



Protocol for Children transferring to a new worker (Transfer protocol)

Last updated: November 2023

About this document

Title	Protocol for Children transferring to a new worker (Transfer protocol)
<u>Purpose</u>	To set out the procedure for the children transferring to a new worker
<u>Updated by</u>	Katherine Peddie
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This document is only valid on the day it is printed.

Date Issued:	Version	Summary of Changes	Created by
Feb 2021	1	Final version	
April 2021	1.2	Updates to include flow chart and a more explicit child focus	K Peddie
July 2021	1.3	Inclusion of London CP Procedures links and addition of quick reference guide	K Peddie
August 2021	2	Signed off by ADs and DCS	K Peddie
July 2022	3	Review by Policy and Procedures Group and update of Step Up/Down from EH	K Peddie
July / August 2023	4	Significant changes: 16+ to create clarity. Addition of transfer to Court Service and to out of Borough. Transfer work step, meeting and tracker streamlined.	K Peddie
November 2023	5	Revised Step Down process to include Transfer meeting	K Peddie

Intended Audience

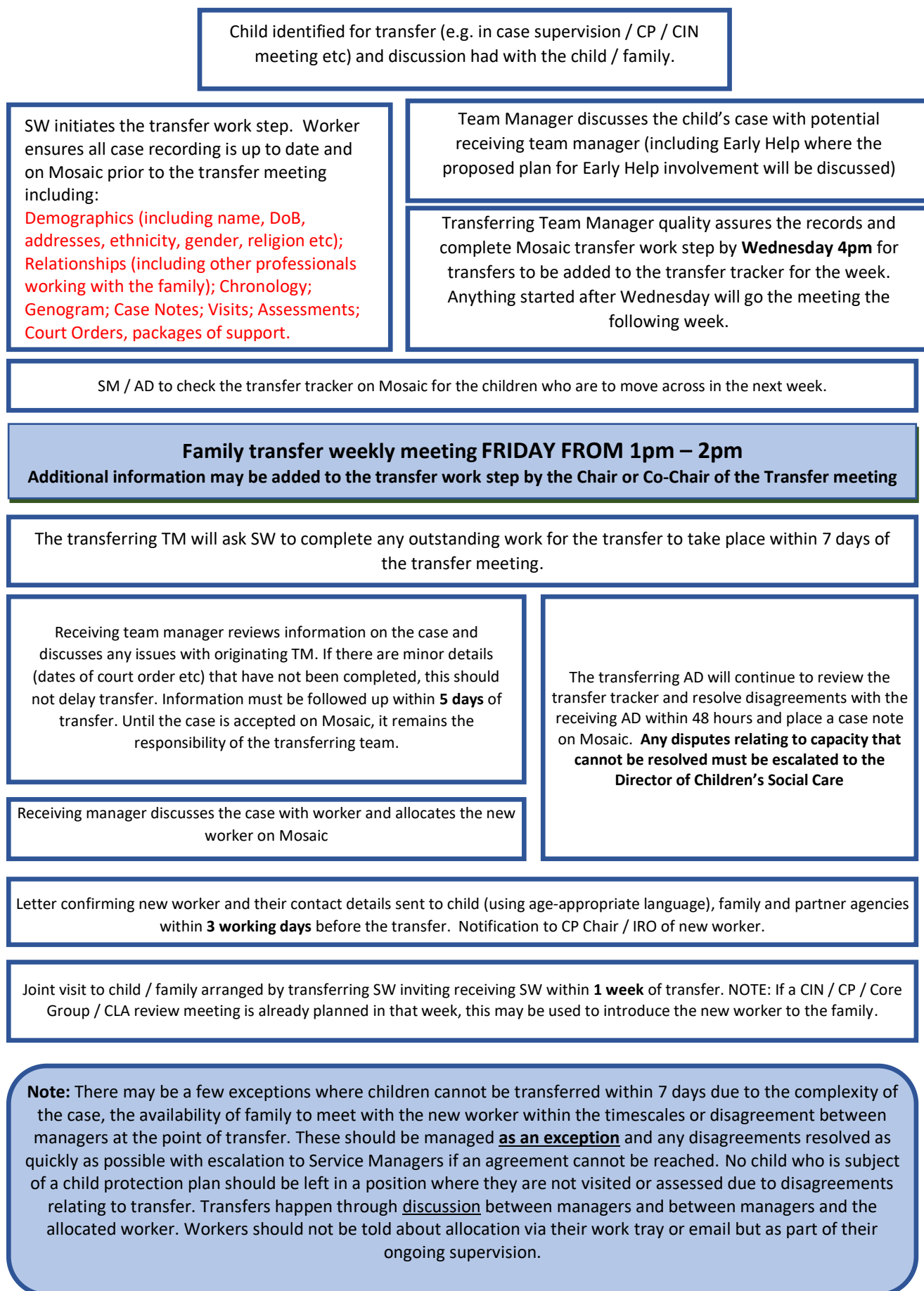
This document has been issued to the following people for Review (R) Information (I) and Review and Sign off (S). The Transfer protocol is mandatory and must be shared with all managers, and social work staff and with those holding cases in Early Help.

