

Children Social Care

Protocol for the Transfer of

Children's Cases between

Teams

Protocol for the Transfer of Children's Cases between Teams for Children Social Care Policy Governance

Title	Protocol for the Transfer of Children's Cases between Teams
Purpose/scope	Ensure that there is a clear understanding of how and at what point a child or young person should move from one team to another
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1. Introduction

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that there is a clear understanding of how and at what point a child or young person should move from one team to another. The objective is to ensure that there is both continuity of care and clarity of responsibility at each stage of the process.

2. General Principles

The child's needs, their journey and their welfare should always be at the centre of discussions about transfer of responsibility between social work teams.

Transfer of responsibility can impact on the timeliness and quality of service provision to children and families if not well managed – it is important therefore that full information accompanies the transfer and that the receiving social worker and manager have a good understanding of the child's circumstances and any associated risk.

Children, young people and their carers/parents need to be informed of the change of worker as soon as is practicable allowing for any concerns and/or anxieties to be addressed in a timely way and as such reduce the risk of disengagement from ongoing intervention.

A child and their family will be supported by the teams that best reflect where his or her needs can be best met, Team capacity cannot be used as a reason for not transferring.

3. Escalation Arrangements

Where there are significant differences about the acceptance or transfer of social work responsibility, these should be resolved between the relevant Team Managers in the first instance or in exceptional circumstances by the Service Delivery Managers.

This protocol cannot cover all eventualities and decisions about case responsibility must ultimately be based on the children's needs.

4. Transfer Standards

Children and young people due for transfer will be discussed at a weekly Transfer Meeting where a date for transfer will be agreed and recorded at the meeting in the Transfer Log (**See Appendix 1**). This Log will be stored on the Team Share Point Site so that it is fully accessible to all managers for reference.

Team Managers are required to attend the Transfer Meeting however if on occasion they are unable to attend their Senior Social Worker should deputise for them.

Chairing responsibility for the Transfer Meeting will be rotated between Managers.

Before children and young people can be transferred from one team to another certain requirements must be met:

- Child's family and professional demographics must be up to date.
- Every child should have had an up to date assessment and plan.
- Chronology must be up to date.
- Case notes must be complete, up to date and finalised.
- Supervisions and management decisions up to date and recorded on file.
- Agreed relevant outstanding tasks in Protocol work tray.
- All other forms/plans to be finalised and not in draft.
- Case Summary reviewed and up to date including key dates for meetings, reviews, contact, visits, and identification for key risks and protective factors for child.
- The child's electronic record must be quality assured and signed off by the transferring manager to ensure all outstanding work has been completed (**See Appendix 2**)

5. TRANSFER PROCESS

5.1 Transfer arrangements between Assessment Team, Child Protection Team, Child in Care Team and Disabled Children Team

The mechanism for transfer of responsibility for children and young people between teams will be the weekly Transfer Meeting. All Team Managers are required to attend this meeting

and in the event that they are not able to attend they must make arrangements for representation.

The Meeting takes place on a Tuesday 9.30 am – 10.30am

The transfer meeting has two key functions:

- a) To highlight, track and allow for early discussion and planning of those children and young people that will be transferring to another team at a future Transfer Meeting. This will allow receiving Team Managers to plan and agree allocation to a team and social worker.
- b) For social work responsibility to transfer from one team to another for those children and young people that are transferred on that day.

5.2 Unborn Baby Assessments

Where the decision is made within Family Connect that there is the need for an unborn baby assessment these will be allocated directly to the Parenting Team. Where concerns are raised and it is less clear as to whether a full unborn baby assessment is required these cases will be allocated to the Assessment Team for a C&F assessment. If the outcome of the C&F assessment is that a full pre-birth baby assessment is required these will be transferred to the Parenting Team for the assessment to progress.

5.3 Child Protection

At the point where the Assessment Team Manager is aware that arrangements are to be made for a child to be subject of a Child Protection Conference the name of this child is to be added to the template provided so that pre-planning and discussion can take place prior to the next Transfer Meeting. This will enable arrangements to be made by the Child Protection Team Manager to allocate a Social Worker who is able to attend the Initial Child Protection Conference and Initial Core Group.

