

Children’s Social Care
Transfer Protocol

June 2017

**Children’s Social Care Transfer Protocol**

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that when it is necessary to transfer case responsibility for a child / young person between services within Children’s Social Care this is achieved in a timely and effective manner, has a focus on the child and is in line with good practice. The Transfer Protocol sets out the agreed process and points of transfer for children, young people and their families that require a children’s social care intervention. It sits alongside the Early Help Manual and the LSCB thresholds document.

It includes the transfer points from:

* MASH to Early and targeted help/integrated Youth Services
* MASH to Private Fostering Team.
* MASH to Assessment Team.
* MASH to Child Health and Disability service (CHAD)
* MASH to PLO and Court Team
* Assessment Team to CIN and CP Team.
* Assessment Team to PLO and Court Work Team.
* Assessment Team to LAC and 16+ Team.
* Assessment team to CHAD
* CP and CIN Team to PLO and Court Work Team
* CP and CIN Team to LAC Team.
* LAC team to CIN and CP team.
* PLO and Court Team to CP and CIN team, LAC team and Aspire Adoption
* Private Fostering team to Assessment Team and CIN and CP team
* Process for Separated Children Seeking Accommodation (previously known as UASC)
* Process for No Recourse to Public Funds cases.
* LAC team to 16+ and Care Leavers Team
* Transfers to Regional Adoption Agency (from July 2017)

It is essential that social workers and team managers ensure they are clear and informed about this protocol to secure effective transition

**Principles**

Transfer of cases will be conducted in a timely fashion; the child’s experience, needs and journey should always be at the heart of decisions to transfer cases. There is the principle of ‘no delay ‘ensuring that children and their families receive support with no gap in service provision. Delays can result in children not being effectively safeguarded, families reaching crisis point and children waiting longer than is necessary to achieve permanence.

Good quality information will be passed from the transferring team to the receiving team to prevent gaps in knowledge and to ensure that the welfare and protection of the child is paramount.

All managers will commit to attending the weekly transfer meetings to secure consistency of approach. Children and young people and their parents or carers and agencies should be advised of the transfer process and timings.

Transfers will take no longer than two weeks from initial identification. Earlier notification for looked after children is encouraged where this is advantageous for the child. Once the case has been presented to the Transfer Meeting, the receiving Service has two weeks to identify receiving team and social worker. A handover meeting is expected to take place within the next five working days.

Looked After Children and Children subject to a Child Protection Plan will **always** have an appropriately qualified worker allocated to them.

Thresholds for intervention are clearly understood and applied by the MASH and Assessment teams.

Allocation of assessments is timely and outcomes secured proactively.

The voice of the child/young person is clearly evidenced.

Transfer between the Services is not blocked. Statutory requirements and court directions are always adhered to.

Step Down to Early Help and targeted support is effective and secured in a timely manner through robust planning, taking no longer than two weeks to formally transfer.

If the transfer between teams is blocked for whatever reason the situation will be escalated for review and problem solving alongside the Service Managers and Service Director when required.

There are limited circumstances where more than one social worker can be allocated to a family, for example, looked after children that become pregnant and the need for a separate referral in relation to their child; instances involving child-on-child abuse within the family home and some gang related affiliation whereby the young person is placing siblings at risk.

The manager of the service will oversee a strategic understanding of the volume/demand pressures within their Service.

**Transfer Standards**

There is the principle of ‘good order’ in respect of case files. This relates to the electronic record.

To enable the effective transfer of a case, the allocated social worker and their team manager must ensure that the following actions have been undertaken:

* All files must be up-to date at the point of transfer and have been checked and authorised by the Practice Manager/Team Manager.
* A transfer summary should be produced for any case transferring within and between teams, **(except for MASH)**. The transfer summary will include a summary of the work undertaken, identify all dates for meetings and deadlines over the following eight weeks and clearly state the date of the last assessment and any outcomes identified.
* Personal information must have all sections completed, including ethnicity (if known), sibling details, names, addresses and telephone numbers of involved professionals, including school details.
* All case recording is up to date, including an updated chronology, genogram, contact records, court reports, and records of visits, (CIN, LAC, and CP): LAC paperwork, Statutory Review etc.

* Chronologies and genograms must be up to date as per the Case Recording Policy, having considered previous family historical knowledge and information from checks. (**Chronologies are started in the Assessment teams).**
* All cases from AST where children are over 10 years old at the point of transfer must have had a CSE screening assessment completed.
* All forms must have been signed and dated by the relevant social workers and line managers.

