

# Practice Matters

## Stepping Down – to Partner Agencies

### What is stepping down - to partner agencies?

As a Partnership across Derby City and Derbyshire our joint threshold document states we are committed to ensuring children and their families access the right services at the right time, at the lowest appropriate level of intervention. Whatever the level of intervention following a referral as things improve services will reduce or end, with a clear and agreed pathway forward. For children and families open to children’s services this often means cases will close to us, with continued support being needed from partner agencies.

### Why do we need a stepping down process?

A consistent approach and process around how we step down plans between teams or to partners is important to achieve a collaborative response to ensure families continue to receive the appropriate support following closure to children’s services.

### How good practice looks for cases stepping down to partner agencies?

- **Good communication** between teams within Children’s Services and partner agencies, needing to provide continued support is vital.
- The progress of a child’s plan and impact of that plan should be regularly reviewed together with the family and other involved professionals; consideration about whether the **threshold for intervention** has changed should be a regular conversation at those meetings.
- As improvement is noted and threshold for intervention is considered to have changed, a discussion should take place within supervision to evidence management agreement and oversight.
- Discussions should take place with key relevant partner agencies **and** the family, **prior** to a case closing to identify what **outcomes** the step-down plan needs to address, **how** these outcomes will be met and **who** else needs to be involved once closed to children’s services. This best ensures their commitment to, and understanding of, the plan going forward.
- Following these discussions, at a plan review meeting – together with the family, Step Down is **jointly** agreed, the **SMART** child’s plan is updated, and the **new lead professional** identified and agreed. This will all be recorded in the Child’s Plan process on Mosaic and the decision and the updated child’s plan should be shared (in writing) with the family and all involved professions / agencies.
- Transition and handover over of the plan are key to the safeguarding and welfare of children – if there is any delay or disagreement over the step-down arrangements, these must be raised with a team manager and escalated with partners to progress the step-down.
- Case is closed to Children’s Services.



