

Procedure for Managing Unallocated Cases within Walsall Safeguarding and Family Support Service

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

All unallocated cases must be reviewed on a weekly basis by the Team Manager and an MDR recorded on Mosaic. Should a case remain unallocated for a period of four weeks this must be escalated to the relevant Group Manager.

This procedure is to be followed by team managers at all times when a case that has been transferred into the service cannot be allocated to a Social Worker.

AMENDMENT

This chapter was amended in August 2016. Appendices 1 to 3 were updated.

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1. Introduction

All Child Protection and **Looked After** Children must be allocated to a suitability qualified social worker. All **Private Fostering** cases must also be allocated. All other cases must be allocated unless there are workload capacity issues. Team managers are expected to ensure that there is no capacity for allocation within other teams across the service before cases are left unallocated. Discussion about this should take place at the weekly allocations meeting and also informally between team managers.

All unallocated cases must be proactively managed by the team duty system - in effect these are cases 'managed through duty'. It is the team manager's responsibility to ensure that the child is being adequately safeguarded; that the plan for the child is being progressed in a timely manner and that good communication is maintained between the child, family and involved professionals. At no time is a case to be left.

All unallocated cases must be reviewed on a weekly basis by the Team Manager and an MDR recorded on Mosaic. Should a case remain unallocated for a period of four weeks this must be escalated to the relevant Group Manager.

2. The Process of Managing Unallocated Cases

- i. When a case is transferred from IRS to SFS (or from LAC to SFS where a child has been rehabilitated back to the care of his/her family) the team manager must review the file and record an MDR. In accordance with the transfer policy the MDR must provide a summary of the presenting issues, including the concerns and current safeguards; an outline of the plan for the child and provide direction for social work activity;
- ii. The team manager must seek worker capacity to allocate both within their own team and across the service make a record of who the allocated worker will be on an MDR;
- iii. If this process has been completed and it has not been possible to identify an allocated worker than the case will remain unallocated to be managed through the team duty system. The manager must record on the MDR that it has not been possible to allocate (a reason for this does not need to be recorded as the only reason should be workload capacity across the service);
- iv. The team manager should send letters to all involved professionals, parents and carers and to the child if they are over 11 years of age, to explain that it has not been possible to allocate a worker. Templates for these letters are included as [Appendices](#) to this procedure. Copies of these letters must be attached to a Mosaic case note to evidence that this action has been completed;
- v. On unallocated cases the MDR should outline the activity that needs to be undertaken by the team's duty workers, including specific actions and timescales. Such activity will include those tasks that would normally be completed had the case been allocated e.g. duty visits to the child and family; reviewing the child's plan through **Child In Need** reviews; amending the **Child In Need Plan** as necessary and liaising with family and professionals;
- vi. All duty activity on the child must be recorded on Mosaic and the team manager 'notified' via the Mosaic system so that they are informed of activity on the case. Upon receiving this notification the team manager should review the case and consider whether any further action is required or whether there needs to be a change of plan for the child. Each team manager is expected to develop their own system for managing this process;

- vii. If concerns about a child who is unallocated increase then the team manager must make renewed efforts to allocate the case either within their own team or across the service. Allocation of all cases should occur as soon as this becomes possible;
- viii. If a case is unallocated and it becomes evident that plans for the child have been successfully implemented and outcomes have been achieved, then it may be appropriate to end specialist service involvement. In these circumstances there must be a Child In Need review where this is discussed and step down arrangements agreed. This must be communicated by the duty worker to the team manager who will either agree or give further direction which must be recorded on an MDR. A closure summary and record must be completed and the team manager should review the case for closure as per the usual procedure.

See Local Guidance Practice Guidance section for

Appendix 1: Unallocated Letter (Parents/Carers)

Appendix 2: Unallocated Letter Young Person (11 Years Plus)

Appendix 3: Unallocated Letter (Professionals)