



Telford & Wrekin  
Co-operative Council

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# Protocol for a Child's Journey through Services

## Children's Social Care

Published      March 2023  
Review         January 2024

## Policy Governance

<b>Title</b>	<b>Protocol for a Child's Journey through Services</b>
<b>Purpose/scope</b>	Description of a Child's Journey through our services
<b>Subject key words</b>	Allocation, transition, transfer
<b>Council Priority</b>	Every Child, Young Person and Adult lives well in their community
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<b>Date Established</b>	April 2023
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	April 2024
<b>Service Improvement &amp; Efficiency Validation</b>	Laura Moore
<b>Legal Sign Off</b>	Not applicable
<b>Finance Sign Off</b>	Not applicable
<b>Approver</b>	CS SMT

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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's case responsibility should move from one team to another. The objective is to ensure that there is seamless transition for children between social work teams ensuring both a continuity of care for the child or young person 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. Flexibility should be used to coordinate a seamless transition process.

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

Children, young people and their carers/parents need to know there is to be a change of social worker as soon as is practicable and have the opportunity to meet their new social worker during the transition period.

A child and their family will be supported by the social work team that best reflects where his/her or their needs can be best met, team capacity should not be used as a reason for delaying a child's transition.

## 3. Escalation Arrangements

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

This protocol cannot cover all eventualities and decisions about the transition of children's case work between teams it must ultimately be based on the children's needs.

## 4. Service Wide Transfer Standards

Children and young people due for transition will be discussed at a weekly Transition Meeting where a date for transition will be agreed and recorded at the meeting in the Transition Tracker (**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.

In the first instance Team Managers from different service areas will meet weekly to discuss any children's social work responsibility that needs to transition to another team; Team Managers will then meet individually within their own service area to agree a named Social Worker.

Group Managers will ensure follow up of this by attending a weekly Transition Meeting however if on occasion they are unable to attend they will arrange for one of their Team Managers to deputise for them.

Chairing responsibility for the Transition Meeting will be rotated between Group Managers. Before responsibility for the children and young people is 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 assessment on file within the last twelve months, (this can be legal statements) and up to date plans.
- Chronology must be up to date.
- All recording in the child's record 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.
- An up-to-date summary of the progress of the child should be included within the case summary including key dates for meetings, reviews, family time, 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.

## **5. Transition Meeting Process**

### **5.1 Transition arrangements between Assessment Team, Family Safeguarding, Child in Care Team and Children with Disabilities Team.**

The key mechanisms for the tracking, monitoring and transfer of responsibility for children and young people between teams will be the weekly Transition Meeting between Team Managers on a Tuesday and a follow on Transition Meeting between Group Managers on a Friday. Management representation from each service area is required for these meetings and in the event that individual Manager is not able to attend they must make arrangements for representation.

These Transition Meetings have the following three key functions:

- a) To identify, highlight, track and allow for early discussion and planning for those children and young people that will be transitioning to another team at a future date. This will allow for any joint planning between teams as preparation for transition

arrangements and for receiving Group Managers to plan and agree allocation to the new team and social worker.

- b) To ensure timely transitions for children and enable the children to be within the right team at the right time.
- c) The Group Manager Transition meetings ensure that any agreed transitions by Team Managers are followed through in a timely way, which is best for children.

## **5.2 Unborn Baby Assessments**

Where the decision is made within Family Connect that there is the need for an unborn baby assessment these assessments will be allocated directly to the Parenting Assessment Team. Where concerns are raised and it is less clear as to whether a full unborn baby assessment is required these unborn children will be allocated to the Assessment Team for a C&F assessment. If the outcome of the C&F assessment is that a full unborn baby assessment is required these will be completed by 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 the subject of a Child Protection Conference the name of this child is to be added to the Transition log so that pre-planning and discussion can take place. This will enable arrangements to be made by the Family Safeguarding Team Managers and Group Manager to allocate a Social Worker who is able to attend the Initial Child Protection Conference and Initial Core Group (should the child be made the subject of a child protection plan).