If the child becomes subject to a Child Protection Plan the Assessment Social Worker will convene the Initial Core Group and in conjunction with the Child Protection Social Worker create the Child protection Plan. Following this the transfer of the case will take place at the next Transfer Meeting

5.4 Child in Need

The Assessment Team following C&F assessment will provide a case management service to children who require S17 services and planning. A review of the case will be undertaken by the Assessment Team Manager at a 3 month point and if the child and family still require social work intervention the child will transfer to the Child Protection Team for longer term intervention.

5.5 Care Proceedings

Where the Assessment Team makes an application to the court for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) in respect of a child(ren), the Assessment Social Worker will be responsible for completing:-

- the initial EPO Witness Statement
- Chronology and Care Plan

If the EPO is granted and following a reconvened LPM the outcome of which is that an application is to be made to the Court for an Interim Care Order (ICO), the Assessment Social Worker will be responsible for completing: -

- the Witness Statement
- Chronology and Care Plan supporting the Application for the Interim Care Order

The Assessment Team Manager will alert the Child Protection Team Manager to this case, and the Child Protection Team Manager will identify a Social Worker to attend the first Court Hearing. The child will formally transfer at the next Transfer Meeting.

Where there has been a Letter Before Proceedings (LBP) meeting with an outcome that does not require an immediate application to Court the Assessment Team Manager will highlight this case at the Transfer meeting with a view to a Child Protection Social Worker having the option of attending the LBP. The case will transfer to the Child Protection Team the meeting following the LBP having taken place.

Where there are ongoing Family & Friends viability assessments taking place at the time of transfer the Assessment Social Worker will complete the necessary elements of this, however this will not delay the transfer of the case.

6. Children in Care

Children looked after will transfer from the Assessment Team to the Child Protection Team following the first Child In Care review having taken place where there is not yet a plan of permanency for the child and/or there are ongoing Care Proceedings.

If a plan of permanency is achieved for the child by the first Child in Care Review and there are no ongoing Care Proceedings these cases will transfer directly to the Child in Care Team.

Children looked after will transfer from the Child Protection Team to the Child in Care Team at point that the child's Care Plan is for permanency (ratified by the IRO) and there are no ongoing Care Proceedings.

6.1 Homeless Young People aged 16 years and 17yrs.

If the young person does not already have an allocated social worker the Assessment Team will undertake a Child & Family Assessment jointly with a Housing Solutions Officer. If the young person becomes a Child in Care the young person will transfer to the Children in Care Team at the next Transfer Meeting.

6.2 Children remanded by the Court into the care of the Local Authority will transfer directly from Family Connect to the Child in Care Team.

6.3 Asylum Seeking Children

The Assessment Team on completion of a C&F will follow the child protection procedures when necessary. Transfer to the Child in Care Team/Leaving Care Team will take place following the conclusion of C&F/Child Protection Processes.

7. Special Guardianship

Following the Court making a Special Guardianship Order the child will transfer to the Family and Friends Team.

8. Private Fostering

Family Connect will triage all children presented as being privately fostered and decisions will be made either to signpost cases for allocation to the Assessment Team (if safeguarding issues present) or directly to the Family Friends Team (no presenting safeguarding issues).

The Assessment Team will complete a C&F Assessment and once completed transfer to the Family Friends Team if the outcome of the assessment concludes that the child is not at risk of significant harm. Any child or young person that requires presentation at Child Protection Conference the Assessment Team will follow the child protection procedures and progress as outlined above to the Child Protection Teams.

9. Social Care step down to Other Services

Stepping down refers to the process of passing a family from an intensive or statutory led assessment or co-ordinated support plan to other more appropriate support services generally within universal, early help and targeted services.

Following social work assessment and intervention there are a number of key points dependent on the individual child's journey where it can be identified that it is now appropriate for step down arrangements to be put in place to enable the child and family to continue to receive the right services that will support them.

Key point include:

- Where a C&F assessment identifies the need for Strengthening Families or other services
- Where a child no longer requires a Child Protection Plan
- Where a child no longer requires a Child in Need Plan
- Where child is no longer needs to be looked after by the Local Authority.

Good step down arrangements and handover are critical to the child and the family in being able to receive continuity of appropriate services and support. Refer to **(Appendix 3)** for guidance and easy read flowcharts of step down arrangements.

