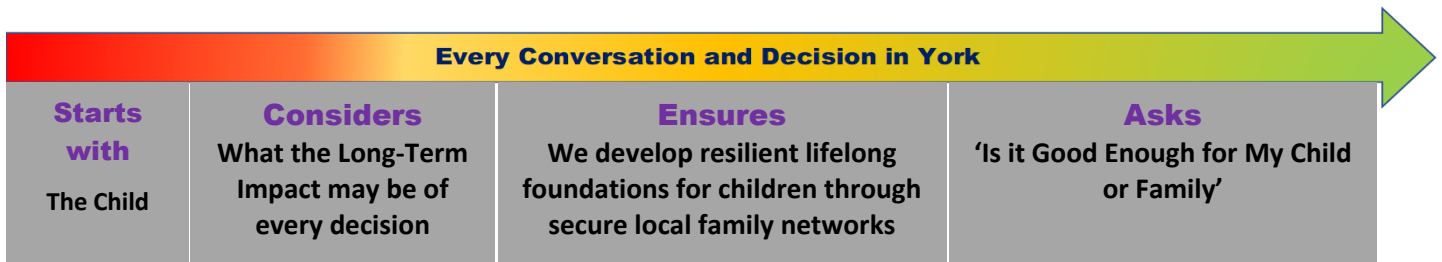


## Case Transfer Protocol



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### 1. Principles

- *Keeping Children safe and Families together:* The right interventions at the right time in the right place.
- *The best interests of the child:* All decisions made in relation to children must have, as the first and paramount consideration, the best interests of the child;
- *Whole family approach:* where possible there will be one social worker to work with all children who are part of the same family and Service Managers should work together to determine where the needs of the family as a whole would be best met. This could include co-working across teams to ensure children are offered the right intervention.
- *Avoiding delay:* All decisions in relation to the provision of services to children will be made promptly and within agreed timescales, having regard to the needs of the child; the achievement of these timescales will be monitored and reviewed;
- *Resolving dissatisfaction:* Where children, or others on their behalf, are dissatisfied with the transfer of their case between teams, we will listen to their views around this and Service Managers to respond to the child/family;

The Practitioner Pledge also incorporates feedback from families which needs to be included as part of the transfer process for children and young people across the service which specifically focuses on:

- *Being clear* with children, young people and their networks about when, how and why a transfer is taking place.
- *Explaining* what is happening and when during a visit to the child and their family.
- *Listening* to children, young people and their families when they have worries or concerns about what is coming next for them and the support they are receiving.
- *Introducing* the new worker so that they can get to know them before the case transfers and share relevant information together so that it is not repeated for children, young people and their families.
- *Sharing information about who is important* to the child or young person so that the new worker doesn't have to ask the same questions that they have already answered.
- *Professionals* working with the family will be informed when the case is transferring, what the plans are around this and who the new worker is who is supporting the child/young person.
- *Important information will be shared* between the worker and the new team so that they know what the child/young person has had to deal with so far in their lives.
- *The new worker will check* that the child, young person and their families understand the plans and give them a chance to ask any questions.

The Practitioner Pledge is attached to this procedure for information under **Appendix A**.

## **2. Process**

The timescale of the transfer process will vary depending on the current situation for each individual child.

When a child/young person has been identified as needing to transfer between teams within Children's Services, Service Managers will have a case discussion using Signs of Safety at the earliest opportunity to allow for smooth planning and transition.

Once it is known that a child/family should transfer then this will be shared at a transfer meeting which involves SMs from Assessment, Safeguarding, DCYPS and/or Early Help depending on where the transfer is taking place.

There are specific expectations around the team transferring and the team receiving to ensure that the change of teams is smooth for the child, their family and the agencies working with them.

The Practitioner Pledge will be used to ensure that social workers and their managers are aware of the best way to support changes and transitions for children and young people between teams.

