threshold for LA targeted tier 2 intervention**

CFCS will screen and signpost contacts accordingly which would benefit for support at Tier 2. To be eligible for support from the Local Authority’s Targeted Early Help Service will need to meet Tier 2 of the Threshold Guidance. In addition to Tier 2 needs, at least three [Supporting Families criteria](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1066049/Annex_A_National_Supporting_Families_Outcome_Framework.pdf) must be present that require support to improve outcomes for children. The Early Help Service triages all Early Help referrals where the Supporting Families Criteria are indicated.

**Contacts which require immediate action**

Any new contact or tier 2 open to Targeted Early Help where risk of significant harm is considered (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/19JIRARaAZPyTg3EaH4S9u4UNyEt8dzLs/edit>) will evoke rapid communication between CFCS and the appropriate Locality Team or Children, Young People and Disability Service, in order that dual planning and process can commence whilst information gathering is taking place.

**Contacts which would benefit from a child and family assessment**

The Children Act 1989 defines children in need as those who:

1. Are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by a Local Authority
2. A Child’s health or development is likely to be significantly impaired or further impaired without the provision for him of such services
3. The Child is disabled.

For the purpose of this document Children in Need in Sutton are defined as those who would benefit from a child and family assessment at tier 3 of the [threshold document](https://www.suttonlscp.org.uk/static/guidance_files/Sutton_LSCP_Threshold_Guidance_2022.pdf). CFCS, upon analysing contacts and seeking consent from the family for the assessment to be undertaken, will pass the assessment to the Locality team where the family resides.

**Contacts on closed cases within the last 3 months**

Where a case has closed within the last 3 months and a new contact has been received, CFCS will treat this contact in the first instance as a new contact, considering the information against [Sutton’s LSCP Threshold Guidance](https://www.suttonlscp.org.uk/static/guidance_files/Sutton_LSCP_Threshold_Guidance_2022.pdf) and making an informed decision regarding next steps. If it is concluded that the case may require further work then this will be transferred back to the last team that the child was allocated under the three month rule to determine next steps

**Contacts for children with complex health needs or disabilities**

When contacts are received for children with complex health needs or disabilities, CFCS will screen the referral to establish both threshold and which service is most appropriate to deal with the child’s needs.

Referrals over to CYPDS must be accompanied by a Functional Needs Assessment (FNA) that has been completed by the relevant agency and which has determined that the child or young person is eligible for the service. If it is a request for Short Breaks, CFCS will transfer the case to the Specialist Support Team, or the social work team in CYPDS.

Should a safeguarding referral be received without a FNA but it is clear that the child would meet the criteria for a CYPDS social worker the case will move to the CYPDS team. Given the size of CYPDS should they need support with managing the initial safeguarding concerns the Locality team where the child lives will co-work this initial piece of work with the expectation that CYPDS holds case responsibility and leads on any child and family assessment if deemed necessary.

**Section 7 or Section 37 Reports**

Requests from the Court for Section 7 or 37 reports are undertaken by the Locality the child resides in if it is a new referral, or by the relevant team if an open case. CFCS will therefore direct accordingly to such requests that are received ensuring that the case if closed sits within the 12 week window as advised by Cafcass Policy.

**Relinquished babies**

For new referrals of a relinquished baby, these should go straight to the Court team.

**Private Fostering**

All referrals in respect of Private Fostering Arrangements will be sent to the Children Looked After team for the completion of a Private Fostering Assessment and ongoing review.

**Transfer of Child Protection cases from other local authorities**

If Sutton Children’s Services are notified of a child subject to a child protection plan by another Local Authority that has moved into Sutton, the CFCS Manager is responsible for negotiating transfers. This includes making contact with the responsible Local Authority and ensuring the case meets the criteria for transfer across local authority boundaries (in accordance with the guidance set out in Working Together and the PAN London Procedures). Once this is established, CFCS will ask for the relevant documents to be sent to the appropriate team. The Duty Manager will liaise with Business Support and the transferring authority inorder to organise and agree the conference. If the child is made the subject of a child protection plan, or a Child in Need Plan, the Service Manager/Team Manager will allocate a social worker at that point.