* Supervision records should be up-to-date.
* All current Legal Orders are clearly identified and accessible.
* 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. For children (under Section 20) the birth certificate will have been requested.
* Financial agreements should be up to date and recorded on the transfer record.
* Cases transferring from Assessment team to CIN and CP teams must have up to date and SMART CIN or CP Plans.
* Personal Education Plans must be initiated prior to the child coming into care or if placed in an emergency within **ten working days** and available for the first LAC review process.

The following list details documents that should be on file, this list should not be viewed as exhaustive:

* Contacts
* Referrals
* Key information
* Chronology
* Child & Family Assessment
* Child’s Plan
* Strategy Discussion
* Strategy Meeting Minutes
* Outcome of S47 Enquiry
* Three-month Summaries
* Transfer Summary
* Case Notes
* LAC documentation, including signed medical consent
* Child Protection Agreements
* Letter/e-mail to referrer
* Report for Initial Child Protection Conference/MAA
* Child Protection Case Conference Minutes
* Placement with Parent Regulations Report and Approval from Service Director
* Parenting Assessment
* Birth Certificate
* Court Orders E.g. Care Order, Placement Order
* Reg 24 Approvals
* PEPs
* Legal Planning Meeting notes

**MASH – Core Business**

* Manage and monitor the receipt of contacts and referrals.
* Secure the thresholds of the front door in line with the agreed partnership threshold document.
* Make decisions within a working day of receipt of referrals for protection or support. Ensure those children requiring protection are quickly identified and responded to in a timely way with 24 hour decisions, strategy discussions and allocating Section 47 investigations within 24- 72 hours. There may be exceptions to this which will be agreed by the TM and SM as appropriate
* Conduct strategy meetings with police, health colleagues, other LA’s, Schools, Nursery’s, Child Minders, FE Colleges, Drugs workers etc.
* Offer advice, support and appropriate signposting to partners in conjunction with our partners to agree risk and signpost appropriately.
* Refer to other services when appropriate.
* Encourage and foster the use of Early Help Assessments, Team Around the Child and Family meetings across the partnership.
* CSE and missing secondary allocations.

**MASH – Transfer Process**

* Transfer and allocate child and family assessments appropriately to Assessment, Aspire Adoption, Private Fostering Service and Separated and Trafficked Children seeking Accommodation services (UASC), PLO and Court (Section 7 and Section 37) Reports and CIN and CP where appropriate (Transfer-in CP Conferences) **Note** that if thecase has been closed within 3 months of the re referral the case will transfer back into the team who held the case previously.
* 24 hr decision to be made with the following three outcomes; transfer to Assessment Team, Transfer to Targeted Early Help or recorded as a contact.
* MASH Team Manager or Practice Manager ensures all strategy discussions are completed, signed off and sent to agencies prior to case transferring.
* Telephone call to made between Team Manager/Practice manager from MASH to appropriate team manager/practice manager to agree transfer.
* Requests for Section 7 reports if prior Social Care involvement within 3 months to be allocated to the originating team apart from the Assessment team. Cases held and closed by the Assessment team within 3 months will be transferred to the PLO and Court team.
* Requests for Section 37 reports if prior Social Care involvement or if an open case to be allocated to the originating team apart from the Assessment team. Cases held and closed by the Assessment team within 3 months will be transferred to the PLO and Court team.
* All other Section 37 reports to be allocated to the PLO and Court Team
* Requests for statements or reports by other Local Authority’s or Courts on children not in the area to be transferred to the PLO and Court team upon receipt of Court Order
* All cases are transferred by the Team Manager or Practice Manager.

**Assessment Team – Core Business**

* Complete timely Multi Agency Assessments (MAAS)
* Children and Young people, including those with complex needs, requiring Child in Need plans to secure short term outcomes up to and including completion of the MAA (maximum 45 working days).
* Children and Young People, including those with complex needs, requiring Initial Child Protection Conference.
* Unborn babies whose mother has a LAC status.