Following this the transfer of responsibility for the child will pass to the Family Safeguarding Social Worker at the next Transition Meeting. (See Appendix 2)  
For children who are provided with a service from Children With Disability Team (CWT) this process does not apply. Joint working between Family Safeguarding Teams and DCT including transitions are set out in Appendix 5.

#### **5.4 Child in Need/Family Safeguarding**

The Assessment Team following a C&F assessment where it is identified that the child requires ongoing s17 services and planning and where parental mental health, substance misuse or/and domestic violence is a key factor impacting upon the child transition arrangements to the Family Safeguarding Team will commence. (See appendix 3)

For children where the above vulnerabilities are not present the Assessment Team following C&F assessment will provide a service to children who require ongoing S17 services and planning. A review of the child's plan will be undertaken by the Assessment Team Manager at a 3 month point and if the child and family still require a child in need service the child will transition to the Family Safeguarding 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) or urgent Interim Care Order in respect of a child(ren), the Assessment Social Worker will be responsible for completing:-

- the initial Witness Statement
- Chronology and Care Plan

The Assessment Team Manager will alert the Family Safeguarding Team Managers and Group Manager to this, and the Family Safeguarding Team Manager or Group Manager will identify a Social Worker to attend the first Court Hearing. The child will formally transition at the next CTM.

Where a Letter Before Proceedings (LBP) meeting is needed the Assessment Team Manager will highlight this case at the CTM with a view to a Family Safeguarding Social Worker having the option of attending the LBP meeting alongside the Assessment Team Social Worker. Arrangements will then be made for the child to transition to the Family Safeguarding Team at the next CTM following the LBP having taken place.

Where Family & Friends viability assessments have commenced at the time of transition the Assessment Social Worker will complete the necessary elements of this, however this will not delay the child's transition.

## **6. Cared for Children**

Children who are looked after by the Local Authority will transition from the Assessment Team to the Family Safeguarding Team following their first Review having taken place where there is not yet a plan of permanency for the child and/or there are ongoing Care Proceedings.

Where a plan of permanency is achieved for the child by the first Review and there are no ongoing Care Proceedings responsibility for these children will transition to the Child in Care Team.

Children with s20 legal status will have this ratified at the Legal Gateway Meeting prior to transition to another team.

Cared for Children will transfer from the Family Safeguarding 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.

Children with s20 legal status will have this ratified at the Legal Gateway Meeting prior to transition to another team.

### **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 housing assessment jointly with a duty Housing Solutions Officer and the social worker will complete a Child & Family Assessment. If the young person becomes a Cared for Child the young person's case responsibility will transition to the Children in Care Team at the first Child Looked After Review.



## **6.2 Children remanded by the Court into the care of the Local Authority**

Children who do not already have an allocated social worker in the Assessment Team or Family Safeguarding Team and have not in the past 3 months will transition directly from Family Connect to the Child in Care Team.

## **6.3 Safety Seeking Children (UASC)**

Where a child/young person is identified seeking safety in UK and are separated from their parents/carers and are identified as being the responsibility of Telford and Wrekin transition will be directly to the Child in Care Team/Leaving Care Team from Family Connect.

Children who are part of the national transfer scheme or the 'dubs' initiative will be accepted and responsibility for their support directly by the Children in Care Team on receipt of any such request.

## **7. Special Guardianship**

Following the Court making a Special Guardianship Order the child will transition to the Family and Friends Team unless children are in receipt of Short Break provision these children's case responsibility will be transitioned into the CWD Teams.

## **8. Private Fostering**

When the decision is made within Family Connect that a child is within a Private Fostering arrangement, a child and family assessment will commence and be allocated directly to the Assessment Team and Private Fostering notification referred to the Family and Friends Team.

## **9. Social Care Step Down to Other Services**

This refers to children and young people who no longer require support from an intensive or statutory led assessment or co-ordinated support plan to another 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 points 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 cared for by the Local Authority.
- Where shortbreaks or specialist disability related support is no longer required.