There is an expectation that there will be joint working between Social Care and Strengthening Families as set out in appendix 3 and that when it is beneficial for formal manager discussions in relation to Step Down of cases from Social Care to Strengthening Families that the Social

Care Manager invites the relevant area Strengthening Families Manager/Senior Practitioner to the Transfer Meeting.

Review date: May 2018

Appendix 1 TRANSFER FOR DISCUSSION

DATE	PROTOCOL NO	CHILD'S NAME	TEAM/SOCIAL WORKER	CHILD'S STATUS ie. CP/CIC/CIN etc	POTENTIAL PLANNED TRANSFER DATE	ACTUAL TRANSFER DATE

APPENDIX 2

Transfer Arrangements for Children cases within Children Services Teams Telford & Wrekin Council

Transferring Team Managers to identify cases for transfer and complete Transfer log.

Discussion with all Managers at the Transfer meeting on **Tuesday mornings from 9.30 – 10.30 am**

Cases discussed and Team Managers made aware of cases being highlighted for future transfer e.g.

- Booked ICPC
- New CIC
- Long term CIN (3 months plus)
- Completion on Care Proceedings
- Emergency protection orders/ICO
- Private fostering

Following Transfer Meeting Receiving Team Managers will need to identify:-

- Which team case to be allocated to
- Who the Allocated Social Worker will be
- Arrangements made for receiving Social Worker to key handover meetings i.e. attendance at initial case conference

Transferring Manager to:-

- finalise all documents, chronology, case notes check demographics on protocol
- quality assure adding case note to confirm

At the Next Transfer Meeting:-

- Case responsibility is transferred
- Transferring Team Manager highlights key tasks and dates
- Receiving Team Manager updates Protocol

APPENDIX 3

STEP DOWN

Stepping down refers to the process of passing a family from an intensive or statutory led assessment or co-ordinated support plan to other more appropriate support services generally within universal, early help and targeted services.

The social care team manager of the case will be in agreement that the case is ready to be stepped down. The step down process will be led by a social worker with consent from the child and family. It is important that there is clear communication and good co-ordination that enables a new support plan to be agreed with the child and family and an effective handing over of the Lead Professional role.

The role of the social worker in helping to outline how the concerns have been addressed and agreeing new outcomes is vital to a successful and sustainable new coordinated TAC/EHCP/TAF plan.

Questions to aid step down planning

The social worker will have gained consent to share the following information with those involved in the stepping down process.

- What were the risks and needs in this situation that required social care intervention.
- What work has been done to address/reduce level of risk and strengthen family functioning?
- What are the current protective factors? (the things that keep the child safe and well)
- Why is the case stepping down at this time?
- What are the outcomes that still need to be achieved through our integrated working model of TAC/ EHCP/TAF
- What would it look like if risk were to increase again? (early warning signs)
- What actions should be taken if risk increases again?
- Have you provided all the most recent information to the professionals that are required to provide ongoing support?

Children's Social Care Intervention Without Previous CAF/TAC/EHCP/TAF Process in place.

- Where cases did not have previous CAF/TAC/EHCP/TAF processes in place prior to a social work intervention the following principles will apply:
- The social worker will discuss the case with their team manager and agree that the case will be stepped down to appropriate services to provide on-going co-ordinated support or a single agency service support.
- The social worker will have gained consent to share the following information with those involved in the stepping down process. Note: If the parent is not in agreement with the assessment being shared with the TAC/EHCP/TAF members the social worker will confirm with the parent which elements of the assessment the parent will not agree to share and what information can be shared.
- If there is not a co-ordinated child in need support plan already in place the social worker will contact the appropriate support services and invite them to attend a TAC/EHCP/TAF or if only a single service is required a joint home visit should be convened. The social worker will attend the TAC/EHCP/TAF and address the step down questions presented above.
- The social worker will no longer be required to support the case once appropriate access to step down services has been initiated and an appropriate lead professional is in place to ensure an ongoing co-ordination of support.
- The line managers must monitor, support, and review cases that have stepped down from social care to ensure a co-ordinated support package is maintained until closure of the plan has been achieved.

Step down from children's social care without previous CAF/TAC/EHCP/TAF process in place.