There are specific flow charts which outline step-ups/step downs between Early Help and Children's Social Care teams which can be found in the appendices of this procedure.

Weekly meetings to be held between the Assessment Service and the Safeguarding Service.

If a child or young person is stepping up or stepping down from Early Help then a separate process is following depending on the circumstances. This is attached to this procedure as **Appendix B**.

Monthly meetings to be held between Safeguarding and Permanence to discuss potential children/families which could be transferring across the service.

There will also be a meeting between Permanence and Pathway to ensure that CYPIC moving towards adulthood have smooth plans and transitions.

Points of transfer are discussed later in this procedure.

### **Initial Transfer Meeting:**

- This will be held weekly with the relevant SMs for Assessment and Safeguarding and Monthly for Safeguarding and Children in Care teams.
- A summary of the focus and purpose of current involvement and future plans which have already been put in place in meetings and outcomes of the Single Assessment.
- Details of future Child in Need reviews, Child Protection Conferences, CYPIC reviews and Pathway Planning meetings, highlighting who is responsible for organising and chairing those meetings;
- Where there are legal proceedings ongoing then details of court dates, filing arrangements etc to be shared with the new worker.
- Agreement to be reached about the date for transfer and who the new allocated worker will be.

### **Case Transfer Mapping:**

- This will be held between the transferring social worker/manager and the receiving social worker/manager after the Initial Transfer Meeting has been held and transfer is agreed.
- Danger Statements and Safety Goals will be shared regarding the child/young person and their circumstances.
- Details will be provided of Family Network meetings/FGC already held, the outcomes from these and review dates for this support.
- An overview of any risks and subsequent safety plans in place or family time arrangements will be given as well as when they are due to be reviewed.

- A summary will be given by the social worker of the best way to develop a relationship with the child/young person during visits and what this looks like for them.
- Details of agencies involved with the case will be shared and plans for how and when they will be informed to be agreed.

Following this initial meeting the Social Worker must update the case records on Mosaic in preparation for case transfer. This will include:

- Case Summary to include Danger Statements and Safety Goals, Safety Plans and key network members.
- Key information, including all family and professional contacts, to be added to Mosaic.
- Up to date chronology to be added to the file.
- Case notes will be updated and completed – including most recent direct work with the child/young person.
- Relevant assessment completed and shared with the family;
- Child's Plan will be clear which summarises the purpose of current involvement;
- Supervision records will be added and completed.
- Copies of all current Legal Orders are uploaded.
- Minutes to meetings held will be shared with family and professionals and added to Mosaic.

The Service Manager currently responsible for the case to oversee and manage the above to ensure the case is ready for transfer on the date agreed at the initial meeting.

The current social worker should discuss the arrangements of the transfer with the child/young person and the family. The current and newly allocated social workers will visit the family, network and/or carer to ensure sharing of information to introduce the new worker.

The social worker transferring the case must inform the network of other professionals working with the family of the change of worker / team.

If there are key meetings (for example Child Protection Conference, Core Group, Child In Need Meetings etc) both the social worker transferring the case and the receiving worker should attend.

Once the above has been completed then the receiving team formally assign the new worker on Mosaic.

### **3. Points of Transfer**

Outlined below is the guidance for points of transfer which most cases will follow. There may be occasions when for service reasons, cases will be transferred outside these guidelines, but the principle of no delay and the child remaining the point of focus remain at the heart of what we do.

### **MASH**

MASH is one point of contact that responds to contacts and referrals in 1 working day, ensuring that timely decisions are made for families. The team screens each contact and makes the decision as to where the referral should be directed, either to the Early Help service, Assessment, Safeguarding, Exploitation Team, Disabled Children and Young People's Service or to offer information and advice.

### **Early Help Service**

Access to this service for families that are not already open is made through a referral to the children and families where these cases are screened and allocated to the appropriate team.