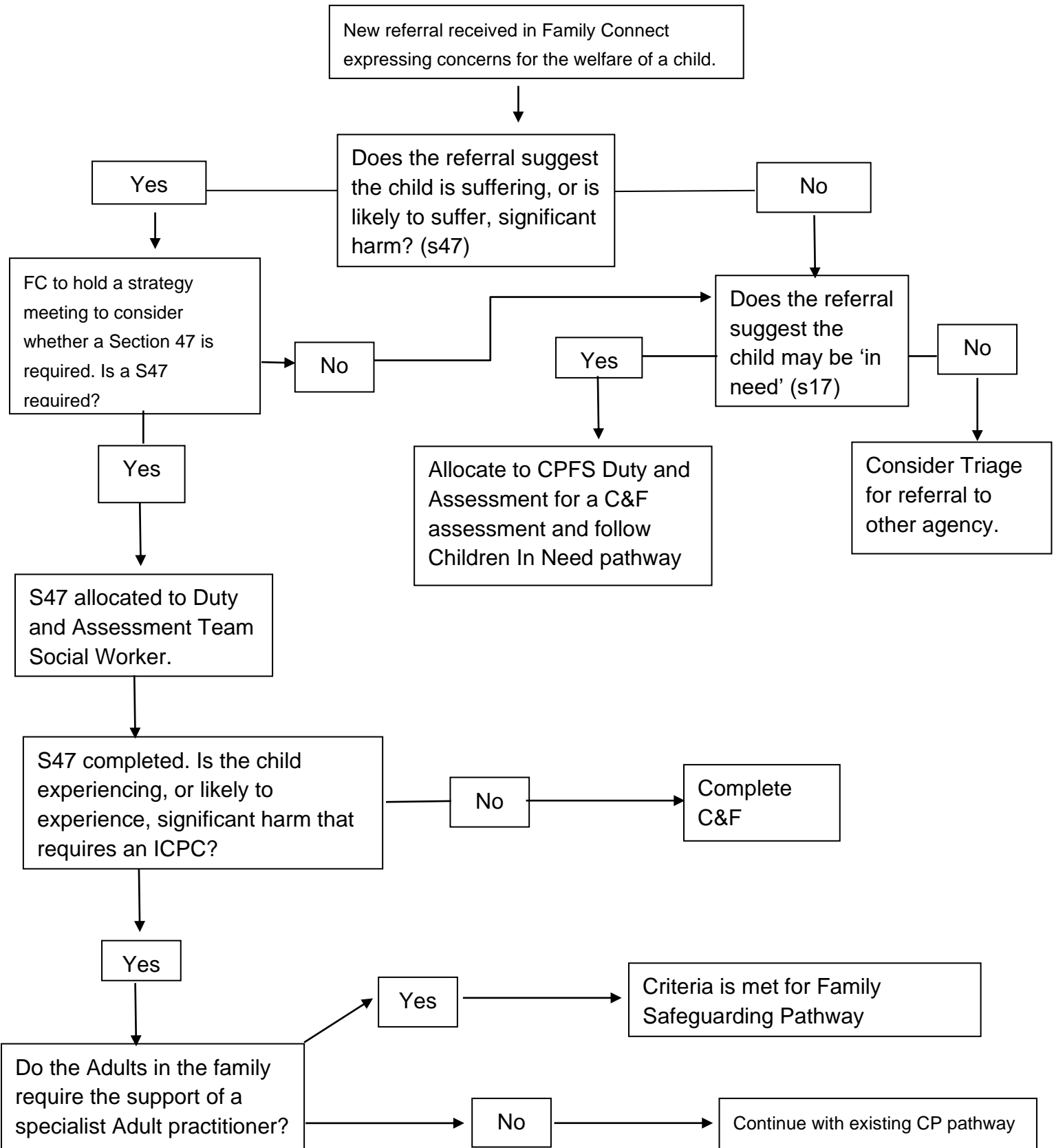
Good step down arrangements and handover are critical to the child and the family in being able to receive continuity of appropriate services and support. There is an expectation that there will be joint working between Social Care and Strengthening Families and that when it is beneficial for formal manager discussions in relation to stepping down the support of children from Social Care to Strengthening Families that the Social Care Manager invites the relevant area Strengthening Families Manager/Senior Practitioner to the CTM.

