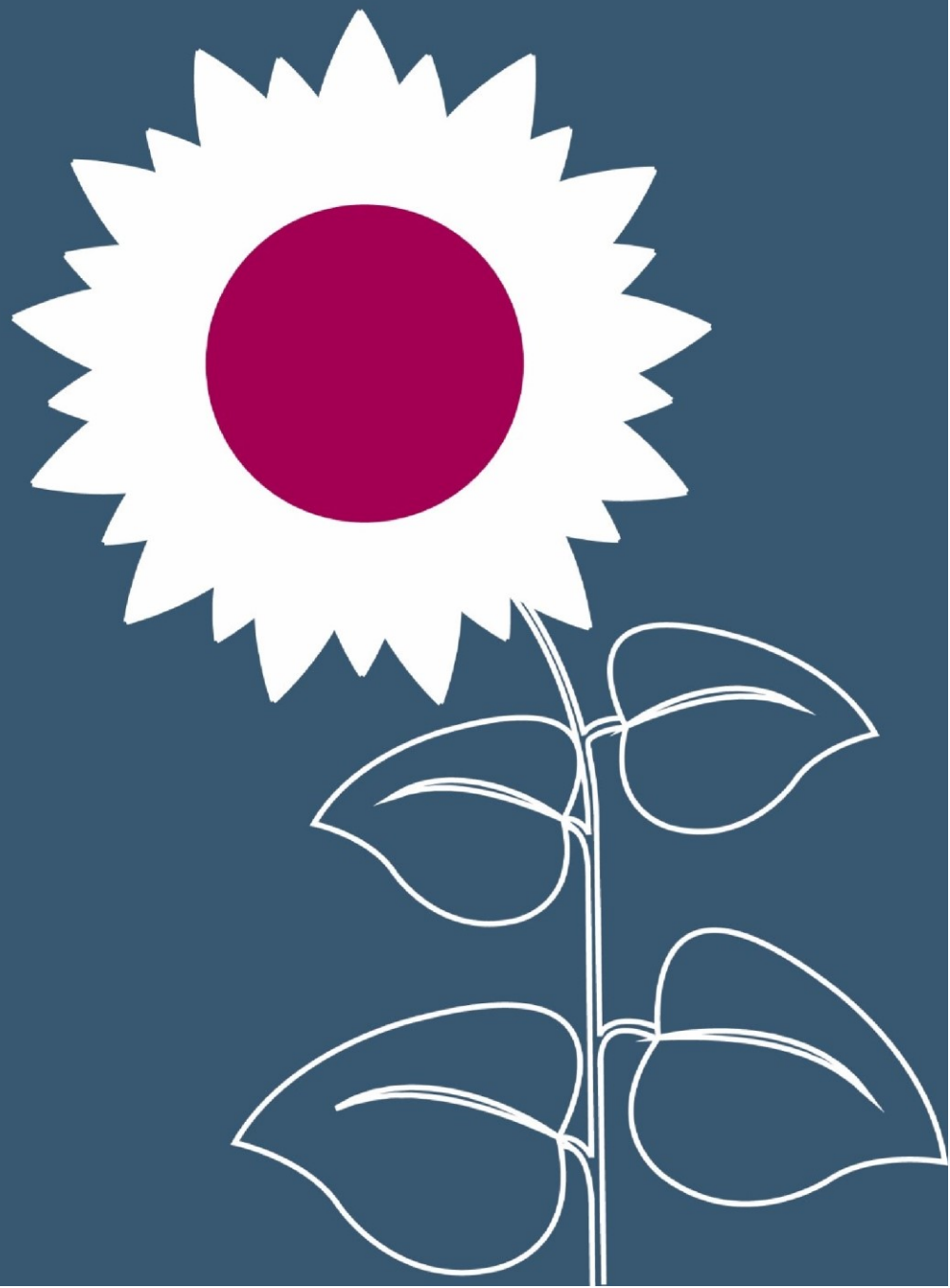


Children/Young People Transfer Policy

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Review March 2024



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General Principles

At all times the needs of the child or young person are paramount when considering the transfer process and appropriate point to transfer responsibility between different parts of Childrens Services.

There should be as minimal a change of team and worker throughout the duration of Children's Services involvement as possible.

Throughput of work is essential to maintain access to new referrals. All children and young people's files should move in a timely way to the new team once the transfer point has been reached. Any capacity or allocation issues must be managed by the receiving team, and not hold up the transfer process.

Children, young people and their parent/ carer(s) should be made aware as early as possible of any changes in worker and joint introductory visits undertaken.

Safe transfer of work means early identification where possible, all relevant tasks completed, forward dates clearly identified, and all parties informed to support with a seamless and timely approach to implementation and review of a child/ young person's plan.