Name	Position	S/R/I
Bob Bielby	Director of Children's Social Care	S
Brenda Mcinerney	Director of Practice, Performance and Partnerships	S
	Assistant Directors	S
	All staff	I

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Transfer process diagram



1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Protocol is about relationships with children, especially about endings and beginnings and transitions between new teams and workers. Social Workers and their managers are reminded that in any transfer between teams or Social Workers that this needs to be focused on the child. In various consultations, children have told us that they often do not know that a Social Worker is moving on or leaving the organisation until someone new knocks on their door. We aim to ensure that **all children** will know in advance that they are getting a new Social Worker and that they have been properly introduced and wherever possible have the opportunity to say goodbye.
- 1.2 This protocol clarifies the process for transferring children and families requiring intervention between various service areas within Children's Social Care, and to facilitate a seamless high-quality service to safeguard children, support them and their families from service areas with the right expertise.
- 1.3 It is essential that staff and team managers ensure they are clear and informed about this protocol to secure effective transition points that reduce drift and delay in case planning and interventions, and that they clearly understand the thresholds for intervention.
- 1.4 This protocol provides guidance on how that is most likely to be achieved, considering the remit of services and the statutory framework. The complex nature of the needs of individual children may mean specific decisions have to be made that are **outside the timescales set out in this document**. Where this is the case, it will be agreed by the relevant Service Managers and their Assistant Directors with clear rationale recorded on the child's record. Children and their families will also be clear about the timescales for changes of worker and will be introduced to them as soon as possible.

2. Key Principles

About the Child or Young Person

- 2.1 The child's experience, their needs and journey within the system are the central concern and should always be paramount. Their wishes and feelings must be clearly evidenced.
- 2.2 Practitioners must make time to talk to the child and their family about the reason for transferring to someone new and explain to them the timescales in which that will happen, being mindful of any past trauma, loss or attachment needs of the child when explaining. Independent advocacy should always be offered but particularly if the family are struggling to understand the process. Care should be taken to understand any communication needs and potentially the need for interpreters.
- 2.3 Receiving practitioners and team managers will read the child's story reflected in the case files and try to familiarise themselves with the work previously undertaken. Transferring Social Workers will talk to the Receiving Social Worker telling them about the child. This is particularly important within the Children Looked After and Care Leaver service because of the longer-term nature of the relationships but is also required throughout the system.
- 2.4 Children and their families should experience a **minimum number of transitions** in receiving our services and should have their needs met at the lowest appropriate level of intervention.
- 2.5 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 team to prevent gaps in knowledge and to ensure that the welfare and protection of the child is paramount.
- 2.6 Where the transfer of a child/family is required, children and families must be given information about the new service and the reasons for the transfer **at the earliest**

possible opportunity. All professionals in the network around the child/family should also be informed.

- 2.7 Wherever possible, **siblings should be allocated to the same worker to enable relationship building.** However, where siblings have a different care plan, consideration needs to be given to the needs/care plan of the individual child and what would minimise disruption for them in the long term. Where there is a large sibling group with contrasting care plans, consideration will be given to the children being jointly allocated.
- 2.8 The transfer will be conducted in a timely fashion, according to the defined standards within this protocol ensuring as much continuity as possible for children ensuring that there is no delay in providing a service due to a disagreement about which service should take responsibility. If a transfer is delayed, casework with the child **must continue** and not be put on pause pending a decision.

About the Process

- 2.9 When children are transferring to a new worker this is based on effective communication between teams and workers and the child and their family. This should start with a discussion between the worker and their manager and with the child and their family. Managers should take care to have this discussion first rather than sending an email where the first a worker knows about an allocation is looking in their inbox.
- 2.10 Statutory requirements and court directions must always be adhered to and all children subject to statutory services will be allocated to an appropriately qualified Social Worker (see also, ASYE Case Allocation Policy)
- 2.11 All recording must be kept up to date, including demographics, case summaries, chronologies, genograms, case notes, assessments, and supervision notes (case summaries and chronologies must be current i.e., updated at least within the last 3 months). It is important particularly before transferring records that the case summary reflects a brief history, the work done, the desired outcomes and any risks and how they are managed. Case files that do not meet these standards will not be allocated/re-allocated/transferred and will remain the management accountability of the presenting team manager.
- 2.12 Clear requirements and expectations will be agreed and delivered by the team transferring. For example, what outcomes they are to achieve with the family.
- 2.13 It is expected that Social Workers being allocated to a child will take the opportunity to read the case history prior to meeting with the child and their family.
- 2.14 Children can be added to the transfer list via the transfer work step as an **early notification** for Early Help, FSCP, Court Progression Service, 16+ and CLA as good practice to ensure joined up working and decision making. As soon as a child is added, the Social Worker must ensure that the case recording is brought up to date.
- 2.15 It should be clear at all points of the transfer process **who is responsible for the child and the family.**

About the oversight

- 2.16 It is the responsibility of the transferring Social Worker and their team manager to ensure that a child's records reflect the history and current involvement of the local authority and that all records are up to date at the point of the transfer request.
- 2.17 Transfer between the services must not be blocked due to capacity issues or disagreement over thresholds. Any disagreements must be resolved via escalation to Service Manager / Assistant Director and be **resolved within 48 hours of the escalation.**
- 2.18 Where there are disputes about the threshold, e.g., the family is subject to CIN and the receiving team believes that it should be Child Protection, a discussion will take place

and the CP Chair TM should be asked their view about whether or not the threshold is met for CP.

- 2.19 Work must be allocated within the service it is aligned to without exception, to ensure any staffing or resourcing pressures are clearly seen and addressed by senior managers.
- 2.20 Where there are allocation challenges, children, if presented appropriately should be accepted unless there is an agreement **from the relevant ADs** that they cannot be allocated in the team due to capacity issues. Where this occurs, an **agreed timescale** needs to be in place so that the case can travel across safely without impacting on capacity for the outgoing team.
- 2.21 The transfer protocol may not fit all circumstances, and therefore **flexibility and reason will be applied according to what is best for the child(ren) and their family** and the management of the case. Case transfer should only happen when the focus of the work moves from the remit of one service to another. However, no decisions can be unilateral; both sides of the transfer process must be actively involved in that decision. Direct discussion between managers to agree an appropriate way forward is a standard expectation to take place prior to weekly Family transfer meetings on **Friday from 1pm-2pm**.
- 2.22 **All managers have a shared responsibility** for the work of the department as a whole and the way work flows through between services. Any outstanding Mosaic work steps are expected to be **completed for transfer within 7 days of the Family transfer meeting**.