[See London child protection procedures for more information](https://www.londoncp.co.uk/chi_fam_bound.html)

**Transfer in Child in Need case**

Please refer to [London Safeguarding procedures](https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/chi_fam_bound.html#) regarding expectations of both the transferring in and receiving authority in relation to Child in Need cases.

In such instances it will be the responsibility of CFCS to ensure that the child is a resident of the London Borough of Sutton and that the referring borough has supplied all of the necessary information. The contact will then be sent to the relevant team who will liaise with the referring authority regarding a date for a CIN meeting. It will remain the responsibility of the referring in Local Authority to arrange the meeting and invite Sutton social care. The point of transfer should take place at the meeting, with Sutton being responsible for leading on the CIN plan thereafter.

**Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

All referrals relating to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) are entered onto Mosaic by CFCS, they are then transferred to the Children Looked After and Leaving Care Service. This service is responsible for managing all assessment and support services required for this group of children and young people

**Step up from Early Help and Integrated Youth Justice Service**

There will be early help cases where the EHIYJS considers that a child/young person’s needs have escalated from tier 2 to tier 3 and as such should have a social worker allocated and a child and family assessment completed. In these instances the following is to take place:

1. Specialist Support Worker in EHIYJS speaks to their team manager regarding their concerns and an analysis of risk is undertaken.
2. If the team manager agrees then consent is sought from the family for the referral to be made to CFCS explaining to them what the added benefit of a social worker would be.
3. Once consent is gained EHIYJS will complete the CFCS referral form and send to CFCS with a request for the case to be passed to relevant locality for a child and family assessment. At the same time a courtesy call will be made by EHIYJS to the relevant Locality to advise of the referral, discuss the case and consider if continued joint working would be appropriate.
4. The Team Manager will record their conversation with CFCS and Locality Team Manager on MOSAIC outlining how the level of concern has met Tier 3.
5. If consent is given and CFCS is in agreement with the threshold then case transfers to localities within 72hrs from receipt of the referral.
6. If consent is not given CFCS to determine if threshold is met for tier 4 services.
7. If tier 4 is not met the case remains with the SSW in EHIYJS who will determine next actions.

**Escalation from EHIYJS to Tier 4**

“This will usually be in response to an incident or significant information being received” As noted above if information comes via a contact into CFCS this will be screened in the usual way and if deemed an immediate risk will be sent to the locality teams to be dealt with.

In instances where CFCS would not be aware, the SSW will complete a referral to CFCS who will respond as with other emergency contacts received, by alerting the relevant locality so that the 87a forms can commence and due process can be followed as quickly as possible. If immediate action is required (i.e strategy meeting, CP medical) the EHIYJS Team manager should email/call CFCS and flag the need for case escalation and follow up by sending the referral form ASAP. The incoming Locality should be kept informed so that resource can be deployed

### 4.2. Transfers to Court team

Transfers to the Court team will in the main be made from the Locality teams. In addition and in keeping with the ethos of reducing transition points for children the Court team will take as priority children who are either looked after at the point of initiating care proceedings or where the child becomes looked after following the first or contested ICO hearing.

The court team will manage cases for the duration of proceedings up until adoption if that is the determination. The process for auditing the case file is outlined below - this should take place (suffice for emergency hearings) prior to the initial hearing to avoid delay in transfer.

The court team will take responsibility for all actions directed within the first CMO, even if the case has not officially transferred on MOSAIC. For the avoidance of doubt children who are looked after prior to initiating care proceedings include: children and parents placed under section 20 agreements in any residential setting or parent and child foster placement and any child placed under reg 24 with extended family or friends

For children that enter care proceedings who are open to the Children and Young People’s Disability Service, the court team is available to co-work with care proceedings cases as required.

For the rare occasion that a child remains in locality teams for the duration of care proceedings and final determination is that of adoption then the case will transfer to the court team to undertake this piece of work.

