



Practice Guidance

Allocation of Work (for Managers)

Version 1, May 2017

Review May 2019

What you need to read...

This practice guidance must be read in conjunction with the Darlington Children's Social Care Case Transfer Protocol:

Refer to the Transfer Protocol on TriX procedures

What are the key timescales:

New cases must have an outcome decision for next steps within 24 hours of the contact being received, should the case require a social work response it should then be allocated to a worker within a further 24 hours.

If a case is transferring between teams then the Transfer Protocol should be followed.

Principles for Allocation...

It is recognised that social workers can only provide quality of work if their caseloads are actively managed and maintained at an appropriate level. It is also important that social

workers are able to achieve a healthy work/life balance to ensure a healthy and contented workforce.

Individuals and their managers both have a responsibility to try to achieve an optimum balance. It is the nature of social work that demand is frequently unpredictable and unexpected.

Consequently, we need social workers who are essentially flexible, responsive people. It is a core activity of all team managers that they should know about and manage the changing demands on team members' time.

Precedence must always be given to the demands of the service and team, but where possible, case allocation will give regard to the interests and expertise of social workers.

Allocation will reflect the needs of newly qualified staff, those returning from extended absences and other individual circumstances.

Managers will explore the opportunities to jointly allocate work and/or to identify co-working as a way of sharing different skills and experiences.

Managers should hold an allocation discussion with the social worker and ensure tasks and targets with timescales are clearly recorded on the system.

NB-Reallocation of Open Cases

When social workers leave the service or are on sick leave, cases should be allocated to another social worker to ensure continued effective social work practice and oversight no more than five working days from the notification of absence. This should be planned in advance where time permits. (If sickness is short term the Team Manager and Service Manager should agree and record cover arrangements, similar to annual leave where cover for urgent and statutory matters is provided by Team Members or the managers). A management case note must be added to the system advising of the arrangements.