**Appendix 1**  
**Transition Tracker**

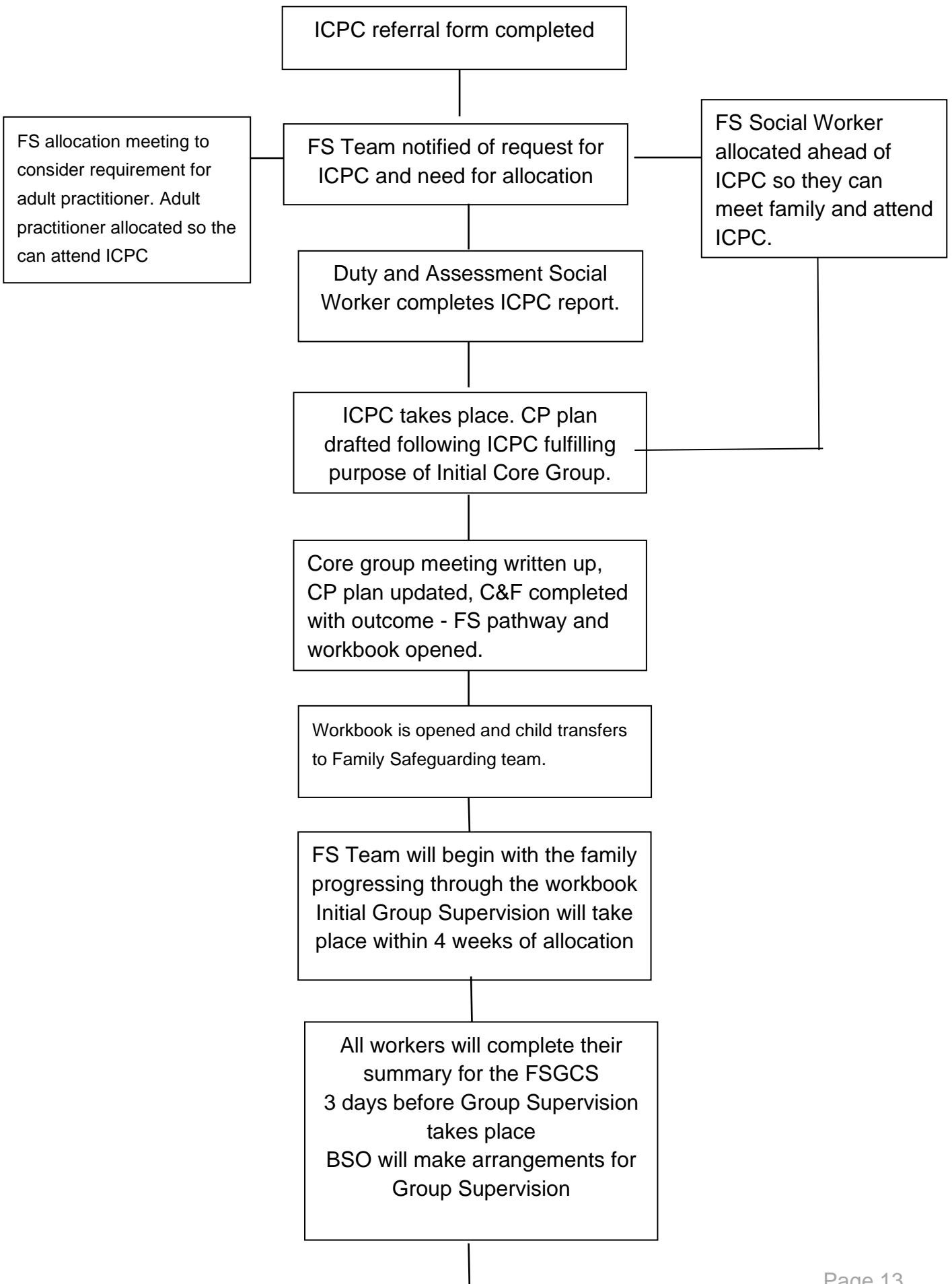
<b>DATE</b>	<b>PROTOCOL NO</b>	<b>CHILD'S NAME</b>	<b>TEAM/SOCIAL WORKER</b>	<b>CHILD'S STATUS ie. CP/CIC/CIN etc</b>	<b>POTENTIAL PLANNED TRANSFER DATE</b>	<b>ACTUAL TRANSFER DATE</b>