Transfer Process Overview

The allocated worker must complete the tasks identified by their manager, ensure the records are up to date and in good order, (including a current pen picture of the child/young person and their circumstances where appropriate) and ensure work has been authorised by the manager as appropriate. An updated chronology is a key requirement ([refer to the Best Practice Guidance documents on the Practice Hub](#)) and to include events in the last two weeks before transfer.

Best practice would advise where possible that a joint visit between workers takes place to ensure the family are supported through transition, have the opportunity to build a relationship with the new worker and clearly know what is happening. This is a further opportunity for the plan to be discussed and agreed actions clarified. The actual transfer of the child or young person's file should take place at key points within the Journey of the child/young person, e.g. following initial child protection conference, child/young person in care review, child in need planning meeting and step-down meeting. Children and young people also transfer at the conclusion of care proceedings – unless the care review is imminent, then the child/young person should transfer upon the making of the order. Planning needs to be in place so all parties are prepared for the transfer.

However, flexibility is needed when considering the particular stages of the family e.g. if a child/young person is at the point of transition/exams etc.

Both the transferring and receiving team should be represented at any meeting to ensure full awareness and involvement in the plan to move plans forward.

The relevant team manager must give notice of a meeting where it is felt appropriate for a child/young person's file to transfer to ensure sufficient consideration can be given to allocation. For children/young person's social care teams, an activity (request of case transfer) must be assigned to the receiving team's desktop to inform them of the date they will become case accountable.

File transfers between social care and supporting families team, are discussed at a weekly meeting as a minimum, in the form of a real time discussion between the CSS, Assessment and Duty Team Manager and the Supporting Families Team Manager in the relevant locality, to consider step down and a transition period of co-working/in reach to aid the transition ahead of formally stepping down and closing the assessment / Child In Need plan.

A children/young person's transfer proceeds by agreement. Consent from the family must be sought prior to attendance at the weekly meeting. Please also see the Step Up/Step Down Guidance [on the Practice Hub Guides and Information page](#).

The Supporting Families Advanced Practitioner and the CSS Team Manager meet to discuss the child's case. A detailed plan must be agreed prior to the point of step down between the social worker, family support worker and the family. The conversation is then recorded on the Child's file by the CSS manager and the Supporting Families Advanced Practitioner then records a summary and the outcome of the discussion on the Locality step up/step down/ in reach tracker. A detailed plan must be agreed prior to the point of step down between the social worker, family support worker and the family.

The tracker is saved in a shared TEAMS channel where all Supporting Families Advanced Practitioner's and CSS managers can access.

Ongoing conversations should take place between the transferring and receiving managers to support an effective transfer process. Within children/young people's social work teams, the transfer of files should be completed on Liquid Logic (LCS) by team managers with the receiving manager allocating the transferred file immediately to a suitably qualified worker by updating LCS to ensure that the new worker is now the primary worker and the receiving team is the primary team. Within supporting families, the allocated worker will be designated on the supporting families case management system.

A problem-solving approach between teams is essential, an approach that seeks to prevent any potential for dispute. In the event of a dispute, between the transferring and receiving service, the escalation policy dictates that it should be escalated to the relevant service manager. In rare and exceptional cases, the matter will be referred to the relevant strategic manager / assistant director whose decision will be final.

Transfer Standards

The child/ren/young person's file should be audited using the transfer standards checklist (Appendix 1) **by the current team manager** prior to a transfer. The checklist is to be authorised by the transferring manager, to ensure all outstanding work has been completed.

Everything must be completed on the checklist (where relevant) in order to transfer the file appropriately.

Permanency Tracker

Team managers in children's support and safeguarding teams (CSS) are responsible for initiating the tracker and ensuring it is up to date before a file transfer is agreed. Children in care managers are responsible for ensuring the file has been audited, the file is up to date and the case transfer summary has been completed. The transfer of files will not be accepted by the children in care service until the tracker is complete.

Transition of children between teams

There may be times when it is in the child/young person's best interests for a period of joint working, as part of the transition, to be undertaken. In these circumstances the allocated social care team will remain the primary team allocated worker. The receiving team will identify the new lead practitioner for the children and ensure that a joint handover meeting and introductory joint visit to the children and family is completed prior to any changes within Liquid Logic.