**Assessment Team – Transfer Process**

* All cases for transfer will be placed on the Early warning sheet and sent out to all team managers at least 48 hours prior to transfer meeting.
* The exception to this is if the case is being presented to Legal Gateway Panel and the transfer to PLO And Court Team will be considered and agreed at LGP.
* Children and Young People, including those with complex needs, requiring Looked After status up to and including the 12-week LAC Review. Transfer taking no longer than 2 weeks from identifying CIC/Court social worker, including handover meeting within this period taking place and transfer summary and chronology on the file. It is important to note that timely transfer is dependent upon early referral to give the receiving team as much notification as possible and time to plan. The point of transfer should wherever possible be by the second LAC Review or PLO Meeting.
* Unborn babies whose siblings are currently subject to Care Proceedings. Team Manager/Practice Manager of the Assessment team will telephone the Team Manger/Practice Manager of the PLO and Court team for discussion and agreement to transfer.
* Unborn babies (0-birth) will be presented to Legal Gateway Panel for consideration of PLO process and initiation of Care Proceedings post birth. These cases will transfer to the PLO and Court team for issuing of application at the PLO meeting.
* Children requiring PLO process and initiation of Care Proceedings will transfer to the PLO and Court Team for issuing application following presentation and agreement at Legal Gateway panel.
* Step down to Early Help when appropriate through Step down process taking no longer than 2 weeks to formally transfer, a clear transfer date to be agreed and overseen by Practice Manager on a weekly basis.
* Transfer of children and young people with CIN, CP plans or to CIN and CP teams through a transfer over process, taking no longer than 2 weeks to formally transfer. The transfer meeting takes place on a weekly basis.

**Children in Need and Child Protection – Core Business**

* Children and Young People, including those with complex needs requiring the implementation of a Child in Need plan.
* Children and Young People, including those with complex needs requiring the implementation of a Child Protection plan, including receiving requests from other authorities. Transfer in requests are received by MASH and transferred to CIN and CP teams directly.
* Section 7 and Section 37 reports on cases within the team
* For children in care the Permanence Planning direction must be identified at 4-week LAC review, second review at the latest.

**Children in Need and Child Protection – Transfer Process**

* All cases for transfer will be placed on the early warning sheet and sent out to all team managers at least 48 hours prior to transfer meeting.
* All cases for transfer to the LAC Team require an earlier notification from CI &CP Team Manager to LAC Team Manager as soon permanence plan confirmed. This allows for information and planning meetings to be coordinated and social worker allocation identified.
* Children and young people requiring additional safeguarding support through the PLO process or through legal orders will be presented to Legal Gateway Panel for transfer to the PLO and Court team.
* Children and young people requiring Looked After status, including those with complex needs, will be presented to Legal Gateway Panel and identification of the legal threshold and subsequently owning team will take place.
* Attendance at weekly transfer meeting with LAC Service, chaired by the team manager from LAC or CP/CIN team.
* The point of transfer should wherever possible be by the second LAC Review or PLO meeting.
* Step down to Early Help when appropriate through step down process taking no longer than 2 weeks to formally transfer and overseen by Team Manager in CIN and CP Service on a weekly basis.

**PLO and Court Work Team – Core Business**

* All cases that are transferred to the PLO and Court team, except for section 7 and section 37 reports are required to have been presented to Legal Gateway Panel. The transfer point will be the PLO meeting. This is normally 10 days after the decision to initiate a PLO meeting.
* Children and Young People (0-17) subject to PLO process and initiation of Care Proceedings up to the in-principle placement for adoption decision.
* Unborn babies (0-25 weeks) subject to PLO process and initiation of Care Proceedings post birth
* Unborn babies whose siblings are currently subject to Care Proceedings.

**PLO and Court Work Team – Transfer Process**

* Section 7 and Section S37 Court Reports as requested by the courts and if they fit the 3-month rule. There are occasions when the owning team have had a lot of involvement with the family, or are still involved with the family and these undertaken by the case holding team.
* Siblings of children subject to Care Proceedings or Permanency Plans that have not yet been finalised.
* Children and Young People subject to Supervision Orders and Supervision Orders with Special Guardianship Orders.
* All cases for transfer to the LAC Team require an early notification from PLO & Court Team Manager to LAC Team Manager as soon Permanence Plan confirmed. This allows for information and planning meetings to be coordinated and social worker allocation identified.
* All cases for transfer to LAC Team upon completion of Care Proceedings where a Care Order is granted, will be placed on the Early warning sheet and sent out to all team managers at least 48 hours prior to transfer meeting.
* Transfer for SGO assessment to Aspire Adoption to take place within 24 hours of a positive viability assessment being concluded.
* Transfer for SGO assessments to Aspire Adoption to be made within 24 hours of Court Order when the viability assessment is negative but SGO assessment is Court Ordered.
* Where the ADM decision is agreement for adoption, referral to be made to Aspire Adoption within 24 hours where secondary allocation with a Family finding social worker will take place.
* Upon completion of Care cases where Care and Placement Orders are granted, transfer to Aspire Adoption will take place 21 days following the making of the Orders where primary case responsibility will transfer.
* Upon completion of Section 7 and Section 37 reports where Child Protection concerns or ongoing need is identified, then the Team Manager/Practice Manager will telephone their respective colleagues in the CP and CIN teams to discuss potential transfer. The details will be added to the Early Warning sheet and case will be discussed at the weekly transfer meeting.

