

## Transfer Protocol Across Swindon’s Childrens Services

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# **Transfer Protocol Across Swindon's Childrens Services**

## **February 2026**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to set out the key expectations and principles around how we will support our children and young people to move between Social Work and Early Intervention teams within Swindon.

Using strength-based practice, we will work alongside children and their families when they experience challenges to support them to build strong foundations and develop resilience so that children thrive. There will be times when children need our help and protection to stop them being harmed. These children and their families will require support from statutory service including help from our partners.

This document is intended as a guide for Social Workers and Managers. It will define the pathways for our children and young people, including decision making points, roles and responsibilities. This document will not cover every situation and in exceptional cases it is expected that managers will negotiate individual decisions based on the child's best interests.

Overall it will demonstrate how the transfer process supports our children and young people's journey for permanence. It sets out how we can all work together to provide support that is seamless and safe for our children.

At the time of transfer to another service area, professional respect for the decisions made must be discussed and agreed as a way forward. Decisions cannot be ignored and overridden by incoming managers

This document should be read in conjunction with our Social Worker and Manager Practice Standards.

### **2. Overarching Principles - The child is at the centre.**

Any discussions/negotiation relating to transfers will always consider the best interest of the child. Swindon is committed to reducing the number of Social Workers for a child as much as possible.

Social Workers and other key professionals will work closely to support children and young people to remain living with their immediate family. In some situations, it is not possible for our children and young people to remain in their family home.

Consideration needs to be given to when a child transfers to another team and this should not occur during key events or transitions in a child or families life.

Where there is a disagreement the immediate or urgent needs of children and families must remain a priority and teams should approach this using their professional judgement to ensure the child/young person/family's immediate needs are addressed.

### **We are aware of the impact of transitions upon children and families**

Transition refers to the movement of one situation, event or experience to another. Though our intention is always where possible to keep transitions to a minimum, the support offered to children and families by different parts of Childrens Services means

that transitions inevitably occur, whether that be a transition to a different type and level of support, and/or the support the child and family are receiving moves to a different Social Worker or an alternatively qualified practitioner. There is an increasing body of awareness of the impact that transition can have upon children and especially the impact of a negative transition. Negative experiences of transition have been found to have an impact upon children's emotional and behavioural wellbeing and development.

Our aim is to keep those transitions to a minimum and when they do occur to ensure they are well managed through focusing on the quality of relationship we have with the child and family and ensuring that is based on respect, by working with children and families and not at them so ensuing their voices are heard.

We will communicate with the child and families about when transition will occur, explaining the reasons why and what will happen, we will ensure children and families are able to express their feelings about the transition. We will also ensure that the movement from one team and one professional to another is done in a positive way that focuses upon the strengths of the child and family and doesn't require the child to feel like they are starting again, but rather they are building on previous engagement. We will ensure new staff supporting a child and family explain who they are, what their role will be. We will ensure that where a child and family's relation with a professional comes to an end, that the ending is achieved positively and leaves the child and family feeling valued.

### **No delay**

It is accepted that there should be flexibility when transferring children from one team to another and there should be no delays which impact on the child's care plan or support being provided to the family. Capacity of a team should not prevent or delay transfer; however, the transferring team should be flexible during any negotiations relating to transfer. Timescales and required actions will be agreed by Managers as part of the transfer meeting.

### **Seamless service**

Swindon is committed to ensuring that transfers of children from one team to another are smooth and seamless. Social Workers and managers will ensure that they communicate in advance of the child/family transferring to another team and that all relevant information is shared in advance. The child and family will be advised of the change of Social Worker in advance, and they will have the opportunity to meet the new worker prior to the transfer. The new Social Worker will also attend the scheduled review/meeting prior to transfer to ensure they are fully up to date with the child's care plan and families plan of support. The child's file needs to meet certain standards of recording, assessment and information to allow the receiving service to see any immediate strengths, needs, assessments and plans required to keep the child safe.