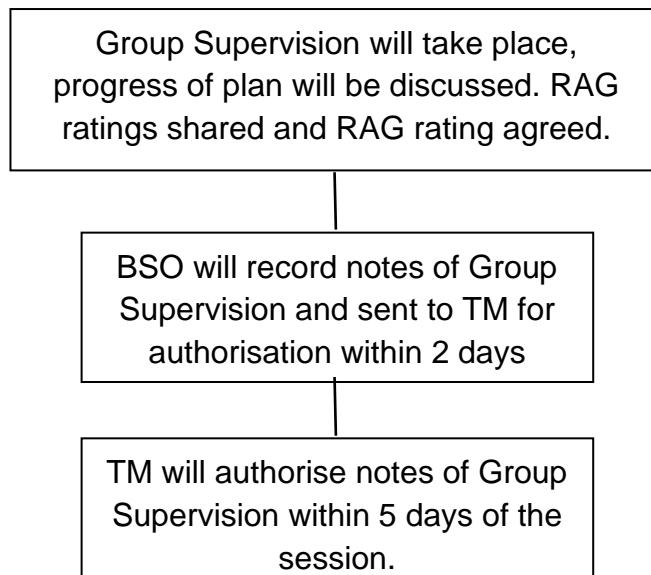
Appendix 2

Family Safeguarding CP Pathway



Family Safeguarding CP Pathway continued

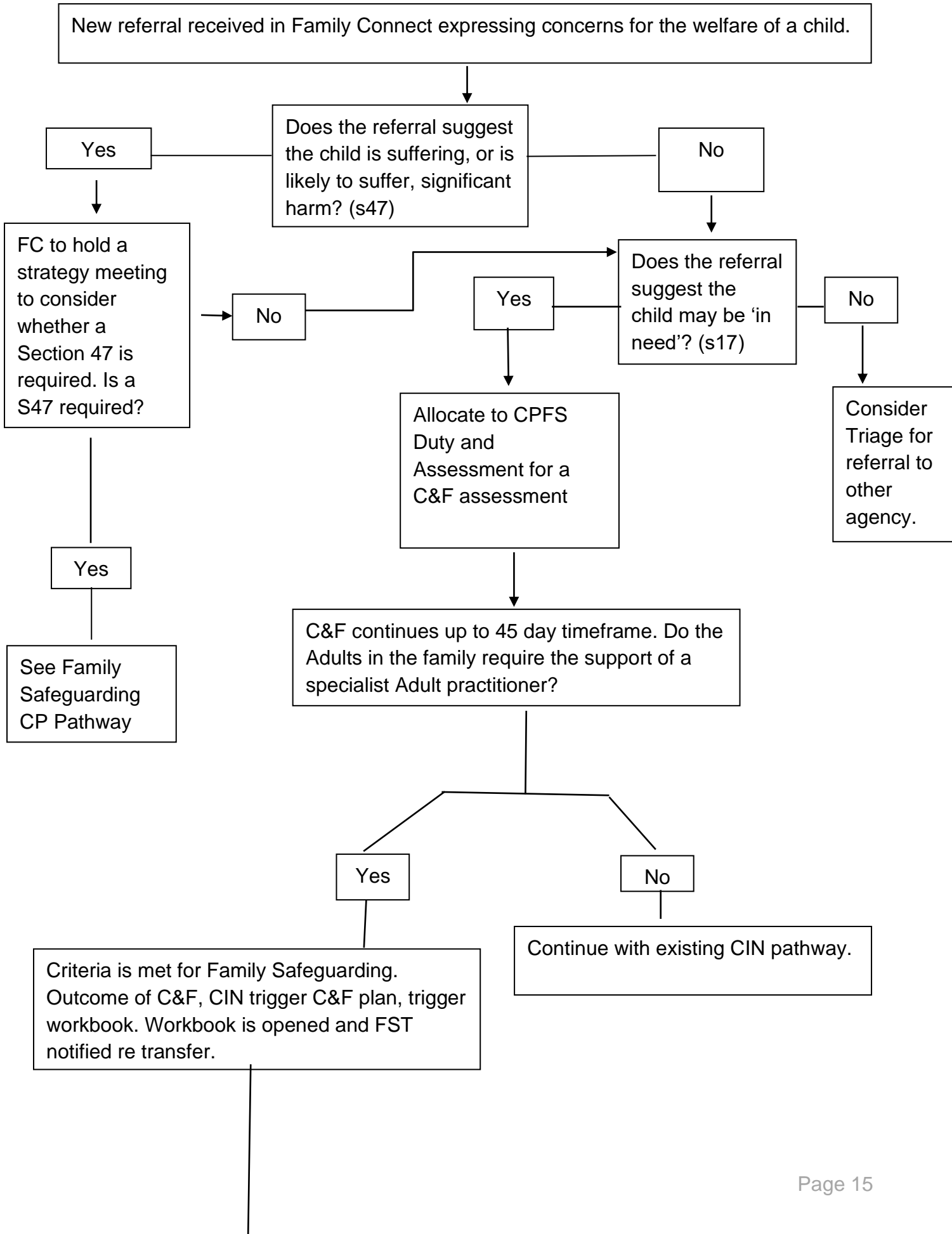


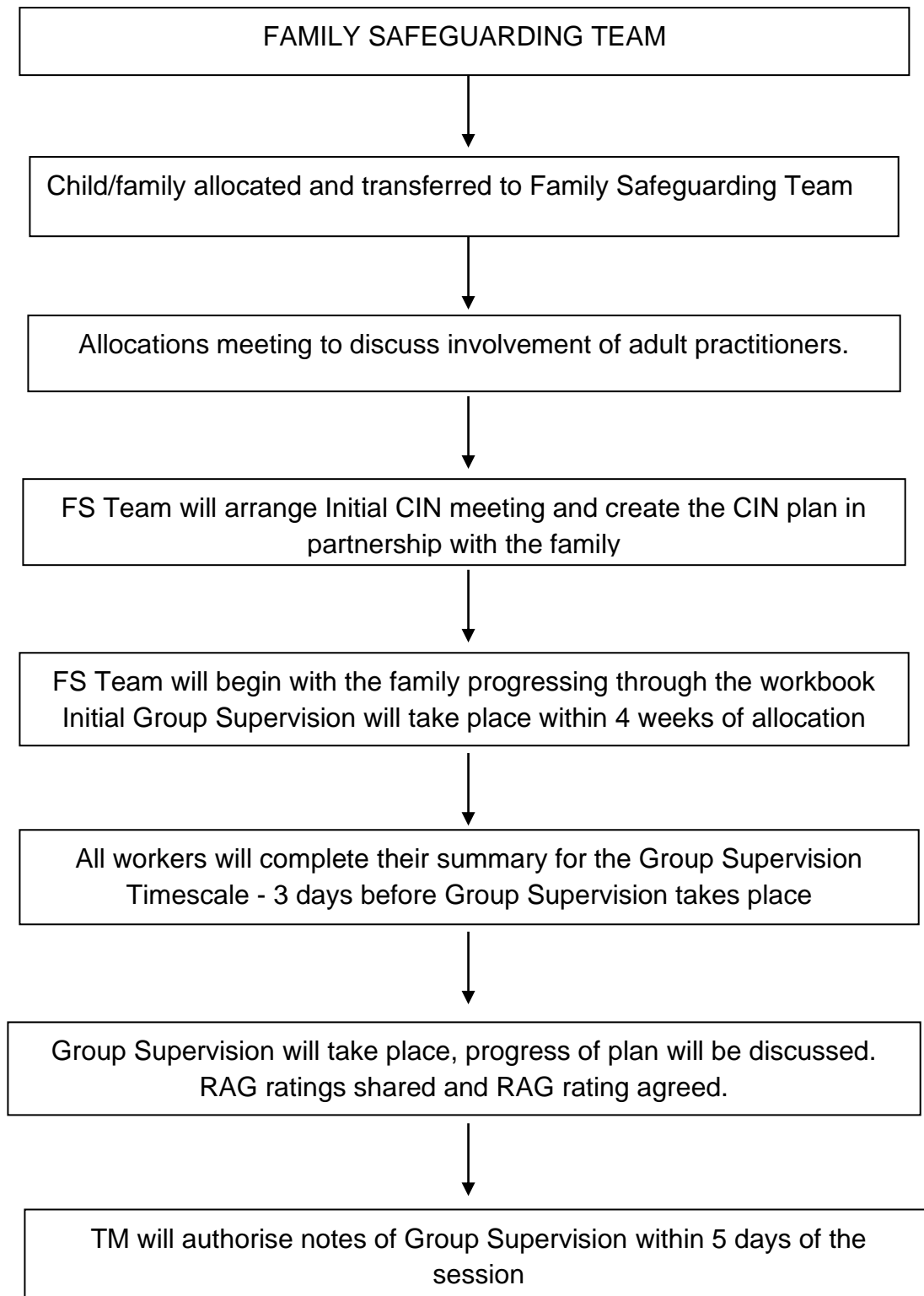


Once all case work completed and threshold decision made RCPC to take place – child to step-down to CIN plan subject to parental consent for a 3 month period and case responsibility to remain with Family Safeguarding.

Appendix 3

Child in Need - Family Safeguarding Pathway





Once all case work completed and threshold decision re CIN– child to step-down with Parental consent to other agency for ongoing support.



**Appendix 4**

**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.

**Appendix 5**

**Cross Service Working between Family Safeguarding and Children with Disabilities**

This process has been developed in order to ensure consistency of approach for children experiencing harm or impairment and who require support from Social Workers.

There will be occasions when children are already allocated to a Social Worker in the Children with Disabilities team (CWD) as they are in receipt of support due to their additional needs and will be allocated to either a Social Worker or Caseworker. If they have siblings who are not currently in receipt of statutory Social Work support then CWD will be the Primary Worker for the child or young person.