3. Governance

- 3.1 Responsibility for the movement of cases between service areas rests with the Team Managers with the Service Manager/Assistant Director for each of the service areas having oversight.
- 3.2 In exceptional circumstances such as capacity issues, subject to agreement by the Director of Children's Social Care, discretion may be applied to the timeliness of a transfer to a new worker and the fitness to transfer criteria may be adjusted with to enable a service provision to children and families.
- 3.3 Oversight of the Transfer process will take place in regular performance meetings, including the Practice and Performance Overview Panel (PPOP). Managers will review the timeliness of transfers to ensure that the majority of children are transferred within timescales and have oversight of any delays and the reasons for these. Audits will review the quality of the transfers.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

- 4.1 Transferring Social Workers should discuss the transfer process with the team manager and verify that all work in advance of transfer has been completed. Once this is done the Social Worker will talk to the child and family about why their case is being transferred to another team and will confirm with them and partner agencies in writing using the letter template in Appendix 1. Social Workers are responsible for ensuring case records are in good order and up to date. Please refer to Appendix 4.
- 4.2 The Social Worker must participate in a verbal handover **(within 3 working days of transfer being agreed)** with the receiving Social Worker / Personal Advisor and Team Manager once the identity of the receiving Social Worker is established.
- 4.3 Transferring Team Managers are responsible for making sure the child's records are fit for transfer. They must review the case files to ensure they are complete, and all required documents are in Mosaic and have been appropriately signed off (see Appendix 4). The transferring manager must participate in a verbal handover to the receiving manager.

- 4.4 Receiving Team Managers are responsible for checking the fitness of the file and informing transferring TM (escalated to SMs if required) if this is not the case as per this procedure. The receiving TM is responsible for ensuring allocation to a Social Worker / personal advisor that the work is carried out as required. The receiving TM will familiarise themselves with the case and identify issues for handover and supervision and attend transfer discussion.
- 4.5 The receiving Social Worker will write an introductory letter to the parents/child using the template in Appendix 2 **within 3 working days** of receiving the case. Ideally this would involve a joint face-to-face meeting/visit with the transferring and receiving social workers, however this will need to be considered on the needs of the child and family. The receiving social worker will also write to identified key partners within **3 working days** (Appendix 3).

5. Process for transferring the records within Children's Social Care *(See flowchart at the front of document)*

Case Transfer work step and Tracker

- 5.1.1 Transferring team (SW / TM and/or AP) will quality assure the file to make sure it is ready for transfer and open the [Mosaic Case transfer work step](#). This information is pulled through into the Transfer Tracker which is available on Mosaic for everyone to be able to review.
- 5.1.3 The Transfer Tracker will be reviewed in the transfer meeting and any additional tasks will be added to the transfer work step by the end of the day.
- 5.1.4 Team Managers, Service Managers, Assistant Directors and the Director will be able to check the lists to consider any cases for transfer to their service and identify any issues and resolve delays.
- 5.1.5 Until the acceptance of the case transfer on Mosaic by the receiving Team Manager, the case work remains the responsibility of the transferring team, however the transfer must take place within 7 days of the transfer meeting.
- 5.1.6 Any transfers not taking place within 7 days of the transfer meeting will be added to the agenda for the next transfer meeting and be notified to the Service Manager and Assistant Director(s) responsible. Overdue transfers will be flagged on the tracker.

Family Transfer Weekly Meeting

- 5.2.1 A weekly transfer meeting will be held at the same time every week (Fridays from 1pm – 2pm). The purpose of the weekly transfer meeting is for managers and social workers to have a forum to discuss and plan for children moving between social workers. It will be chaired by a Service Manager and supported by a Business Support Team Leader and **must be attended** by the TM and SW of the child who is to transfer and the TM of the receiving team and a Business Support Assistant from QA to ensure the right people are invited to Initial Child Protection Conferences and to CLA Reviews. Managers not attending this meeting will delay the transfer process.
- 5.2.2 Any children who will be transferring must have the Mosaic Case Transfer work step initiated so that the details are included on the tracker. This gives the opportunity for the receiving service to review and decide which SW will be allocated and to ensure that the right TM will be at the transfer meeting.
- 5.2.3 The transfer meeting will also review any children who have not transferred within 7 days where this had not been agreed by the meeting or the Director of Children's Services. Any children who have not been transferred and where there has been no agreement sought for delays will be escalated to the Director of Children's Social Care.

- 5.2.4 Children may transfer outside this meeting with the agreement of the Service Managers involved, however their details must be captured on the Transfer Tracker to monitor progress of the transfer.
- 5.2.5 The Transfer meeting is chaired by the SM for CAT and co-chaired by an FSCP SM.

6. Timing of submitting transfers

- 6.1 It is important to consider appropriate timing when submitting a child for transfer, taking account of key dates for the child, such as exams, key milestones, placement moves or court dates. Court cases should transfer either at the first hearing or following the final hearing once the care plan has been finalised.
- 6.2 Crisis within the family may mean that a transfer needs to be put off by a week as the transferring team will have case knowledge to inform planning. In the event of crisis, the transferring team will remain responsible but should inform the receiving team of updates and seek their views in decision making.
- 6.3 Where young people turn 16, consideration should be given to delaying the transfer from CLA to 16+ team until the September after their exams. The optimal timing for this transfer should be determined collaboratively and documented in their care plan, with formal agreement during the Child Looked After Review.