### **Transfer of children processes**

#### **3. Transfer from Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to the Assessment and Child Protection Team**

Children and Families Contact Swindon, the Integrated Front Door, is responsible for the triage of children and making threshold decisions about the next steps in relation to

a contact dependent on the level of need and risk in line with the Right Help Right Time threshold guidance. See Step up to Social Care p13 and link to guidance

#### [The Right Help at Right Time Guidance - Swindon Safeguarding Partnership](#)

If multi-agency information gathering and sharing is required as it is not clear from the referral what is known about the child and risk of harm the contact will be passed to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub for further enquires to be made to determine the level of need and whether the needs identified can be best met by Early Intervention of statutory services.

If the child's needs meets level 4 support threshold, and they are clearly in need of an assessment to determine how best those needs maybe met then the case will transfer immediately into the Assessment and Child Protection Service. From this point, the Assessment and Children Protection Team assume responsibility for the child.

All strategy meetings from Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will be chaired by an Assessment and Child Protection Manager and they will decide if threshold is reached for a Children Act 1989 Section 47 (s47) enquiry where decision for either a joint or single enquiry. Following a strategy discussion, the Assessment and Child Protection Team will be responsible for allocation.

Where a child has been closed to a Family Safeguarding Team for less than 13 weeks it will be allocated back to the team that were previously working with the child. On all children that are re-referred within the 13-week period it is the responsibility of the receiving manager to organise and plan the strategy discussion if required.

Where there are any disagreements in relation to threshold decisions, in the first instance the receiving Assessment and Child Protection Assistant Team Manager should discuss with the Assessment and Child Protection Team Manager. If the difference cannot be resolved, then children should be escalated for a discussion to take place between the Assessment and Child Protection Team and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Managers and finally Service Managers.

The Manager from Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will record a clear rationale on children where there has been challenge made to the original threshold decision that results in a threshold being changed.

#### **5. Transfer of Children in Need or Child Protection from the Assessment and Child Protection Team and transfers of children from other local authorities**

Children will transfer from the Assessment and Child Protection Team to the relevant Family Safeguarding Team in these instances:

- Children who become the subject of a Child Protection Plan at the Initial Child Protection Conference.
- Children who are not made the subject of a Child Protection Plan at the Initial Child Protection Conference but require services as a Child in Need

In these two instances, The Social Worker from Assessment and Child Protection Team and the Team Manager to hand over (but not to allocate) the child/family to the Social Worker from Family Safeguarding before the Initial Child Protection Conference. During

the conference, the family to meet the new Social Worker. The Assessment and Child Protection Social Worker will present the child/family at the conference.

- Children where a Statutory Assessment has been completed that recommends further social care intervention at Level 4 of the Swindon Threshold of Need document (The Right Help at the Right Time), as the children will be facing complex and/or multiple needs which will require an integrated and co-ordinated response.

### **Child in Need (Section 17) Transfer Process**

Children Act) in accordance with the Swindon The Right Help at The Right Time (January 2024) this will be provided by the relevant Family Safeguarding Team or Disabled Children's Team.

The Assessment and Child Protection Team will include the child's details on the weekly transfer list prior to the transfer meeting; with a synopsis of the child that is considered 'Transfer Ready'. A date for the first Child in Need review meeting will be arranged and detailed on the transfer list. A Transfer Checklist for the child must be completed and signed off by the relevant receiving Manager.

The relevant receiving Team Manager will review the weekly transfer list and identify the receiving Social Worker who will be invited to attend the Child in Need review meeting.

The transfer will be undertaken at the first Child in Need review meeting that will be arranged and chaired by the Assessment and Child Protection Team and attended by the newly allocated Family Safeguarding Team Social Worker. All professionals who are deemed necessary to support the transferring plan must be invited to attend the initial Child in Need Review Meeting by the Assessment and Child Protection team Social Worker.

The minutes will be taken by the Assessment and Child Protection Team and written up, along with the Child in Need plan, within 48 hours of the meeting.

A Transfer checklist for the child must be completed and signed off by the relevant Assessment and Child Protection Manager and be sent to the receiving manager at least 24 hours ahead of the proposed transfer which details that all tasks are completed prior to transfer. This should include reference to any practice audit completed for the child and that the manager confirms that actions arising from the audit completed. Where there are outstanding audit actions this should be recorded in management oversight with the rationale.

The child will then be transferred on the Liquidlogic once the Child in Need review meeting minutes have been completed and uploaded on the system. The aim is for this to take place within 48 hours after the meeting has taken place. The receiving Social Worker and Team Manager will be alerted that the child has transferred.