**LAC/Children in Care Service – Core Business**

* Looked After Children (5-16 years) subject to Section 20 or Care Orders (where reunification is not the permanence plan identified at 4-week review, second review latest).
* Permanency Planning (direction identified at 4-week review, second review at the latest).
* Children in Care from the completion of the Care Proceedings.
* Children who cease to be Looked After by becoming subjects to CIN/CP plans will transfer to the CIN & CP team or 12-month supervision orders will transfer to the PLO & Courts team.
* 16+ and care Leavers team to allocate a PA at age 15yrs and 9 months.

**LAC/Children in Care Service – Transfer Process**

* All cases for transfer to the CP and CIN team or PLO and Court Team will be placed on the Early warning sheet and sent out to all team managers at least 48 hours prior to transfer meeting.
* Children who cease to be Looked After by becoming subjects to CIN/CP plans or 12-month supervision orders will transfer to CIN and CP teams or PLO and Court team, if the plan for the child exceeds 3 months.
* Cases where section 20 has been invoked will be presented to Legal Gateway Panel for consideration of PLO process and proceedings. Agreement of appropriate team to be determined by Legal Gateway Panel.
* Regular monthly meetings with the 16 plus team will take place and all children aged 15 years and 8 months old will be discussed and a Pathways Worker will be allocated.
* The transferring social worker and team manager must ensure that the needs assessment and pathway plan must have been completed and reviewed, and statutory visits need to be written and up to date. All key information including transfer summary, management oversight/supervision, genogram, chronology, whereabouts of passport, birth certificate, NI number and UKBA documents, if relevant, must be on the case records and/or must be up to date.

* A formal handover meeting should take place between the social worker and personal adviser, which may involve both Team Managers as required.

 **16+ and Leaving Care Service – Core Business**

* Personal Adviser allocated at 15 years and 9 months (child allocated in the LAC team)
* All LAC age 16+ jointly allocated to 16+ Social Worker and Personal Adviser
* The Personal Advisers will provide support to former relevant Young People in terms of preparing them for independence.

This will include those:

* Young People aged 18-25 (who were relevant /eligible).
* Young People aged 21+ who remain in education/training.
* Young People aged 21-25 (who were former relevant) who re-present to the service as they want to return to education.
* Personal advisers will maintain regular contact (1 in 4 weeks), review the pathway plan on a 6-monthly basis, provide support and advice in respect of EET, housing, finances etc.
* A formal handover meeting should take place between the social worker and personal adviser, which may involve both Team Managers as required.

**Private Fostering Team to Assessment Team and CIN and CP Team – Core Business**

* The Private Fostering team receives referral from a variety of sources including members of the public, language schools and via MASH.
* The team conducts an initial visit within 7 working days
* The team will complete a MAA in relation to the child if a mainstream Private Fostering arrangement and a Private Fostering Assessment of all Private Foster carers.
* The team undertakes Private Fostering Assessments for Dorset County Council- Language School carers only.
* The team raises public awareness, training, information, advice and guidance to members of the public, other agencies, language schools, Special Guardians to ensure compliance, due diligence and safe practice in this area.

**Transfer Process**

* Where child protection concerns arise the Private Fostering team in conjunction with the MASH will conduct a Strategy discussion within 24 hours and if an assessment under S47 or S17 is required the case will transfer directly into the Assessment team or CIN and CP teams as appropriate.
* Referral to Early Help where appropriate

**Separated and Trafficked Children Seeking Accommodation (formally known as UASC)**

* Those under the age of 18 newly arrived will be supported by the Separated and Trafficked Children Seeking Asylum Specialist team to undertake a MAA and initiate the Looked After process. They will be supported in relation to their asylum claim and will be eligible for the same services as other Looked After children.
* An age assessment will be completed by appropriately qualified workers (rota maintained by the SCSA Team Manager) on all children where their age is disputed.
* If over 18 and the Young Person has leave to remain in the UK, then they are entitled to full leaving care support. If the Young Person is over 18 and has exhausted all rights of appeal, or made a fresh claim to the Home Office and awaiting a decision, CSC will decide whether to refer Young Person to NASS for support.
* This specialist team will undertake MAA on Syrian families if threshold met for referral to CSC.