The key areas of joint working between social care teams are as follows:

The Key functions of ChAD include:

- Receiving & processing referrals from members of the public where there is a child welfare concern.
- Receiving & processing referrals from professionals where it is considered a child concern may be a child in need or that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- Organise and chair strategy meetings where children are not known to determine if the threshold for a S47 enquiry is met or alternative outcomes.
- Actively review the daily missing children list and determine an appropriate response where a child does not have an allocated Social Worker
- Respond to information checks from CDAS, CAFCASS, Probation, temporary child protection notifications.
- Allocating to the appropriate children social care team and worker where a Section 7 or Section 37 report is requested by the court and it is an open case (or has been open in last month);
- Receipt and dissemination of legal orders from Legal Services to teams;
- Research and Attendance at MARAC and MAPPA for children with no open case file.
- Respond to referrals / safeguarding checks and DBS checks as part of Homes for Ukraine Scheme.
- Initial assessment work for Unaccompanied minors under Home for Ukraine Scheme.
- Process all DV police notifications.
- LADO is located within the MASH due to enquiries where there is a risk to children, with direct line management to remain under the Strategic Manager for Safeguarding.

The Key functions of Assessment and Duty include:

- Undertake Child and Family Assessments;
- Respond daily to safeguarding concerns received via ChAD on children not open to children social care to ensure initial safeguarding plans are in place;
- Undertake S47 enquiries for children allocated in the team;
- Prepare cases as needed for Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) and begin child protection plan.
- Be responsible for any court proceedings in an emergency, such as an application for an Emergency Protection Order, until the first Directions Hearing; or planned court application until the initial hearing;
- Arrange as needed (with agreement via Accommodation Panel) initial Section 20 accommodation of children;
- Organise any professional abuse and complex abuse investigations, for children allocated in the team;

Case Transfer

- Case transfer between assessment and duty and the Support and safeguarding teams (CSS) will take place at the ICPC, at the initial Child In Need Meeting, or in emergency court applications at the initial court hearing.
- Duty and Assessment Team will make the necessary arrangements for the ICPC and CIN Meeting, and the assessment worker will attend.
- The receiving team will chair the initial Child In Need Meeting for the purpose of initial introductions and formulating the plan.
- Where a team has existing financial arrangements in place – e.g. accommodation, this must be discussed between the two team managers prior to transfer:

CSS to Court teams

Within Legal Gateway Meetings where it is agreed that an application for an ICO with placement into Local Authority care is to be made the Court Progression Officer will start to track the children within the Care Proceedings Tracker. The Strategic Manager for the Court Teams will alert the Service Manager of the Court Teams to the children in order for an identified Social Worker within the Court Teams to be allocated to the children following the making of an Interim Care Order.

The Court Progression Officer will then ensure an initial care planning meeting is arranged following the making of an interim order. This will include the

allocated Social Worker of the Court team, the Team Manager and Paralegal to review the order and timetable the proceedings and assessments with the social worker. This is to be recorded within the child's electronic recording system.

Court Teams to Children in Care Service

Within the context of care proceedings where the final care plan is likely to be adoption the *Court Team* social worker will be the primary worker throughout the care proceedings but a co-working relationship with the children in care social worker will commence where a plan for adoption or long-term fostering is identified. The children in care team manager will identify a social worker at this stage via interface meetings between the Court Team Managers and Children in Care Team Managers.

The purpose of this coworking arrangement is for the children in care social worker to start to build a relationship with the child/young person and their family. They will need to be consulted about all aspects of the care planning (including the child permanence report in the case of adoption). On appointment the child in care social worker will work alongside the CSS social worker (and adoption worker in the case of an adoption plan). However, the responsibility for completing all aspects of documentation related to the child/young person during the care proceedings, including seeing the child/young person, will remain with the Court Team social worker. The point of transfer to the child in care social worker will be within 5 working days of the final hearing (or the issues resolution hearing should the care proceedings conclude at this earlier stage).

At this point the child in care social worker will become the primary worker and the children in care team the primary team; quarterly interface meetings between CSS and children in care will ensure that children in care are sighted upon children likely to require a period of joint working and support early identification of social workers;

Child in Care to Next Steps

For a looked after child/young person already in care who becomes 'eligible' for a leaving care service at the age of 16+, a leaving care personal advisor (PA) from the next steps service will be appointed as a co-worker at the point that the pathway plan needs assessment commences. The CIC social worker will remain the primary worker and the CIC team the primary team until the young person reaches the age of 16. The purpose of this co-working relationship is for the personal advisor to build up a good relationship with the young person and help them start thinking about their long-term future goals and how to achieve them. The PA will remain the secondary worker until the young person turns 18, at which juncture they will become the primary worker.

Children with a Disability

There may also be times when the primary need within a family is not the disability but there happens to be a disabled child/young person within the

family. In these situations, the children with disabilities team may allocate a social worker as a co-worker. Where the CWD team has children in care with siblings who are not disabled in care, and the disabled child closes, to the service, the remaining children in care would be transferred to the children in care service or Next Steps, whichever is the most appropriate given the ages for the child.