### **Child with a Child in Need Plan Transferring to Swindon from another Local Authority**

Where a child who is the subject of a Child in Need plan in another Local Authority moves to Swindon, the referral will initially go to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. The referral from the other local authority should include:

- Copies of an up-to-date assessment of each of the children in the family which clearly identifies the assessed need and any risk / areas of concern(s) to each child
- Copies of the minutes of all of the Child in Need Meetings and Child in Need Plans relating to the period for which the children have been subject to the plan
- Chronology and Genogram

An up-to-date case summary setting out both the current situation and all relevant background information about the children. In the absence of any of the above paperwork, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub team must not accept responsibility.

If the child is considered to meet the Threshold Level 4 in accordance with the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership's Right Help Right Time threshold guidance, and is supported by all the requested documentation, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will alert the Manager of the relevant Team and discuss the child and the timescale for them to be transferred.

### **Child Protection transfer process**

If, as a result of a Section 47 investigation and statutory assessment, the Assessment and Child Protection Team identifies an ongoing need for statutory social work intervention under a child protection plan this will be provided by the Family Safeguarding Team following the Initial Child Protection Conference.

The Assessment and Child Protection Team will include the child's details on the weekly Transfer list with a synopsis of the presenting issues and history, providing notice (Flag up) to the relevant Team that the Initial Child Protection Conference is due, and the child is being prepared for transfer at that conference.

A date for the Initial Child Protection Conference will be arranged, in consultation with the Quality Assurance Business Support Team and detailed on the spreadsheet.

The Family Safeguarding team manager will provide the name of the new Social Worker via email to Assessment Child Protection Team. A transfer checklist must be completed and signed off by the relevant Assessment Child Protection manager which details that all tasks are completed before the day of the Conference.

The Assessment and Child Protection Team Social Worker will produce a report for the Initial Child Protection Conference and ensure this is shared with the parents and conference chair at least two days in advance of the conference.

If the name of the Family Safeguarding Team Social Worker cannot be provided before the conference, a manager from the Family Safeguarding Team will attend the conference and accept transfer on behalf of the team.

The transferring Social Worker will meet with the Social Worker and Team manager from Family Safeguarding Team who will be working with the family going forward before the Initial Child Protection Conference takes place.

This is not the re allocation of the child, as the Assessment Child Protection Social Worker will present the child at Initial Child Protection Conference and a handover will be undertaken there.

The parents and child if they are present will be introduced to their new Social Worker at the Initial Child Protection Conference. This meeting will be chaired by an independent child protection conference chair and minutes are taken by the Quality Assurance Business Support Team.

The child will then be transferred by Assessment Child Protection on the Liquidlogic system to the Family Safeguarding Team within 24 hours of the meeting having taken place. A transfer checklist for the child must be completed and signed off by the relevant Assessment Child Protection manager which details that all tasks are completed and this shared with the receiving Family Safeguarding Team manager ahead of the child transferring.

If the Initial Child Protection Conference is deferred, Assessment Child Protection Team will continue to hold case responsibility until the conference can be reconvened.

### **‘Transfer In’ Child Protection Conference**

When a family with children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan moves to Swindon, the originating Local Authority should notify the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub at the earliest opportunity. The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub team will put a contact on to the Liquidlogic system and then progress to referral. The originating Local Authority should provide Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub with the following documentation:

- Copies of an up-to-date assessment of each of the children in the family which clearly identifies the assessed need and any risk / areas of concern(s) for each child
- Copies of the minutes of all of the Child Protection Conferences relating to the period for which the children have been the subject of the Child Protection Plan
- A copy of the Child Protection Plan and the most recent Core Group minutes (if available)
- Chronology and Genogram
- An up-to-date case summary, setting out both the current situation and all relevant background information about the children

The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub should notify the Quality Assurance Team immediately on receipt of the above information.

Within 15 working days of receiving a request for a Transfer in Child Protection Conference, and on receipt of the documentation referred to above, the Quality Assurance Business Support Officer should arrange a Transfer Child Protection Conference. Once this date is confirmed the information should be shared with the Assessment Child Protection Business Support Officers so that the case can be detailed on the transfer spreadsheet for the forthcoming meeting and early notification is made available to the teams (Family Safeguarding Team or Disabled Children’s Team) to assist with the allocation of the case.