7. Specific Considerations for transfers (see also Appendix 5)

7.1 Step Downs into Early Help

- 7.1.1 As early as possible in the assessment, the Social Worker considers if the family might benefit from an Early Help intervention as outlined in the [Pan London Thresholds](#) and [Continuum of Needs](#). This is to support families to sustain any positive changes they have made and to be supported in their community rather than through statutory intervention. The Social Worker must be clear about what support they anticipate Early Help undertake with the family prior to transfer.
- 7.1.2 Consent must be obtained from parent/carer and the young person where appropriate.
- 7.1.3 When the CAT/FSCP TM agrees with plan for step down the SW should contact the EH TM to discuss the interventions that can be offered. The TM completes the transfer work step which includes a summary and management rationale for step down request and this will be discussed at the next Family Transfer Weekly Meeting.
- 7.1.4 All children being stepped down to Early Help will be discussed at the weekly Transfer meeting where any outstanding work will be identified and agreed.
- 7.1.5 The transferring Social Worker will convene a final handover / Child in Need Meeting within 2 weeks of the Transfer weekly meeting which will also serve as the initial TAF Meeting. The Social Worker will inform the family and other professionals. This meeting must identify a new Lead Professional and produce the basis of the Early Help Assessment Early Help Plan
- 7.1.6 Once the handover meeting takes place the Social Worker completes "Refer to Early Help Mosaic episode". TM sends this to relevant locality inbox. The Social Worker ensures case is up to date including an up-to-date genogram and chronology and the TM ensures that the Transfer work step is signed off. Social worker invites EH practitioner to initial TAF meeting/final home visit for handover.
- 7.1.7 If not in agreement. TM and EH TM discuss. If no agreement can be reached, case is escalated to relevant Service Managers / ADs for final decision making.
- 7.1.8 Any children that have stepped down following a period subject to a child protection or child in need plan should be worked with in Early Help for a period of no less than 3 months to ensure that change has been sustained.

7.2 Early Help Stepping-up case to Children's Social Care

- 7.2.1 Where there is evidence that risk is escalating or has escalated on a case open to EH.
- 7.2.2 If there is evidence that child is at imminent risk of harm – the Early Help Practitioner (EHP) will alert their manager immediately (where the manager is not available, the EHP must notify the manager's manager).
- 7.2.3 Where there is evidence that child is at significant risk of harm – the EHP to alert manager on the same day. Evidence that risk is escalating and requires statutory intervention to promote safety and wellbeing of the child - EHP to alert manager within 24 hours.
- 7.2.4 The EH TM completes a case note which includes a summary and management rationale for step up request.
- 7.2.5 The EH TM makes contact with CAT Duty TM for a consultation (timescales as above)
- 7.2.6 Where an agreement is reached to escalate the case the EH TM sends an email to IRH TMs and CAT TM, with management rationale stating that case has been accepted and requesting contact to be created. Practitioner ensures case is up to date. Genogram and chronology provided.
- 7.2.7 Where the TMs are not in agreement. Case is escalated to CAT Service Manager for decision making.
- 7.2.8 If a strategy meeting is required, this will be chaired in CAT Duty ensuring the EH Practitioner is invited.

7.3 Transfer of Children subject to Child in Need Plans

- 7.3.1 Where a child has been assessed as a Child in need under s17 (including families who have No Recourse to Public Funds), and it is unlikely that their needs will be met in less than three months, or through referral to another agency, they will be transferred to FSCP (the process outlined in sections 4 and 5 (above) must still be followed prior to transfer).
- 7.3.2 Following the completion of the Child and Family Assessment, CAT must initiate the Mosaic Case Transfer work step and organise a CIN meeting within 10 days of the completion of the Child and Family Assessment to which they invite the social worker who will receive the case. The CAT worker will complete a CIN plan within 2 working days after which it can be transferred.
- 7.3.3 An FSCP SW will be invited to attend the CIN meeting (in cases where the Team Manager is unsure who will be the child's new social worker, they must attend this meeting). Information must be on the Case Transfer work step at least one week in advance of this meeting.

7.4 Transfer of Children with Disabilities

- 7.4.1 The Children with Disabilities team works with children who have severe or profound disabilities (see Children with Disabilities Levels of Need). Children with disabilities assessed not to meet this level of need will either be transferred to FSCP or to Early Help depending on the outcome of the assessment.
- 7.4.2 Any proposed transfer should be discussed between the current Team Manager and the CWD Team Manager to confirm that these criteria are met. It is important that there is clear evidence of the nature and extent of the disability. CLA open to CWD transitioning to adult services post 18, a discussion with the 16+ service will need to take place to determine delivery of leaving care services in coordination with Adult services. **NOTE: A needs assessment and Pathway Plan must be completed by the time a child looked after with disabilities turns 16 and 3 months. The 16+ Service should be notified when the child turns 15 so that a Personal Advisor can be allocated from the age of 16.**
- 7.4.3 See also Transitions Process.

