

Case Transfer Process

Head of Service (Quality Assurance)

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1. Scope of Policy

This policy should be used by practitioners and managers to facilitate the case transfer process between: Assessment Teams (AT), Safeguarding Teams (SG), Children Looked After (CLA) Teams, Children with Disability (CWD) Teams, Leaving Care (LC) Service, Family Intervention Service (FIS) and transfer in from another Local Authority.

Relevant documents

[Step Up Step Down Guidance – Local Guidance](#)

[Effective Support for Children & Families in Somerset – Threshold Document](#)

2. General Principles and Processes for Transferring Cases Between Teams

- All case transfers (other than those within a team) must be discussed and agreed at weekly Transfer and Allocation meetings (TAM). Attendance at these meetings is mandatory for Team Managers and relevant information must be available in advance.
- The date of transfer should be agreed between the relevant Team Managers (TM) at the weekly meeting. For CP and CLA Cases the IRO / CP coordinator should be advised of the transfer arrangements.
- The LCS case transfer form must be started by the allocated worker and can be viewed electronically at the weekly area allocations meeting, to evidence the stage the casework is at, the rationale for transfer and who will action which tasks prior to case transfer taking place. (e.g. child's assessment, plan, case summary, and demographics).
- Case allocation decisions must be recorded on the weekly allocations spreadsheet and in case notes on the child's LCS record.
- Case transfers must take place within 2 weeks of the transfer decision at the allocations meeting, to minimise disruption and delay to children and families providing agreed tasks are completed. Where tasks are not completed within the 2-week window the case must return to the next allocations meeting for this to be resolved and prevent drift and blocks in workflow.
- The point of case transfer must **always** include a joint worker handover meeting with the family.
- If allocation to a named worker cannot be completed within the 2 weeks and the case is ready for transfer, as set out above, work should sit in the TM's tray for the part of the service that is receiving the case (i.e. SG or CLA tray)
- If a case remains in a TM's tray there must be a weekly management overview added to LCS with clear oversight of actions required. If a case has not been allocated within 2 weeks of the transfer decision, the allocation issue must be escalated to the receiving team's Operations Manager (OM).
- Cases which are re-referred into CSC within three months of being closed or stepped down should return to the previous case holding team.

3. Case Transfer Points

Cases transferring from the Assessment Team

Upon completion of an assessment, there are several possible outcomes:

- (i) No further action – when the case will close. It should be rare for a case to close with no ongoing support from any agency.
- (ii) Step-down – the case should transfer to a lead professional within Early Help Services or to the Family Intervention Service (FIS). A step-down plan on LCS (forms) must be completed and sent to the receiving team.
- (iii) Short term, time limited intervention – case can remain with AT, for a period of targeted intervention no longer than 3 months after the completion of the assessment.
- (iv) CIN or CP Plan required – the case will transfer to the SG Team at the point of initial CIN meeting or initial CP conference, the reports for these meetings having been completed by the AT worker. Both the existing and new social worker should attend the meeting.
- (v) Child becomes looked after – where a child becomes looked after as part of court proceedings, the case will remain with the Safeguarding Team until the child either has: (i) a permanence plan for placement away from birth parents (including kinship placements, FFA, adoption) or (ii) a permanent placement away from birth parents (e.g foster care, residential care, kinship care).

The decision as to whether the case transfer at (i) or (ii) above should be based upon a number of factors, including the best interests of the child; the avoidance of unnecessary delay; the nature of the relationship between child, family and social worker; any ongoing interventions which may be negatively impacted by a transfer to another team

If the ability to transfer cases in the best interests of the child is not possible due to the capacity of a team, this should be discussed by the relevant Operations Managers, and escalated to the relevant Heads of Service if a solution cannot be agreed. Note – the decision not to initiate care proceedings must be made and subsequently reviewed by Legal Gateway Panel.