At the Transfer Child Protection Conference, Swindon Children’s Services will formally accept case responsibility, and the case will be allocated to a team Social Worker.

### **‘Transfer Out’ Child Protection Conference**

Where a child on a Child Protection Plan moves out of Swindon, the above process should be followed and progressed by Swindon Children's Services as the originating Local Authority.

## **6. Children with Disabilities**

A referral will be received by Children and Families Contact Swindon.

The Disabled Children's Team will work with disabled children who:

- Require social worker intervention  
**AND**
- Have a significant and enduring disability as defined under the Equality Act  
**AND**
- The primary reason for referral is the impact of the child's disability  
**AND**
- The child's disability fits into one or more of the following definitions:
  - A physical disability fully dependant on carers for all elements of care
  - A learning disability (a significant impairment of intelligence along with a significant impairment of social functioning)
  - A multi-sensory impairment requiring a significant level of care

If considered to meet the Criteria for the then the child would pass to the Disabled Children's Team for allocation. Siblings will receive intervention through the Disabled Children's Team if they are identified as children in need, where a child is identified as meeting the above criteria.

The Disabled Children's Team will work closely with both the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and Assessment and Child Protections Team, to ensure disabled children and their families are allocated the most appropriate team to meet their individual needs.

When children are referred to Children and Families Contact Swindon and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and it is very clear to workers in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub that the child's disability meets the Disabled Children's Team criteria, the child and their family will be given an assessment by the Disabled Children's Team.

However, when the decision is not straightforward a Social Worker from the Disabled Children's Team will work alongside the Social Worker from the Assessment and Child Protection team to complete the statutory assessment. During the assessment process a decision will be made about which social work team is best placed to work with the family following the assessment, and the Disabled Children's Team Social Worker will provide advice and information regarding additional (disability specific) services available to the family.

If an allocated child within the Disabled Children's Team is considered at risk of significant harm and the threshold met to convene a Strategy Discussion or start a Section 47 investigation then this will be progressed by the child's allocated Social Worker within the DCT and progressed in accordance with child protection procedures based on assessed risk and the priority to safeguard the child.

If a referral is received from Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub in respect of a child that meets the eligibility criteria and is unallocated then the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub team is responsible for making threshold decisions about the next steps within one working day.

The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Manager will make the decision that a child meets the threshold for statutory social work intervention. The referral will be given an outcome of single assessment or strategy discussion. If a child is unknown to Children's Social Care, the Disabled Children's Team would be invited to the strategy discussion and would take responsibility for the family if the child with a disability demonstrates the primary need.

If the child is already allocated within Disabled Children's Team, the strategy meeting will be chaired by an Assistant Team Manager/ Team Manager in the Disabled Children's Team and they will decide if threshold is reached for a section 47 enquiry and whether or not it will be joint or single enquiry. If threshold is not reached for a section 47 enquiry, the Disabled Children's Team Manager will determine the next steps.

Where a child has been closed by the Disabled Children's Team for less than 13 weeks, then Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will allocate the child back to the Team.

If the primary reason for allocation is the disability of one child then his / her siblings would also be worked within the Disabled Children's Team. The principle is that all children in one family wherever possible should be held by the same Social Worker or, if this is not possible, within the same team.

## **7. Court Proceedings Transfer**

### **Agreed Public Law Outline - Pre-Proceedings**

If, following presentation of the child to the legal planning meeting, a decision is made that threshold has been met to escalate to Public Law Outline Pre-Proceedings or care proceedings the child will transfer from Assessment Child Protection Team to Family Safeguarding Team. The pre-proceedings letter to the family will be written after the Legal Planning meeting and will be signed off at the Legal Gateway Panel where permissions will be given around the forward planning from the Legal Planning meeting. It will be shared with the parents, within the agreed timescale, ensuring there is sufficient time for the parents to seek legal advice.

These children will be flagged to the relevant Family Safeguarding team via the transfer weekly transfer list. The child will remain with the allocated Assessment Child Protection Social Worker until the Pre-Proceedings Planning meeting with legal, when the child will then transfer over to the appropriate Family Safeguarding Team. Both the Assessment Child Protection Team and the Family Safeguarding Team Social Worker/Team Manager will attend the Pre-Proceedings Planning meeting to discuss and forward plan.