If safeguarding concerns are made concerning a sibling group, and one of these children is currently open to CWD, the same safeguarding pathway should be taken for all children including the child with disability, led by the safeguarding team, with specialist support from CWD. This will not apply if the child open to CWD is in an external specialist placement as the safeguarding concerns are unlikely to impact on that child apart from contact, which can be assessed by the CWD team.

Where a child who is looked after in Family safeguarding has a disability that meets CWD criteria and a plan of adoption, the CWD team will undertake the child and family assessment, co-work offering support/ guidance with the disability aspect. The family safeguarding social worker will undertake the family finding and adoption until, adopters are found and this progresses to an Adoption Order or, the care plan changes, and the Placement Order is discharged, when the child will transfer to CWD.

This pathway relates to children or young people who are referred to Family Safeguarding and one of which has an identified disability in addition to the harm/impairment identified in the referral for them and their siblings.

The referral pathway for children into Family Connect follows the agreed pathway in the Threshold of Need document. If threshold for statutory Social Work involvement is met decisions will be made in CPFS Duty and Assessment service as to level of intervention/support offered to family and work will be transferred into Family Safeguarding as per agreed pathway (link to existing pathways).

If, upon allocation, it is felt that a child or young person meets the criteria for CWD Family Safeguarding Team Manager to discuss with CWD Team Manager and a Social Worker from CWD to be added as co-worker to Family Safeguarding Social Worker. This will provide the family with additional support from experienced and specialist practitioner who can signpost and support family. Family Safeguarding will remain as Primary Worker under supervision of Family Safeguarding Team Manager. CWD Social Worker and Team Manager to be invited into Group Supervisions where case progression and tasks agreed. Once Family Safeguarding intervention completed and family are ready to be closed to service, if further support required for child/young person with additional needs then primary allocation to be moved to CWD in line with agreed exit planning. All decisions and agreements to be clearly recorded on child's file with rationale for decision making.

In the event of any disagreement between Team Managers in relation to allocations or case progression then discussion to be held with Family Safeguarding and CWD Group Specialists and decisions/agreements to be clearly recorded on child's file. In the event that this does not provide resolution, discussion to be held between Family Safeguarding and CWD SDM.

**Paul Grocutt/Marie Hatton – March 2023**