**No Recourse to Public Funds**

* Service Manager MASH and Assessment Service has the lead to oversee all NRPF assessments and monitoring of cases going forward.
* If a child has been assessed as requiring a Child Protection, Child in Need or Looked After Children intervention they will be allocated to CP and CIN teams or LAC/16+ team at transfer points identified.
* If families are assessed as not requiring interventions as above, they will be retained by the Separated and Trafficked Children seeking accommodation team and visited not less than every six months to monitor appropriate intervention in financial support.

**Case transfers to Aspire Adoption (RAA)**

* The local authority will take primary casework responsibility for all children for whom adoption or special guardianship is being considered to the point of Care and Placement Orders.
* In the case of relinquished babies, the local authority will take primary casework responsibility until the formal witnessed CAFCASS consent has been obtained.
* Post Placement Order, if the primary responsibility for the child has not transferred to Aspire, the local authority social worker will undertake all stat visits and all direct work with the child, including life story work, to prepare them for placement, with advice and support from the Aspire social worker and family support practitioner.

**Special Guardianship Assessments**

* The local authority will refer into Aspire for a full assessment of a family member or friend within 1 working day following the conclusion of a positive viability assessment.
* If a negative viability assessment is concluded and the Court orders an SGO assessment, then this will be referred within 1 working day from the Court’s decision irrespective of whether the sealed or draft order is received by the Local Authority to avoid further delay.
* Enquiries and notifications about Special Guardianship Order applications, which are received by the local authority where the child is not the subject of care proceedings, will be referred to Aspire within 1 working day.

**Cross Local Authority Cases**

* Cross LA cases are referred through MASH and transferred to the CP and CIN teams. It is expected that the process from receipt of documentation to transfer in CP conference/CIN Meeting should take no longer than 15 days.
* Cross LA cases must have an up-to-date assessment (having been completed and updated as close to the transfer request as possible, but no longer than 3 month prior to case transfer), a current plan, chronology, genogram, details of the professional network and previous conference minutes.
* Requests for Court statements or joint care planning for children in another Local Authority area will transfer in the first instance to the PLO and Court Team manager immediately upon receipt of receiving the Court Order.
* The final decision as to accepting case responsibility must be made during the Transfer Conference/CIN Review.

**Transfer Meetings:**

**Transfer Meetings for all Teams (excluding MASH and PLO and Court team who have threshold/24h decision transfer and LGP as point of transfer)**

* Transfer meetings will be held weekly chaired by a nominated Team Manager. A Team Manager or Practice Manager are expected to attend. This can include speaker phone discussions to reduce travel time.
* Cases should be identified to Assessment team business support prior to the meeting who will collate information which outlines case status and useful transfer information. This will be undertaken 48 hours prior to the transfer meeting. Cases outside of this timescale will require telephone conversations between Team managers and practice managers to agree a late addition. Regarding LAC children and early notification to the LAC Team Manager will assist in approved transfer planning.

* The meeting will identify transfers and any remedial actions required to facilitate the transfer and this will also be recorded by Assessment team business support colleagues.
* Any case identified for transfer at the meeting should expect formal transfer to the new team to take place in no longer than **two weeks** unless an alternative transfer point has been agreed (e.g. a LAC Review/PLO meeting)
* Prior to the formal transfer date, the new worker and current worker should plan introductions to family and professionals and should also write to them all confirming a transfer has occurred. This letter should include the new workers team and contact details.
* A Case Transfer Summary should be authorised and signed off by the respective team manager/practice manager to be available for the transfer meeting.
* As part of the transfer handover, the prospective allocated social worker from CIN and CP team, PLO and Court team will attend the CIN meeting, ICPC, or Formal Pre-Proceedings meeting.
* The team manager transferring the case will audit the file and its contents, as will the receiving team manager prior to transfer and they will agree remedial actions required.
* The Team Manager receiving the transfer will take responsibility for updating the CIS system/MOSAIC with the new worker and team.

**Transfer to Another Local Authority**

* All relevant records and assessments / chronology to be updated;
* The Team Manager / Practice Manager to contact manager in other local authority to discuss transfer request. If CP transfer in conference to be requested;
* Referral to be sent in writing with relevant documents. Request confirmation of receipt and recorded on Raise/Mosaic
* Letters to go out to partners and family to confirm action taken.

Penny Lodwick

Service Manager

19.7.2017

**Appendix**

Aspire Adoption Service Specification Roles and Responsibilities between Aspire and LAs

CHAD Eligibility criteria

Early Help Needs Identification form

Court Protocol

Early Warning Sheet

To be reviewed June 2018