The relevant Manager will chair the Pre-Proceedings Planning meeting, arranging the date for this meeting in consultation with the relevant legal and children's social care professionals. At this meeting agreements will be made in terms of timescales for assessments and referrals to be made to other services to support the family. The Family Safeguarding Team Social Worker will start these processes from this meeting.

If the meeting does not take place then the allocated social work team will continue to hold case responsibility until the meeting can be reconvened.

The Assessment Child Protection Social Worker and their Team Manager will then attend the Pre-Proceedings meeting with the parent and introduce them to their new Social Worker from Family Safeguarding Team, who should also attend.

- **Agreement to Initiate Care Proceedings**

If the Legal Gateway Panel agrees that care proceedings should be initiated (under Emergency Protection Order or urgent Interim Care Order) then if the child is being held by the Assessment and Child Protection Team the relevant receiving team will be invited to the Legal Planning meeting and the child will transfer to the team shortly after the initial court hearing providing that the child's record is up to date and is ready for transfer. Any initial statements and care plans will be completed by Assessment Child Protection Team, and any initial evidence will require Assessment Child Protection attendance at Court. There is an expectation that the new Social Worker from Family Safeguarding should also attend any hearings.

## **8. Unborn Babies**

**This section should be read in conjunction with the pre-birth protocol.**

Children and Families Contact Swindon will accept referrals in respect of the unborn child as early as the first midwifery booking appointment should concerns arise. The early identification of risk factors by midwives at the maternity booking appointment will form the basis of the referral to Children's Social Care. Multi-agency working is at the heart of the Pre-Birth Assessment and the identification and management of risk.

If a professional working with the mother has concerns for the unborn child and /or the mother, a referral should be made for additional support at any point during pregnancy.

All referrals made to Children and Families Contact Swindon beyond the first 12 weeks of pregnancy or those 'stepped up' from Early Intervention, where there is a risk that the unborn child's safety and welfare may be compromised upon birth, will be accepted by Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.

The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will decide on and record the next steps of action within one working day. This will include deciding if to share/ gather information with/from other agencies. Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will undertake a risk assessment at this point.

Decisions will take account of referral information, information held in existing records, discussions with the family (where possible and appropriate) and information provided by other professionals or services as deemed necessary.

The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Team Manager will review the information and decide what further action is needed. If it is agreed that the likelihood of significant harm is high the unborn baby may be directly transferred to Family Safeguarding. The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Team Manager should highlight the rationale behind the decision making on this. A conversation should be had between the duty manager in Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and Family Safeguarding Team Duty Manager, to inform them that an assessment is required. Interventions need to be put in place at the earliest opportunity.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will accept cases at 12 weeks of pregnancy where there are concerns which identify potential risk to the unborn. In some instances, unborn babies will be referred across to the Assessment and Child Protection Team for a Statutory Assessment/ Pre-birth Assessment, when further assessment is required to understand potential harm.

Unborn babies will be referred to the multi-agency pre-birth panel two weeks following their allocation to Children's Social Care – see pre-birth protocol.

The completion of the Pre-birth social work assessment will inform the ongoing level of intervention of the child in accordance with assessed threshold of need and any presenting risks.

Where there are late notifications of a pregnancy and the concerns around the unborn baby are at level four, the Family Safeguarding Teams should be notified immediately, with the unborn baby being allocated to a social worker in Family Safeguarding.

### **9. Emergency Protection Orders and Police Protection**

The Assessment and Child Protection Team / Family Safeguarding Team Social Worker (depending on whose team the child is in at the time) will take the lead in respect of work around children who are made the subject of Police Protection powers and those requiring Emergency Protection Orders.

In emergency situations, the allocated Social Worker will complete the necessary paperwork and work with the legal team to present the child to the court and, if the child is allocated to a Social Worker in Assessment Child Protection Team, this must be raised at the earliest opportunity with the relevant Family Safeguarding Team to enable a decision to be made as to the appropriate timing of the transfer. If the child is to be progressed to an Interim Care Order, then a Social Worker from the Family Safeguarding Team will be available to attend the Initial Court Hearing for the transfer to take place.