The social worker will discuss the case with their manager and agree to step down the case to appropriate services

The social worker will have gained consent to share the information with those involved in the stepping down process. Note: If the parent is not in agreement with the assessment being shared with the single agency professional or TAC/EHCP/TAF members the social worker will confirm with the parent which elements of the assessment the parent will not agree to share and what information can be shared.

If a single agency response is required the social worker will arrange a joint home visit to address the step down questions. (where appropriate)

If a multi-agency response is required the social worker will contact the appropriate support services and invite them to attend a TAC/EHCP/ TAF

The social worker will lead the initial TAC/EHCP/TAF and will address the step down questions.

Where the social worker is no longer required to support the TAC/EHCP/TAF an appropriate lead professional will be identified.

The line managers of the lead professionals must monitor, support, and review cases that have been brought to the attention of Family Connect Safeguarding or that have been stepped down from social care to ensure a co-ordinated support package is maintained until closure of the support

Children's Social Care Intervention Within Prior Existing CAF/TAC/EHCP/TAF Process

Where cases had been assessed when integrated working processes were in place and it has been evidenced that the on-going support will need to continue the following principles will apply:

- When the social worker has completed the assessment the lead professional will be informed of the outcome by the social worker.
- The social worker will have gained consent to share the information with those involved in the stepping down process. Note: If the parent is not in agreement with the assessment being shared with the single agency practitioner or TAC/EHCP/TAF members the social worker will confirm with the parent which elements of the assessment the parent will not agree to share and what information can be shared.
- The social worker will request that the lead professional convenes a TAC/EHCP/TAF meeting in order to ensure that the recommendations of the assessment are addressed and appropriate actions supported.
- The line managers must monitor, support, and review cases that have stepped down from social care to ensure a co-ordinated support package is maintained until closure of the plan has been achieved.

The social worker will discuss the case with their manager and agree to step down the case to existing services

The social worker will have gained consent to share the information with those involved in the stepping down process. Note: If the parent is not in agreement with the assessment being shared with the single agency practitioner or TAC/EHCP/TAF members the social worker will confirm with the parent which elements of the assessment the parent will not agree to share and what information can be shared

Once agreed the social worker will provide the lead professional and supporting members of the TAC/EHCP/TAF with the relevant information.

The lead professional will convene a TAC/TAF meeting in order to consider the outcome of the assessment and recommendations made. The TAC/EHCP/TAF plan should ensure that the ongoing support reflects the assessment recommendations.

If necessary: the social worker will attend the TAC/EHCP/TAF meeting to clarify recommendations made.

The line manager of the lead professional must monitor, support, and review cases that have been brought to the attention of Family Connect Safeguarding or that have been stepped down from social care to ensure a co-ordinated support package is maintained until closure of the support plan has been achieved.

Children's Social Care intervention for Child(ren)/young people who no longer require a Child Protection Plan.

When it is being considered that a child(ren)/ young person is no longer in need of a Child Protection Plan the following principles will apply:

- The social worker will discuss the case with their team manager and agree whether it would be appropriate to step down the case and whether social work involvement is still required to oversee the support plan.
- The Social Worker will convene a Child Protection Core Group prior to the Review Child Protection Case Conference.
- At the Child Protection Conference review meeting the decision will be made that a Child protection Plan is no longer required.
- The Child Protection Conference review group will Consider whether the child(ren)/young people need to become subject to a TAC/EHCP/TAF Plan. If the view of the group is that they do not, then the case will be supported within universal services.
- If the view of the group is that the child(ren)/ young people would benefit from a continued co-ordinated multiagency approach and be subject to a TAC/EHCP/TAF plan, then the group will identify the most appropriate Lead Professional for the child(ren)/ Young People and plan the initial TAC/EHCP/TAF meeting date.
- Where the decision has been made by the manager and social worker that the child/young person still requires social care involvement, the social worker will continue to lead and co-ordinate the appropriate support plan.
- Where the decision has been made that the social worker will not be remaining involved with the case, the social worker will lead the first initial TAC/EHCP/TAF ensuring that all actions required for the continued support of the child(ren) and family are captured and that the new

lead professional is clearly identified. A copy of the TAC/EHCP/TAF plan will be forwarded to the Children and Family Locality Service, the new Lead Professional and their Service Manager.

- The Lead Professional line manager must monitor, support, and review cases that have stepped down from Social Care to ensure a co-ordinated support package is maintained until closure of the plan has been achieved.