Cases transferring from the Children Looked After Team

- Where a child has been looked after but returns to family or friends (including parents) and requires ongoing support in the community (including on an SGO), the case should remain within the CLA Team for a minimum of 6 months. During this time successful return home should be established. Step down or closure should be possible within 6 months therefore if this is not achieved the plan needs to be reviewed as it may need to change.
- Where a child is placed at home on a care order then the case will remain with the CLA Team until the order is revoked.

Cases transferring into and out of Children with Disability (CWD) Teams

- CWD Teams hold cases of all types - assessment, CIN, CP and CLA. On rare occasions, there is a need for cases to transfer in to CWD Teams from another specialist social work team, or out of CWD Teams, where a child no longer meets the eligibility criteria for the CWD Team.
- Where the CWD Team would like to transfer a case out of their service area to another frontline social work team, they should contact one of the AT TMs for the correct geographical area and ask for the case to be added to the allocations spreadsheet. The CWD TM should then attend the area allocations meeting at which the case transfer will be discussed.
- If an area SW team would like to transfer a case to the CWD Team, then the area TM should first have a discussion with the CWD TM to clarify if the case meets the CWD service eligibility criteria. If this is the case, then they will be invited to the CWD weekly allocations meeting to discuss the transfer and to ensure that the case is transferred into the correct team (related to level of need) within the CWD service.

Cases transferring to the Leaving Care Service

- For CLA, the Leaving care team will become involved with the young person from their 16th birthday onwards, including contributing to the child's first Pathway Plan
- Where a child has been looked after and is eligible for support from the LC Service, the transfer of the case should be discussed and agreed by the social

work TM and the LC Team Leader (TL). The LC case transfer audit form should be completed on LCS and the case should transfer as soon as is practical after the child's 18th birthday.

- These transfers do not need to be discussed and agreed at weekly allocations meetings but should be negotiated on a case by case basis between the CLA TMs and LC TLs.
- The transfer meeting, in addition to the SW and LCW, should involve the TM and LC TL. If on-going issues require specialist adult services (e.g. Adult Safeguarding or Adults with Learning Difficulties) then a representative from the relevant adults' services should also be involved in the meeting.

Cases transferring between Area Offices

- As for relevant case type detailed above, to be discussed/agreed between relevant TMs and referred to the receiving TAM.
- Where there is disagreement, decision will be taken by relevant OMs.

Cases transferring to Adult Services

- From 14th birthday, cases should be tracked through transition process.
- It may be necessary for more complex cases to be referred to the Complex Health Care Panel or Complex Case Panel.

Cases transferring to Somerset from another Local Authority

- Case transfers from other Local Authorities should only be accepted when the child is permanently resident in Somerset.
- Where a child is subject to a child protection plan in another local authority, and that local authority requests that the plan transfers to Somerset, the case should be discussed at the local area allocations meeting. A SG Team worker should be allocated and attend the transfer in conference. The referral is sent to the area Assessment Team tray where the TM checks that the case meets the transfer criteria. The area assessment team alert the area ISU team to organise a transfer in child protection conference (must be held within 15 days from formal notification). The case should be discussed at the local area

allocations meeting, a social worker allocated and then transferred to the Somerset Local Area Safeguarding Team.

- Where a child is subject to a Child in Need plan in Somerset, and the family move to live in another local authority, the allocated social worker should consider whether the child and family may need ongoing support following their move. Work under a Child in Need plan is carried out on a voluntary basis, and as such it is necessary to seek the consent of the family prior to making a referral to another local authority. If the family want to receive support from the new local authority and have given their consent to share information, the allocated social worker should make a referral to the relevant social care team, outlining what involvement the family have had in Somerset and what support they may need in the future. It is also good practice to share a copy of any recent assessment or key documents with the new local authority, subject to consent from the family.
- Where a case is before the family court in another local authority, and the court makes a Supervision Order to Somerset County Council, the case should be discussed at the local area allocations meeting and allocated within the SG Teams, unless agreed otherwise between TMs.