### **10. Section 7 and Section 37 Court Reports and Transfer of Supervision Order cases**

Notifications from the Court for Section 7 assessment where the child is unknown to children's social care should be allocated into Assessment Child Protection Team. Children where a section 37 court report is needed should also be allocated to Assessment Child Protection Team. Transfer of Supervision Order children should transfer from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to the relevant Family Safeguarding team.

### **11. Relinquished Children**

All children who are being relinquished will transfer from Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to the relevant Family Safeguarding Team for an assessment to be completed and appropriate action taken to ensure that there is minimum delay for the child.

### **12. No Recourse to Public Funds Families**

Children will initially be screened by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Service and if deemed to meet the duty of the Local Authority in accordance with the Practice Guidance for Local Authorities **Assessing and Supporting children and families who**

**have no recourse to public funds** will be transferred over to the Assessment and Child Protection Team for a Social Worker to undertake the necessary assessment.

If the assessment identifies safeguarding concerns in respect of the care / parenting provided to the child(ren), then they will transfer to the Family Safeguarding Team, determined by the outcome of the assessment and the assessed needs.

### **13. Separated Migrant Children and Trafficked Children**

Separated Migrant Children and trafficked children will initially be screened by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Team and they will process all Separated Migrant Children referrals within 1 working day.

The outcome of Separated Migrant Children referrals will be:

- Classified as Separated Migrant Children
- Social Work Assessment

All Separated Migrant Children will be allocated to the Positive Futures Team for a Social Work Assessment by a specialist worker.

### **14. Private Fostering Notifications**

#### **Notifications when the child is not open to a social work team**

These children will be referred into Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, screened and transferred across to Assessment and Child Protection Team to complete a Statutory Assessment in respect of the child and the presenting family situation.

The Assessment Child Protection worker will undertake a joint visit with the Private Fostering Social Worker in the Fostering team.

The Assessment Child Protection Team will complete the statutory assessment, and the Private Fostering Social Worker will complete the Private Fostering Assessment of the Carers.

If the statutory assessment identifies safeguarding concerns which are considered to require further intervention, then the Assessment and Child Protection Team will undertake the Section 47 Enquiry and present the child to the convened Initial Child Protection Conference, at which point it will transfer across to the Family Safeguarding Team.

If the assessment identifies multiple or complex needs considered to meet the threshold for Child in Need intervention the child will be transferred over to the Family Safeguarding Team at the first Child in Need review meeting

#### **Notifications when a child is open to the Family Safeguarding teams**

When the Family Safeguarding Social Worker is informed that a child is living in a private fostering arrangement, they will undertake a joint visit with the Private Fostering Social Worker to assess the situation.

The Family Safeguarding Social Worker will need to update the statutory assessment on the child, and the Private Fostering Social Worker will complete the Private Fostering Assessment of the Carers.

The child must be seen by the Family Safeguarding Social Worker as per Swindon's Child in Need visiting frequency and reviewed at Child in Need review meetings. The Private Fostering Social Worker should be invited to attend all Child in Need Reviews and Planning meetings.

## **15. Children We Care For**

### **Children transferring from Assessment Child Protection Team to Family Safeguarding Teams.**

If a child becomes a child we care for when allocated within the Assessment and Child Protection Team, they should be transferred to the Family Safeguarding Team at the first Children We Care for Review.

The transfer must be supported by a completed Transfer Checklist which must be signed off by the relevant Manager and a copy placed on the child's record.

Good practice should be supported by a joint handover visit by the transferring and receiving Social Worker to support the transition plan and ensure the child is included in the planning. The receiving Family Safeguarding Manager will accept the child at the appropriate point of transfer. They will place a manager's entry onto the child's case notes detailing that transfer has taken place. This should include reference to any practice audit completed for the child and that the manager confirms that actions arising from the audit completed. Where there are outstanding audit actions this should be recorded in management oversight with the rationale.

### **Children transferring from Family Safeguarding Teams to the Children We Care for Team**

At the point that a child or young person's child's permanency plan is confirmed, the child/young person will transfer to the Children We Care for Team from the Family Safeguarding Team

The Children We Care for Team Social Worker and/or Team Manager must be invited to attend the child's permanency planning meetings. It is good practice for liaison to take place with the Children We Care for Team regarding the child's final Care Plan.