7.5 Transfer of Children subject to Child Protection Plans

- 7.5.1 Children who are the subject of a Child Protection plan will transfer from CAT to FSCP the day after the initial child protection conference once the file is ready (the process outlined in sections 4 and 5 (above) must still be followed prior to transfer).
- 7.5.2 The transferring Social Worker should notify the Child Protection Chair that the family are to transfer to a new worker and **both transferring and receiving Social Workers must attend the ICPC. If the receiving Social Worker is not available, a duty Social Worker from the receiving team or team manager from the receiving team must attend the ICPC.**
- 7.5.3 CAT must provide the Child and Family Assessment which also doubles up as the report for the Initial Child Protection Conference.
- 7.5.4 Following the ICPC if the child is not made subject to a Child Protection (CP) plan but a CIN Plan is agreed, the child's case will transfer to FSCP as above. The ICPC will agree the outline CIN plan.
- 7.5.5 The invite list for the ICPC will include names of all professionals plus the name of the receiving Team Manager and receiving Service Manager.
- 7.5.6 The Mosaic case transfer work step should be initiated **at least a week in advance of the ICPC to allow the receiving TM time to identify a SW.**
- 7.5.7 Where a pre-birth assessment is required and there is no current involvement from the service, CAT will undertake the assessment and then transfer to the appropriate team (see [Pre-Birth Assessment Protocol](#)).
- 7.5.8 Where a child steps down from a Child Protection Plan, they will be subject of a CIN plan for no less than 3 months. From there they may be stepped down to Early Help intervention (although it must be clear what this intervention will consist of) for a further period of 3 months.

7.6. Transfer of Children Looked After

- 7.6.1 Children who are accommodated will be transferred **at the first "Looked After" review**. Prior to this transfer, the current team is responsible for ensuring all relevant documents and the Child Looked After (CLA) care plan are completed and up-to-date.
- 7.6.2 Children Looked After will be transferred to the Family Support and Child Protection Service where rehabilitation home, with parents/carers or connected persons, is being explored. For children who are subject to care proceedings, the Court Progression Service will take over case responsibility. Following final court orders that confirm the child's legal permanency, the case will be handed over to the CLA service.
- 7.6.4 The Mosaic case transfer work step should be initiated **at least a week in advance of CLA review to allow the receiving TM time to identify a SW** to attend the CLA review.
- 7.6.5 Relinquished children and those for whom adoption is a likely long-term care plan will be initially allocated to the Court Progression Service. This is to ensure that a care order can be obtained in a timely and orderly fashion. Once the care order is granted, the case will then be transferred to the Child Looked After (CLA) Service. This procedure applies regardless of whether the child's case originates from the Children's Assessment Team (CAT) or the Family Support and Child Protection (FSCP), ensuring that the necessary legal processes are completed before the child is placed under the permanent care of the CLA service.
- 7.6.6 When children under 16 have been in section 20 voluntary accommodation for 3 months, a Legal Gateway Meeting is mandated. The CLA Service Manager will be invited to this meeting to discuss the future care plan. If it is anticipated that the child will remain in the care of the local authority, the case will be transferred to the Court Progression Service to ensure the appropriate legal framework is established. Following this, once a Care Order is granted, the child's case will be transferred to the CLA Service for ongoing care and support. This process ensures that the child's

transition is managed with full legal oversight and in the best interest of their long-term welfare.

- 7.6.7 Children who become looked after by the Family Support and Child Protection Service (FSCP) and for whom a permanence plan—such as adoption or long-term foster care—is being considered, will remain with the FSCP while the plan is being developed. Upon establishment of the plan and care proceedings are initiated, these children will then be assigned to the Court Progression Service to secure the necessary legal orders. After the court order is granted, affirming the legal permanence plan, the child will be transitioned to the Child Looked After (CLA) Service for ongoing care. If a newborn is born to a family during care proceedings, the newborn will be promptly included in these proceedings. This ensures a structured transfer of responsibility, with the Court Progression Service overseeing all legal aspects until the resolution, followed by a handover to the CLA service for the execution of the long-term legal care plan.
- 7.6.8 Children in the CLA service will remain with their social worker until the age of 18 (unless they are reunified home), however a PA from the 16+ Service will also be allocated by the time the young person turns 17½ to ensure that there is continuity for the young person who becomes a care leaver. The optimal timing for this transfer should be determined collaboratively and documented in their care plan, with formal agreement during the Child Looked After Review.

7.7 Transfers of Children Looked After between 16 and 18

- 7.7.1 The principle in Lambeth applies that children and young people should have as few changes of social workers as possible. When transferring a young person over the age of 16 consideration needs to be given to the timing of this and what the most appropriate service is for them.
- 7.7.2 Where a young person is transferring from FSCP to 16+ Service, all proceedings will need to be concluded prior to the transfer to 16+ team where a young person has been in FSCP. All young people transferring to the 16+ team from FSCP will have their Initial permanence planning meeting convened with corresponding tracker updated. Direct work with the family needs to be evidenced on the case file to determine reunification has been exhausted before the case transfers to 16+ service. Both services need to be mindful of key events in the young person's life, such as exams, when considering the best time for them to transfer to a new worker.
- 7.7.2 If a 16 year-old young person has become looked after in CAT under s20 (for example, under the young person's housing pathway), they should be transferred to the 16+ service at the first CLA review. A Social Worker or Team Manager from the CLA Service must attend the first CLA review to agree the actions in the Care Plan / Pathway Plan. Where the young person over the age of 16 has come into the service and proceedings have been initiated, the CLA Service will be part of the initial hearing and then the case will transfer.
- 7.7.3 Similarly, any young person coming into care over or above the age of 17 ½ years-old will transfer to the 16+ Service at the first CLA review. A Social Worker or Team Manager from the 16+ Service must attend the first CLA review to agree the actions in the Care Plan / Pathway Plan. Once the young person has spent 13 weeks in care, a PA may be. These young people become 'eligible' young people after they have spent 13 consecutive weeks in care. Those young people who do not spend 13 weeks in care before they turn 18 will be 'qualifying' for advice and assistance only.

7.9 Transfer to the Court Service

- 7.9.1 If the plan is to initiate care proceedings during or at the end of the PLO process, a slot should be booked at the Legal Gateway meeting. Initial Statements and Care Plans must be submitted to the Legal Gateway and include the views of the IRO where a child is looked after.

