**Transfer Panel – Terms of Reference**

**1. Principles Underpinning the Transfer of Cases**

These procedures set out ‘best practice’ principles and processes regarding case transfers. In order for the process of case transfer to work as soon as possible for the child & family, a degree of professional judgment will be required in many cases to decide when to transfer. At all times the needs of the child are paramount when considering a change of the adult who is helping them. A change of practitioner is a significant event for a child and family and needs to be reflected in sensitive and careful handling by Practice Leads and practitioners.

**2. Transfer Panel**

The role of the Transfer Panel is to managehandovers in the case pathway and access to post assessment services – eg Intervention, Family First.

The function of the Transfer Panel is to facilitate children and their families to access the right service at the right time for only as long as is necessary.

The Transfer Panel meets weekly on a Tuesday between 9.30am and 1pm and is facilitated by Service Managers from both Social Care and Family First.

**3. The Transfer Process Between Services**

Transfers between practitioners and/or services will be conducted in a timely fashion, ensuring as much continuity as possible for families. All transfers between services will be discussed and decided through the weekly Transfer Panel. Transfer panel involves the nominated Practice Leads from each of the services. Service Managers must ensure that their service is represented by a nominated Practice Lead.

* Allocated practitioner completes the Transfer Request on AzeusCare by completing a CYPS Transfer Panel Booking Request Form.
* A CYPS Transfer Panel Booking Request Form must be completed and submitted for each child in the family for whom Transfer is required. This can be done by copying the Transfer Panel Booking Request Form to each relevant sibling.
* The request for Transfer should outline the background and the request that is being made and submitted via AzeusCare by noon on the Friday, prior to Transfer Panel where the request is being discussed.
* On receipt of the CYPS Transfer Booking Request, the Transfer Administrator will add the child’s name to the next Transfer Panel Agenda using the Panel Meeting Screen on AzeusCare and notify the allocated social worker via email.
* Practice lead attends Transfer Panel to present reason for transfer;
* Transfer Panel decides on transfer and agreed handover/transfer date is identified;
* Pending change of worker discussed with family and professionals;
* Practice Lead oversight ensures child’s case file record is up to date and ready for transfer;
* Letters dispatched to family and professionals confirming a change of service and/or practitioner and date of transfer.
* Handover meeting held with the family between transferring and receiving practitioners, within 5 working days of the transfer date.

**4. Transfers Between Practitioners in the Same Service**

All transfers (re-allocations) between practitioners in the same service area will be decided and managed between Practice Leads. The above steps (d) to (h) also apply to changes of allocated practitioner.

At no point should a child be left without a named allocated practitioner. If difficulties are experienced in transferring cases due to capacity this should be immediately escalated to the Service Manager. The Head of Service and Deputy Director should be notified in writing and a record kept of the agreement for each case that has been escalated.

If a family are receiving a service and move locality within the London borough of Newham, case responsibility will remain within the locality service to whom the case is originally allocated.

**4.1 Transfer/closure summaries & case records**

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 transferring practitioner/service to prevent gaps in knowledge and delay in activity.

Wherever a child experiences a transfer between practitioner and/or service, the transferring practitioner must ensure the child’s record is up to date with all relevant information and a transfer or closure summary is available. The Practice Lead is responsible for ensuring the case record is up to date before transfer.

**4.2 Handover meetings**

Children, young people, their parents/carers and other professionals engaged with the family should always be advised of any plans to change practitioner and/or service in advance. Transfers should always involve a handover meeting with the transferring and receiving practitioners, with the family. If this is not possible, the reasons will need to be explained to the family and recorded on child’s record.

**5. Transfers Between Statutory Children’s Social Work Service to Non-Statutory Family First Early Help Service**

**5.1 Transferring a family from Family First Early Help to Children’s Social Care**

If at any time the family Lead Professional in the Family First Early Help service thinks the family’s difficulties are worsening and the team around the family has become worried that the child or young person’s needs are increasing, the Lead Professional must alert their line manager immediately. Following discussion between practitioner and team leader, the team leader will discuss with MASH Practice Lead to jointly make the decision whether or not to refer the family to Children’s Social Care. Where the issue solely relates to a child or young persons disability, the Disabled Children and Young Person’s Team Practice Lead, will be part of the decision whether it is appropriate or not to refer the family to Children’s Social Care.

If the child or young person is considered to be ‘in need’ of a statutory social work assessment, the family should be consulted, and consent sought for a referral to MASH using the portal. The current Early Help Assessment and Plan should be included with the referral to enable decisions to be made within MASH using the most current information. If threshold is met for social care involvement, the case record will remain open to Family First until the children have been transferred at an agreed handover meeting.

If the child or young person is considered to be at risk of, or suffering from significant harm, the family will be referred to MASH immediately and a Child Protection (Section 47) Strategy Meeting held. The Lead Professional and their line manager must attend the Strategy Meeting.

**5.2 Transferring a family from Children’s Social Care to the Family First Early Help**

When Children’s Social Care has been helping a family to improve a situation, the child or young person’s needs should have lessened, and the family may no longer require a statutory service. However, to embed the positive changes the family may need some continued help from a non-statutory service. With agreement, families who meet the Family First Early Help Service criteria and who want to continue to receive a service, can be transferred from Children’s Social Care to the Family First Early Help Service. To transfer a family the nominated Practice Lead will need to present the case at the weekly Transfer Panel.