Discussions with teams where the case needs to be stepped across Early Help and Children's Social Care follows a clearly defined process, which is attached to this procedure as **Appendix B and Appendix C** as the process differs depending on where the case is transferring to and from.

### **Assessment**

The Assessment service is allocated all new referrals which require input from Children's Social Care due to safeguarding concerns.

The Assessment teams undertake Single Assessments to determine next steps, which take up to 45days.

The Assessment teams hold cases where the child/young person is being supported under a Child In Need plan and will do this for up to 12 weeks and if further work is required it will transfer to the Safeguarding Service or the Exploitation Team depending on the primary issues being addressed.

In cases where Child Protection concerns are raised, the Assessment teams hold them from referral and Strategy Meeting up until Initial Child Protection Conference where they will then transfer to the Exploitation Team or the Safeguarding service.

The Assessment teams also complete Private Fostering assessments and private law work (s7/s37).

If there are urgent legal proceedings initiated then case transfers will take place either following the initial Legal Gateway Meeting and before the first Pre-Proceedings Meeting or following the initial court hearing.

### **Safeguarding Interventions**

Work with children supported through Child In Need and Child Protection Plans for the duration of Children and Families Service intervention.

Social Workers will also attend and co-ordinate Transfer-In Conferences, support cases through the Pre-Proceedings process, undertake work through Care Proceedings and work alongside the fostering team to undertake the necessary assessments around Connected People and Special Guardianship Order plans.

This team also work with children who are placed at home with their parents under a Care Order with a view to progressing towards discharging this order and building networks to support families in the long-term.

Social Workers in the Safeguarding service will also work with children and young people where there are plans for them to return home to their parents from other arrangements.

Where a family are in receipt of a means tested allowance, an annual visit will be required to ensure we are aware of their circumstances.

The Safeguarding service will work with all children in care up until a permanent plan has been established for them.

Cases transfers will be out of Safeguarding Interventions into Permanence or Early Help.

### **Disabled Children's Teams**

Disabled Children's Teams accept case transfers from MASH, Assessment and Safeguarding Interventions and Early Help when there has been previous agreement and discussion with DCS service manager.

### **Permanence teams**

Permanence teams support children whose final court care plan is for them to be Looked After outside of their family home. As well as supporting that arrangement, the Permanence teams are also responsible for reunification plans back into a child's network with discharge of care orders and through management towards Special Guardianship Orders.

Responsibility for pathway plans remains with the permanence team until the child turns 18 however the Pathway Advisor is allocated when the young person reaches 17 ½ . See **Appendix D** for a clear timeline around this process.

## **4. Mechanisms to Resolve Difficulties**

If there is a difference of views about which team is best placed to meet the needs of a child or about the point of transfer, attempts should be made to resolve it by dialogue between the respective Service Managers. Face to face discussion is often the most effective way of reaching a solution.

## **5. Case Closure**

Cases will be closed if the child or young person no longer requires a service from Children's Social Care.

Closure should be brought about through discussion between the child, family and professionals involved. The decision to close a case is made by the Service Manager following discussion with the worker in supervision. It is important to gain the views of professionals involved in the child's plan. This may be done by discussing the case closure at a Core Group or Child in Need review.

Once the decision to close the case is made, the worker will notify the child, the parents or carers and other relevant family members and all professionals involved with the family.

There is not a standard pro forma closure letter to these parties: the social worker will need to write a letter to the child (if appropriate) and family members.

It is important to appropriate discussions and preparation have taken place with the child/young person, their parents and their network.

Ongoing safety planning with the network of support in place is important to ensure that everyone, including professionals, know what to do if there are concerns in the future

Other professionals involved with the family should be made aware that the case is to be closed by Children's Social Care

The formal closure letter must always point out to the service user how to contact the service again or provide details of other appropriate support agencies.

A Case Closure Summary should be completed and recorded on Mosaic with a clear reference to the safety plan and support network in place.

End

**Dated: 05.07.2023**