- 7.9.2 The transfer meeting should take place prior to the first hearing. Cases will transfer either at the first hearing or before the first CLA Review, depending on the circumstances of each case which will be agreed at the transfer meeting.
- 7.9.3 If transferring at the first hearing, the current allocated social worker will be responsible for drafting the initial court statement and care plan, with input from the Court Team Social Worker. The allocated social worker will also be responsible for completing the CLA Care Plan and review paperwork. The allocated worker and the Court Manager or Social Worker where possible will attend the first hearing. The allocated worker is responsible for setting up the first CLA review in consultation with the Court social worker and both should attend the first review.
- 7.9.4 Where it is highly likely that the child will become looked after, they may be allocated directly to the Court Service (i.e. straight from CAT service (typically unborn children and EPOs)) outside of the above framework with the agreement of the Service Managers in the Court and relevant services. In this exception the Service Managers will agree what paperwork is required.

7.10 Completion of Care Proceedings

- 7.10.1 At the conclusion of care proceedings, the future case management of children will be based on the outcome of the court case. These cases will be presented to the weekly Transfer Meeting as soon as the Care Plan has been agreed, enabling the identified team to plan for its allocation and the attendance of a social worker at the final hearing.
- 7.10.2 There are occasions when orders are granted at the conclusion of proceedings which are unexpected or outside of the local authority's final care plan. These should be managed as follows:

No Order

- 7.10.2 If proceedings are concluded, and no order is made, a decision will need to be made about the level of service required. Therefore, there should be a discussion between the Service Manager with case responsibility at the conclusion of the proceedings with the Service Manager in the most appropriate onward service, most likely FSCP.

Supervision Order

- 7.10.3 If a Supervision Order is granted at the conclusion of proceedings for a child to remain at home with parents or family/friends, then the case will transfer to or remain in FSCP for the duration of the Supervision Order. In such instances, the responsibility for completing the Supervision Order Plan will be with the allocated social worker within 10 working days of the making of final court orders.
- 7.10.4 This includes cases where other orders are granted, for example Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement orders as Child in Need planning will need to commence.

Care Order

- 7.10.5 If a Care Order is granted at the conclusion of proceedings, for a child to remain with a birth parent or connected person which has not already been foreseen, the case will need to transfer to CLA, if it is not already within that service.
- 7.10.6 Placement with Parents process will need to be followed/completed prior to transfer if the plan is for the child to remain with their parent subject to a Care Order. **Only the Director of Children's Social Care or the Strategic Corporate Director of Children, Families and Education can agree any placements with parents.**

8. Out of Borough

8.1. Children transferred from Out of Borough

- 8.1.1 The [London Child Protection Procedures](#) establish protocols between local authorities to help identify the responsible authority and the process for transferring between local authority boundaries. These protocols must be consulted when receiving a child in

from another authority and when a Lambeth child goes to live in another authority. It is particularly important that relevant information is shared between the authorities prior to accepting case responsibility.

8.1.2 There are three different types of transfer from Outside the Borough where the other authority will have previously completed their assessment, all of which will be routed through the Integrated Referral Hub:

- **Children subject to Child in Need** – IRH will add the child(ren) on mosaic and notify FSCP SMs who assess the threshold and case responsibility and allocate the family within **1 working day of the request to FSCP**, or refuse directly to the transferring LA.
- **Children subject to a Child Protection plan** – IRH will send the referral to QA services. If accepted, an invite to ICPC is sent to FSCP SMs and the family is allocated to a team within **1 working day of the request to FSCP**. The Receiving SW is expected to attend the ICPC.
- **Court designation** – IRH / Legal will send a referral to FSCP SMs who will assess the threshold and case responsibility and instruct legal, the family is allocated to a team within **1 working day of the request to FSCP**.

8.1.3 Where another borough has completed an assessment, this will be passed to the FSCP service to determine whether the case is accepted for transfer. This includes children subject to a CIN plan. This decision should be made within 1 working day of receipt by the FSCP Service Manager and may require the Service Manager contacting their counterpart in the originating authority for further information prior to accepting.

8.1.4 For transfer-in of children subject to CIN from other local authorities, IRH will contact SMs in FSCP on the day of receipt of the notification and follow up with an email. IRH **must** ensure they **speak** to the receiving team directly as well as emailing as an email may be overlooked. It is good practice (see [London Child Protection Procedures](#)) to hold a meeting with the originating authority where a child in need has transferred from another local authority. This will also help with determining who holds responsibility. This should be booked within 7 days of accepting the case and the previously allocated worker from the other authority should be invited.

8.1.5 Children who transfer in from other local authorities via transfer-in child protection conferences, legal cases to be designated to Lambeth, and Family Assistance Orders will go directly to FSCP. IRH will contact TM for CPC and the relevant SMs in FSCP and alert them for transfer-in child protection conference (See [London Child Protection Procedures](#)) and follow up with an email copying in the SMs in FSCP.

8.2. Children transferred from Lambeth to another Borough

8.2.6 Where children move out of Lambeth with their families, the [Pan London Child Protection protocol for children moving across other boroughs](#) must be followed. Paperwork to be submitted to the Child Protection Conference or the Child in Need meeting to which another Borough will be invited, **MUST** be of sufficient quality, otherwise the receiving authority may delay the transfer.

9. Disputes

9.1 The Transferring Operational AD will review the red column on the transfer tracker and resolve disputes with the Receiving Operational AD within 48 hours and place a case note on Mosaic.

9.2 Where differences cannot be resolved by the ADs, for example due to capacity issues, **this must be escalated to the Director of Children's Social Care** who will make a decision within 48 hours.