**6. Service Remit & Transfer Points Between Statutory Social Work Services**

**6.1 MASH**

A child will transfer from the MASH to the Assessment Service at the point at which it is agreed that the threshold for is met for a Child and Family Single Assessment either s17 or s47. If the MASH receives a re-referral on a child previously known to any statutory service within 3 months of the case being closed, the child will be transferred back to the previous service and where possible to the previous allocated social worker. A child must be allocated to a social worker within 24 hours of the decision being made in the MASH.

A child will transfer from MASH to the Disabled Children and Young Person’s Team at the point at which it is agreed that the threshold is met for a Child and Family Single Assessment s17 or a S47 where the safeguarding issue specifically relates to the child or young person with disabilities. Where there is a child in the family will additional needs and where the initial concerns in the referral is of a safeguarding nature, or the request for an assessment is for reasons other than related to the child with disabilities MASH will transfer to the Assessment Service.

**6.2 The Assessment Service**

The Assessment Service is responsible for undertaking the C&F assessment, child protection enquiries (Rapid Response). If the assessment concludes that the child is in need of a non-statutory family wellbeing service, or a statutory social work service, the case will need to be presented at Transfer Panel within 5 working days of completion of the assessment to transfer to one of the following services, dependent on help required:

* Family First Early Help Service;
* Intervention Service;
* Looked After Children Service;
* Disabled Children and Young Person’s Team.

Transfer will take place at the Early Help Planning Meeting or Child in Need Planning Meeting as appropriate within 10 days of the completion of the assessment.

Children who require an initial child protection conference will be presented at Transfer Panel to identify the receiving social worker and team. Transfer will take place at the child protection conference which will be attended by the receiving social worker.

**6.3 Intervention Service**

This service includes four locality teams who are responsible for providing help and services to children in need and children who are subject to a Child Protection plans or who are in PLO or subject to care proceedings.

Children will need to be presented at Transfer Panel to transfer either into or out of Intervention Teams. Children will transfer from the Assessment Team to the Intervention Service once the Child and Family single assessment has been completed and statutory services are required to improve outcomes for children as described above. Handover points will include the Child in Need Planning Meeting, PLO meeting or in the event where an application for an order is made then this will happen at the first hearing.

Children may also transfer from Intervention Service to the Family First Early Help Service in the circumstances and through the process stated above.

Children will transfer from Intervention Service to the Looked After Children service following conclusion of care proceedings and the final order and plan for permanency has been obtained. Attendance at the transfer panel should take place 5 working days prior to the final hearing and the transfer will take place at/or within 5 working days of the final hearing. Final statements and care plans should be sent to the Looked After Children service manager 5 working days before submitting them to court.

The Assessment Service or Intervention Service social worker should invite the receiving Looked After Children social worker and/or manager to any significant meetings, such as a Child Protection Conference, Looked After Review (with the child/young person’s agreement), Legal Planning Meetings and Public Law Outline (PLO) meetings.

For looked after children the following must have been completed before transfer:

* Most recent Looked After Child Social Workers review report;
* Placement Information Record;
* Initial Person Education Plan (PEP);
* Initial Medical should have been arranged and where possible taken place;
* Up to date Care Plan;
* A copy of all current Legal Orders must be scanned into the case file record. 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;
* Any financial agreements should be up to date.

A child becomes looked after subject to Section 20, without a legal order, will need to be presented to Transfer Panel within 5 working days of the Permanency Plan being ratified at Care and Access to Resources Meeting and the transfer will be at the following Looked After Review (ordinarily the second Looked After Review meeting).

**6.4 The Looked After Children Service**

This service includes seven teams responsible for children who are looked after by Newham Local Authority.

Children will ordinarily transfer from the Intervention Service to the Looked After Children Service. However, there may be some children who will be allocated directly from MASH to the Looked After Children Service, for example, unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Cases that move to the three Leaving Care Teams do not go through the traditional weekly transfer meeting.

The three Leaving Care teams and the four Looked after Children’s teams are overseen by a service manager who reports to the Head of Service for Looked after Children and Permanence which includes leaving care.

Children and young people in Newham are considered to be leaving care aged 18. At 17.6 months the Looked After Children team notifies the Leaving Care Manager of a young person and the Leaving care manager will allocate a Personal Advisor to the young person. The Personal Advisor will co-work with the allocated social worker until the young person becomes 18.

This allows for a smooth Transfer and introduction to the young person’s preparation to leaving care.

Where a young person’s service from the Disabled Children and Young Person’s Team will be ceasing at 18, DCYP Practice Lead will notify the Leaving Care Manager when the young person is 17.6 months. The Leaving Care Manager will allocate a Personal Advisor to the young person. The Personal Advisor will co-work with the allocated social worker until the young person becomes 18.

Whilst the young person remains in education, the allocated social worker within the Disabled Children and Young Person’s Team will remain involved as the lead professional with input from the Leaving Care Team. The Personal Adviser will be allocated to the young person when the young person is ready to transfer to Adult Social Care or when the young person will no longer be receiving a service from the Disabled Children and Young Person’s Team.

**6.5 The Leaving Care Service**

Will work with a young person up until they are 25 as set out in the governments Keep on Caring Policy: supporting young people from care to independence. The young person has to be acceptant of the support offered.

**7. Dispute resolution**

Managers will work co-operatively to resolve case transfer issues as they arise. **Resolution should in all cases be achieved within 1 working day.** The key aim is to ensure that the flow of cases is achieved by managers working together. In rare and exceptional cases, it will be necessary to refer the matter to the Service Managers where a decision will be made.