If the permanence plan for long term fostering is confirmed at a Child We Care for Review, the case will transfer to the Children We Care for Team shortly after the Final Order.

If the care plan is long term foster care, the Team Manager of the Children We Care for Team should be consulted on the final care plan.

At the end of Court Proceedings, the case will transfer to the Children We Care for Team.

Good practice should be supported by a joint handover visit by the transferring and receiving Social Worker to support the transition plan and ensure the child is included in the planning. All the points above re case transfer from Assessment Child Protection Team to Family Safeguarding Team will apply and be completed. This should include reference to any practice audit completed for the child and that the manager confirms that actions arising from the audit completed. Where there are outstanding audit actions this should be recorded in management oversight with the rationale.

Where the child is older and on a Section 20, the Family Safeguarding Team will keep them for 13 weeks before they transfer to the Children We Care for Team or Positive Futures.

## **16. Leaving Care**

### **Process for referral and transfer to Positive Futures Team from Family Safeguarding or Children We Care for Team**

As soon as it is known that a child is going to remain a child, we care for at the time of their 16th birthday, the responsible Team Manager/Assistant Team Manager will notify the Positive Futures Team Manager of this by the age of 15½ years, on the basis there is no plan to return to their family.

Good practice should be supported by a joint handover visit by the transferring and receiving team including the PA if allocated. The checklist needs to be completed as is required for all transfers between teams. This should include reference to any practice audit completed for the child and that the manager confirms that actions arising from the audit completed. Where there are outstanding audit actions this should be recorded in management oversight with the rationale.

Children will move into the Positive Futures service at age 14 years if a separated migrant child.

Arrangements will be made for a Pathway Adviser to be appointed by the Positive Futures Team Manager by 16 years. The Manager will also record on Liquidlogic who the allocated Pathway Adviser is and email the Social Worker, Pathway Adviser and Care Leavers Assistant Team Manager to inform of the allocation.

The Social Worker should meet to discuss the young person and complete their Pathway Plan. An introduction should be arranged with the young person prior to the young person becoming 16 years old. Between the ages of 16 and 17 years, the Social Worker will take the lead. For adults the Pathway Adviser will take the lead with the Pathway Plan.

The allocated Social Worker in consultation with the young person, the young person's carer and other involved parties, should draw up the young person's Needs Assessment (Leaving Care Assessment of Need) and Pathway Plan, based on the Needs Assessment, no later than three months after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Social Worker will retain responsibility for them until the young person is 18 years old.

At the age of 18 the Pathway Adviser will assume that role as the lead professional, unless the young person has an allocated Social Worker in the Adult Social Care team.

The Pathway Adviser should attend the young person's Child We Care for Review with the consent of the young person. The Pathway Adviser should attend any other relevant meetings regarding the young person as required.

The Pathway Adviser will work alongside the allocated Social Worker, from the young person's 16th birthday, and will have a key role in providing support to the young person after he/she leaves care.

The support to the allocated Social Worker for the young person will be to assist in the development, implementation and review of services as set out in the Pathway Plan and transfer checklist, which must be in place by the 16th birthday.

## **17. Early Help Step Up and Step-Down Process**

### **To step up a child/ren**

#### **Step-Up from Early Intervention Locality Team to Children's Social Care via Children and Families Contact Swindon**

A request for step up for a Social Care Assessment can be made by an Early Intervention Locality Team to Children and Families Contact Swindon. This would be because the child's needs have changed or there is an escalation of concern, and the child needs support and protection at (S17) Child in Need, or (S47) Child Protection levels. The Right Help at the Right Time guidance will support decision making and if there are child protection concerns (child has experienced or is at significant risk of harm) noted a request for Social Work Assessment will commence.

The allocated practitioner or Early Intervention Co-ordinator will make the request for joint review with Children and Families Contact Swindon by telephoning the Duty Manager / Advanced Social Worker. The allocated practitioner or Family Coordinator will complete a case note on Liquidlogic detailing the request for step up, rationale and decision, regardless of the consultation outcome.