10. Complaints

- 10.1. Children and families may wish to complain about the transfer process and should be encouraged to use the Lambeth Children's Complaints Procedures if they wish to do so. Complaints will be used to update and improve practice relating to transfers.

Appendix 1: Template for Transferring Social Worker to inform the child and family and partner agencies that their case will be transferred to another team



**To: Name of Person you are
sending the letter to
Their Address**

**Your Name
Job Title
Children's Social Care
London Borough of Lambeth
Tel: Mobile:
Email:
Civic Centre
6 Brixton Hill
London SW2 1EG
Website: www.lambeth.gov.uk**

Date

Dear (Insert Name)

I am writing to let you know that we will be allocating your child and family to a new social worker.

Please note, there is nothing to worry about, sometimes we make these changes to ensure our families are assigned to workers who have the most relevant expertise to meet the family's current needs. We do understand that sometimes changes can be hard, but we will try our best to make this transition as smooth as possible. Please also be assured that as part of the handover process, the new social worker will be able to read the information we have on our records to become familiar with your circumstances.

Your new social worker/PA is called (insert name) and s/he will be taking over from (insert date). I have also included her/his contact number below, along with the contact details for his/her manager.

Name of new social worker and their number:

The name of the new Team Manager is (insert here with contact details).

It has been a privilege to work with you / and your family. I wish you all the best for the future.

{Note: you might want to include a positive reflection of the strengths of the child in the time you've been working with them}

Kind regards

Insert signature here

Put your name here

Appendix 2: Introductory Letter from the Receiving Social Worker or Personal Advisor to be sent within 3 working days of accepting a case.



**To: Name of Person you are
sending the letter to
Their Address**

**Your Name
Job Title
Children's Social Care
London Borough of Lambeth
Tel: Mobile:
Email:
Civic Centre
6 Brixton Hill
London SW2 1EG
Website: www.lambeth.gov.uk**

Date

Dear (Insert Name)

My name's (insert) and I am your new social worker/ personal advisor.
I'm aware I may not be your first social worker, but I thought it would be nice to tell you a little about myself.

My name is:

I've been a social worker for (*only if the worker wishes to say the duration*)

What made me want to become a social worker or what I love about my role is.....

I'm sure you may have questions of your own and there are also things I like to discuss with you, so when we meet/speak that would be a great opportunity for us both.

Please see my contact details below, along with the duty/out of hours number in case you ever need to contact social services outside of the man office hours.

I will also be writing to other people that may work with you and family, to introduce myself and let them know that I am your newly allocated social worker/ personal advisor.

I look forward to working with you.

Kind regards

Insert signature here

Put your name here

Appendix 3: Introductory Letter from the Receiving Social Worker or Personal Advisor to partner agencies to be sent within 4 working days of accepting the case.



**To: Name of Person you are
sending the letter to
Their Address**

**Your Name
Job Title
Children's Social Care
London Borough of Lambeth
Tel: Mobile:
Email:
Civic Centre
6 Brixton Hill
London SW2 1EG
Website: www.lambeth.gov.uk**

Date

Dear (Insert Name)

Re: Name of Child, DOB, Address

I am writing to tell you that I am the new social worker / personal advisor for the above child/ young person.

I will be taking over work with the child/family from (insert date).

Please see my contact details below, along with that of management.

My contact details are:

My Team manager is (insert name and contact details)

My Service Manager is (insert name and contact details)

Kind regards

Insert signature here

Put your name here

Appendix 4 Criteria to judge file fitness

The following documents must be completed and evidenced within the electronic case files:

- Demographics, professional involvements and family relationships must be up to date
- A full and up to date **Chronology** of the current team's involvement
- **Child and Family Assessment** to be completed with analysis of reason for step down or escalation and clear summary of the concerns, what intervention you are asking for and safety goals and desired outcomes for the family i.e., to improve the relationship between the parent to prevent re-referral of domestic abuse concerns and to prevent the child experiencing domestic abuse and impacting on their emotional well-being. It must be signed off by the transferring Team's TM and feedback provided to the family and referrer as appropriate.
- A relevant plan should be on the file detailing what needs to happen and setting out clear desired outcomes.
- **Case summary** including the reason for referral, history of the family and any new concerns identified during the assessment.
- **Visits** to the family home, evidence that the child has been seen and **direct work** completed and uploaded on Mosaic. Also, within the child and family assessment evidence of how the voice of the child has been incorporated and analysed.
- Evidence of **regular supervision**. Supervision records to be evidenced, in accordance with the Supervision Policy. It is expected that the supervision record will be explicit in recording why joint work or a step down is being requested, the expectation of Early Help and how one will know when there are improvements.
- **Management oversight**, which includes allocation notes, management oversight, including when there is a change in direction of the case i.e. from child in need to child protection, explaining the escalation or de-escalation.
- A copy of all current Legal Orders should be included in the record including the date of the order; 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.
- Financial agreements should be up to date and recorded on the transfer record.
- All documentation should be signed off by the relevant Social Worker and their line manager prior to transfer.

When a transferring child who is subject to CLA procedures the case file should contain the following documentation, which is signed off by the

Social Worker/line manager where appropriate and commented upon within the transfer summary:

- a) Placement Information Record
- b) Care Plan
- c) Review of Arrangements
- d) Placement Agreement - Placement Planning
- e) Contact Arrangements/Schedule
- f) Medical Consent
- g) Date of Medical/Health Review
- h) Date of PEP
- i) If the child is returning home, there must be a risk assessment of the proposed arrangements.