### 4.3 Children Looked After and Leaving Care Service

Children Looked After and Leaving Care Service will have cases transferred to them as follows:

* UASC from CFCS
* Private fostering arrangements from the Localities
* Children Looked after with long term care plan to remain section 20 from Localities
* Children and young people subject to Care Orders from the Localities and Court team
* Cases where ADM agrees that adoption is no longer the plan for a child.

## 5. Transfer process

**Early Warning list - Timeline**

Locality teams transferring to the Court team will place the child’s details on the early warning list at the legal planning meeting stage

Locality teams transferring to the Children Looked After and Leaving Care Service will place the child’s details on the early warning list at the point that the decision is made for the child to remain in Local Authority long term care. For private foster arrangements the Locality teams will place the child’s details on the early warning list at the conclusion of a positive child and family assessment.

Court team transferring to the Locality teams will place the child’s details on the early warning list at the conclusion of the care proceedings (instances of the child returning to the parents care under a Supervision Order)

Court team transferring to the Children Looked After and Leaving Care Service will place the child’s details on the early warning list once a final Care Order has been determined in court.

## 6. [Transfer Procedures](http://www.proceduresonline.com/southwark/chapters/pr_transfer_teams.htm#tran_cases#tran_cases)

The decision to transfer a case should be taken by the Service manager or supervising manager and should be recorded on the child’s record on MOSAIC.

Step 1

Team Manager to complete the Google form providing the relevant information.

A detailed audit to be carried out before or at the time of completing the google form as the case cannot transfer if an audit has not taken place.

The Google form needs to be submitted by Wednesdays at 12pm

Step 2

CLA Business Support will log into the inbox on Wednesdays to check if there are google form responses to be added to transfer list Google sheet

If there are responses, business support will update the list with new cases or add updated information to cases already listed for transfer.

CLA Business Support will send an email to all Case Managers to remind them of the upcoming meeting and to remind them of the deadline for cases to be submitted.

Step 3

CLA Business Support to log into the inbox at 2pm on Wednesday afternoon to check if there are Google Forms responses to be added to the transfer list - Google sheet. If there are responses, business support will update the list with new cases or add updated information to cases already listed for transfer.

Step 4

Case managers with cases on the transfer list will need to attend the virtual transfer meeting. The calendar invite will be sent to case managers from business support via Gmail calendar with the link to the meeting.

Case managers will need to provide the most up to date information regarding the case, the transfer and the mosaic workstep audit information.

CLA business support will also be in attendance to record actions from the case managers and make notes of any actions agreed at the meeting.

Step 5

CLA business support will tidy up the actions from the meeting. Cases will also be moved off the list if transfer has been completed/not going ahead.

CLA business support will send an email to all team managers to inform them the google sheet has been updated following the meeting in the morning. This will remind manager there may be tasks outstanding that are delaying transfer and to be completed by next week.

## 7. Contingency planning

Requests to suspend any aspect of this protocol due to localised pressures such a capacity should be raised with the respective HOS for discussion at SMT.

## Appendix 1

**Documents and tasks to be completed by transfer - checklist**

A transfer summary should be produced for any case transferring, setting out the updated case information and highlighting key issues

* All case recording is up to date, including an updated chronology, contact records, records of visits (CIN,CP,LAC); LAC paperwork, Statutory Review etc
* Front page of Mosaic to be completed including ethnicity, GP, school/nursery where relevant, linking all siblings
* All case recording on MOSAIC must be completed
* Supervision records should be up to date (case should show that the allocated worker has had regular supervision in accordance with Sutton’s Supervision Policy) and recorded on MOSAIC:
* A copy of all current Legal Orders are included
* All statements, care plans and working together agreements
* 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 Accommodated under Section 20) will have been requested
* Initial Impact tool
* Pen picture of the child/young person on long term cases
* Photograph of on file (subject to consent for young people)
* For children aged 11 years and over, a CSE risk assessment
* Financial agreements should be up to date and recorded on the transfer record.
* Placement information record
* Up to date chronology
* Genogram
* Personal Education Plan
* Health Plan
* MOSAIC workflows complete

Other documentation for children who are looked after - this should not prevent transfer

* Passport
* National Insurance number
* If the young person is an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, any Home Office documents relating to their immigration status.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)