If there is agreement to step up, Children and Families Contact Swindon will complete a contact on Liquidlogic and progress a referral onto Assessment Child Protection Team. The Children and Families Contact Swindon Manager will sign off all requests. Where it is concluded that the child should be the subject of a statutory assessment, any services provided by Early Intervention, should continue while the assessment is being completed until the outcome of the assessment is known, unless otherwise agreed (where it is not in the children and families best interest to do so).

#### **Step Down to Early Intervention**

Children's social care teams should always aim to reduce their involvement as the child / family's needs are met or reduce through the completion of actions in their plan. Children, young people and their families who would benefit from Step-Down / Early Intervention support will be identified by their Social Worker at the earliest opportunity, with agreement from their line manager.

On completion of a statutory assessment / or Child in Need Review, if the Social Worker has assessed a need for early intervention support, the assessment analysis or minutes of the review meeting and plan should set out the needs identified. The Child in Need review meeting should be chaired by the line manager to establish that this is the right path to progress, in partnership with the parents/carers and other involved agencies.

Social work teams (Assessment and Child Protection/Family Safeguarding/Disabled Children's Team) can step down to Early Help using the weekly transfer meeting.

The decision will be made at this meeting that this is the right course of action for the child. A handover between the Social Worker and the Early Intervention Service should take place, after seeking consent from the family. Good practice would be a joint visit to the family to support relationship building and handover of child planning.

## **18. Children who are closed to Childrens Social Care and are re-referred**

Any child re-referred to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub less than 13 weeks from closure (the date of closure recorded on Liquidlogic) will be transferred to the last team that was allocated for a decision regarding future action needed. If a child is re-referred over 13 weeks from closure this will be processed by Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and a decision made as to what further action is needed.

## 19. Escalation Process

In the event of disagreement between services and teams within Children's Services in relation to the transfer of cases, discussion should be informed, documented and focused on the safety, development and best interest of the child or young person. This process should be held at Assistant /Team Manager level initially but if the issue cannot be resolved it should be escalated to the relevant Service Managers.

## 20. Transfer Standards Handover

It is good practice for there to be a joint visit by the transferring Social Worker and the new Social Worker and a discussion prior to transfer between transferring and receiving workers and managers

To enable an effective transfer of responsibility for a child the allocated Social Worker and their line manager must ensure that the following actions have been undertaken: -

- A **transfer summary** should be produced setting out the updated information and highlighting the key issues and actions needed including a management analysis. This should be on Liquidlogic at the time of transfer.
- All recording is up to date
- All basic information such as ethnicity, disability, religion recorded.
- All contact details for the family and involved professionals should be correct at time of transfer
- Supervision records are up to date and clear evidence of management oversight
- Any financial agreements should be up to date and recorded within the transfer summary
- All practice audit actions have been completed.
- An updated and analytical **chronology**.
- A three generational **genogram**
- An up to date and completed **assessment** signed off by the transferring team's Manager on all relevant children in the family and feedback provided to the family and referrer as appropriate.
- A completed and relevant SMART Plan detailing what needs to happen and setting out clear desired outcomes.
- If a child protection situation a clear and SMART safety plan should be recorded
- A copy of all current **Legal Orders** should be included on the file. In the case of a looked after child a copy of their birth certificate.
- All documentation should be signed off by the transferring social worker and their line manager prior to transfer.

## Children We Care For

The child's file should include the following: -

- A statutory assessment

- Placement Plan
- Care Plan/Pathway Plan (where appropriate)
- Review of Arrangement
- Family Arrangements
- Medical Consent
- Health Plan
- Date of Health review
- Date of Personal Education Plan
- A reviewed Personal Education Plan
- Delegated Authority information
- Court documents/Birth Certificate/Court Order/Guardian's statement

Prior to transfer on Liquidlogic the child's record should be quality assured by the supervising manager to ensure that the record complies with the practice standards listed above.

If the receiving team, consider that these transfer standards have not been met then they have the responsibility to raise with the transferring team manager to discuss and agree what further work is needed prior to transfer.

It is the responsibility of the transferring team to ensure that all actively involved agencies, professionals and family members are notified of the transfer and the name and contact details of the newly allocated worker and team.

If, as a result of a Statutory Assessment, the Assessment and Child Protection Team identifies an ongoing need for statutory social work intervention under a Child in Need Plan (S17).