Any data quality errors should be resolved prior to transfer but are not to be used as a reason to delay transfer

The TM should complete the checklist in the work step before submitting a case for transfer. Basic information should be up to date and the current circumstances for the child should be clear, with clarity on the professional network and any key dates arising.

Appendix 5 At a glance guide to children transferring to a new worker

Children transferring between teams	
Key Steps for all practitioners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the need for a family to step up / down or across to another team. What outcomes do we want to achieve? • Have a conversation with the child / family about it including the timescales. • Have a conversation with the identified team invite them to the next CIN / CP meeting / Review. • Prepare the case records / add to the Case Transfer work step and attend the Family Transfer weekly meeting. • Complete any outstanding work identified by the TM, AP or Family Transfer weekly meeting. • Undertake a joint visit with the transferring worker and the receiving worker (to be written up on the records by the transferring worker) • Transfer the records to new team / worker. • Transferring worker to send a thank you note to the child / young person / Receiving worker to send introductory letter. • If a child is subject to a CP plan or becomes CLA, notify the CP Chair / IRO of the name of the new worker. 	

At a glance						
Early help	IRH / EDT / Edge of Care	CAT / NRPf / PF/ Young Person's Housing Pathway	FSCP / Flourish	CLA / UASC	16+	CWD
Early Help will step up to Children's Social Care via an IRH referral or step down to tier 2 Early Help in the Community IRH may step down to Early Help following referral						
	IRH will determine if a referral meets the threshold for assessment and will allocate to CAT to undertake the assessment. If the case has closed within 3 months of the referral, it will be screened by the SM and if					IRH may allocate directly to CWD where the threshold is met for CWD involvement

At a glance						
Early help	IRH / EDT / Edge of Care	CAT / NRPF / PF/ Young Person's Housing Pathway	FSCP / Flourish	CLA / UASC	16+	CWD
	necessary allocated back to the last SW who was working with the family. In this instance they could allocate directly to FSCP					
		<p>CAT will undertake a Child and Family Assessment and once complete will transfer to FSCP for CP / CIN or they will Step down to Early Help.</p> <p>Where a child is subject to proceedings, FSCP will be invited to the first LPM / Pre-Proceedings before being transferred to them.</p> <p>This will follow the Case Transfer Steps set out above.</p> <p>Where a child is accommodated, they will be transferred to the FSCP at the first CLA review</p> <p>Where a family is assessed by CAT as having No Recourse to Public Funds the NRPF team will retain case accountability. Where there are CIN issues, FSCP would work alongside the allocated worker in NRPF to support and assess.</p>				In the course of the assessment it may be determined that the child does not meet the threshold for CWD involvement (however if there is a disability they are still eligible for CIN support). This will follow the Case Transfer Steps set out above.
		<p>Where a young person has no additional needs and presents as homeless, they will be allocated to the Young People's Housing Pathway and the case will remain open for 6 weeks following completion of the assessment.</p> <p>Where a young person has identified additional needs and presents as homeless they will be transferred to the FSCP under a CIN plan.</p>				

At a glance						
Early help	IRH / EDT / Edge of Care	CAT / NRPf / PF/ Young Person's Housing Pathway	FSCP / Flourish	CLA / UASC	16+	CWD
		If the young person is already known to FSCP under a CIN or CP plan and become homeless, they will be considered by the Young People's Housing Pathway but case responsibility rest with the FSCP.				
		Where there is a clear indication and agreement for a permanency plan for long term care, the case will transfer directly to the CLA service.				
Early Help to be invited to the Family Transfer meeting		When FSCP identify that CIN intervention is coming to an end and there is a role for Early Help, they must identify the outcomes they wish to achieve by stepping down and discuss this with Early Help				
		Relinquished children and cases where there is a likelihood of adoption as the long term care plan will be transferred directly to the CLA service regardless of whether they come from CAT or FSCP.				
			<p>Children who become looked after will be transferred to the CLA team / 16+ Team at the first looked after review, however they may be added to the transfer list prior to this as advanced notice.</p> <p>Where a child looked after will continue as a child looked after post 16, it is good practice to notify the 16+ team when they are 15 and 6 months to ensure good and timely transition and joint working.</p> <p>When children under 16 have been subject to s20 voluntary accommodation for 3 months, a Legal Planning Meeting will be required. CLA/16+ Service Manager will be invited to attend the Legal Planning Meeting. If the care plan envisages that the child will remain in the care of the local authority, they should be transferred to CLA/16+ Service.</p>			

At a glance						
Early help	IRH / EDT / Edge of Care	CAT / NRPF / PF/ Young Person's Housing Pathway	FSCP / Flourish	CLA / UASC	16+	CWD
			Where a young person presents as homeless has been subject to s20 under the Young People's Housing Pathway and are 16+ they will be transferred to the 16+ Service straight away (without waiting 3 months).			
					Where a child with disabilities is eligible for Leaving Care Services, advance notice should be given to the 16+ Service	
						For children transitioning to Adult Services for an Adult assessment under the Care Act, preparations will begin at 17 in preparation for the Adults Transitions Team accepting case responsibility when they turn 18

Transferring to a new worker within the same team

For various reasons a practitioner can no longer continue to work with a family. Generally, this is because the practitioner is moving on or, they are off for long term sickness or maternity/paternity/adoption leave. Very seldomly the team manager may need to reallocate a child or family to another worker either because of capacity issues or because another worker may have particular skills or expertise, although this must be done in a planned way.

It is anticipated that the practitioner usually has sufficient time to say goodbye to the children and families they are working with and to introduce them to the new practitioner, with the exception of sudden illness or unforeseen emergencies. This would be done in the same way as a usual transfer, including discussing with the child and their family and a good handover to their new colleague and, wherever possible having a joint meeting with them.