CWD team will undertake their own child and family assessments for children with disabilities who are referred in and meet the criteria for the team. The cwd social worker will continue to case hold the disabled child even if they require child protection, PLO or proceedings and become looked after.

Edge of Care

Where a child who is not open is referred in and is on the edge of care, the assessment will be undertaken by the Fast Social worker.

Children open to the social workers in the Fast team, who become looked after, and the plan is to remain in care will transfer to either the court team, the children in care team or Next Steps, depending on the specific circumstances for the child.

Where children are already open and are on the edge of care, they will be allocated to a FAST intervention Worker who will co-work the case with the allocated social worker.

Children with concerns around exploitation

Where a child is referred into children's social care and there are exploitation concerns, the assessment and duty team will undertake the child and family assessment and where the child is assessed at high risk of exploitation, or involved in a police operation or complex or complicated abuse process, or where there are known links to Organised Crime Groups they will transfer to the CE team.

Where children are already open to CSS, consideration will be given to the quality of the relationship with the existing social worker to determine whether transfer to the CE social workers is the best option for safeguarding the child. Consideration will be given to children assessed as medium risk, where there are growing concerns about the exploitation and concerns of potential links to OCG's.

- Where the child is in care the case management would remain with the children in care social worker supported by the CE coordinators and wider safeguarding partners.

Pre-birth referrals where the mother is wishing to relinquish their unborn baby should be referred to the **Court** teams at the earliest point possible if referred after 16 weeks an adoption support social worker should co-work to ensure

swift placement of the baby (foster to adopt) where this continues to be the plan.

Other important co-working relationships will exist with workers in the Stoke-on-Trent fostering service, the adoption partnership/service, independent reviewing services, youth offending team, the FAST team, supervised contact service and child and family therapeutic team, and with adult services teams. The primary social worker for the child will remain in the relevant CSS, Court Team, CIC, CWD or next step team.

Where a children/young person has been allocated to a newly qualified social worker (ASYE) and child protection concerns become apparent, or the child/young person needs to be accommodated. In these circumstances an experienced social worker should become the primary worker and the ASYE becomes the co-worker in the relevant team.

The ASYE should continue to co-work to support the transition for the child/young person and their family and gain experience of child protection/looked after work. An ASYE may also, by agreement between managers, co-work established situations where child protection or looked after issues are relevant where this facilitates good learning opportunities.

The fundamental principle is that there can only be one accountable worker and team for a child, with any other workers cited as co-workers on the electronic system. Managers are accountable for children allocated to their teams and records being fully up to date to ensure smooth and prompt transfer between services to ensure there is not drift or delay and a joined up approach to children's plans.

Re-referrals Within a 3 Month Period of Closure

Liquidlogic (LL) to be checked to see if the child has been closed within the 3-month timescale. An alert has been built in to LL to link DOB's/names to identify if the child/young person was open within the 3-month rule.

If the child/young person falls under the three-month rule and has been closed within that time then the ChAD Consultant social worker (CSW) will have a critical friend discussion with the previous social worker / team, in regard to what action is required based on the new presenting information and taking into account the knowledge of the family history. The CSW will make reasonable attempts to contact the previous team in the 24-hour period following receipt of the referral. If contact with the previous team has not been possible then the social worker/team manager will decide on the referral based on threshold and process as they would any other referral, including information gathering.

The child/young person will be allocated to the team who best meets their needs, this will not automatically be the previous team as it may be that the child/young person is now looked after / homeless and would also take in to account the location of the child/young person.

This contact needs to be processed within 24 hours and must not be delayed for the purposes of the critical friend discussion.

However, if it is a new concern that requires an urgent/emergency response, the child/young person should be allocated to the relevant CSS team to ensure concerns can be managed swiftly in line with child protection procedures.

Out of City Transfer-in Process

The process for transferring children/young people into Stoke-on-Trent from other local authorities is via Childrens advice duty service (ChAD). Families whose move to Stoke-on-Trent is permanent and where concerns for the children meet the threshold for intervention will be managed in the usual way.

Children/young people with child protection plans who make a permanent move to Stoke-on-Trent will be allocated to CSS and a child and family assessment will be completed. The conferencing service will arrange an initial child protection conference.

The transferring local authority will be expected to provide the current child protection plan and any previous child protection reports, an up to date assessment/risk assessment of the transition and chronology to inform the CSS and conference. They will also request additional documentation, i.e. core group minutes and records from statutory visits. The resulting plan from the transfer-in conference will inform further work undertaken by CSS including further assessment required.

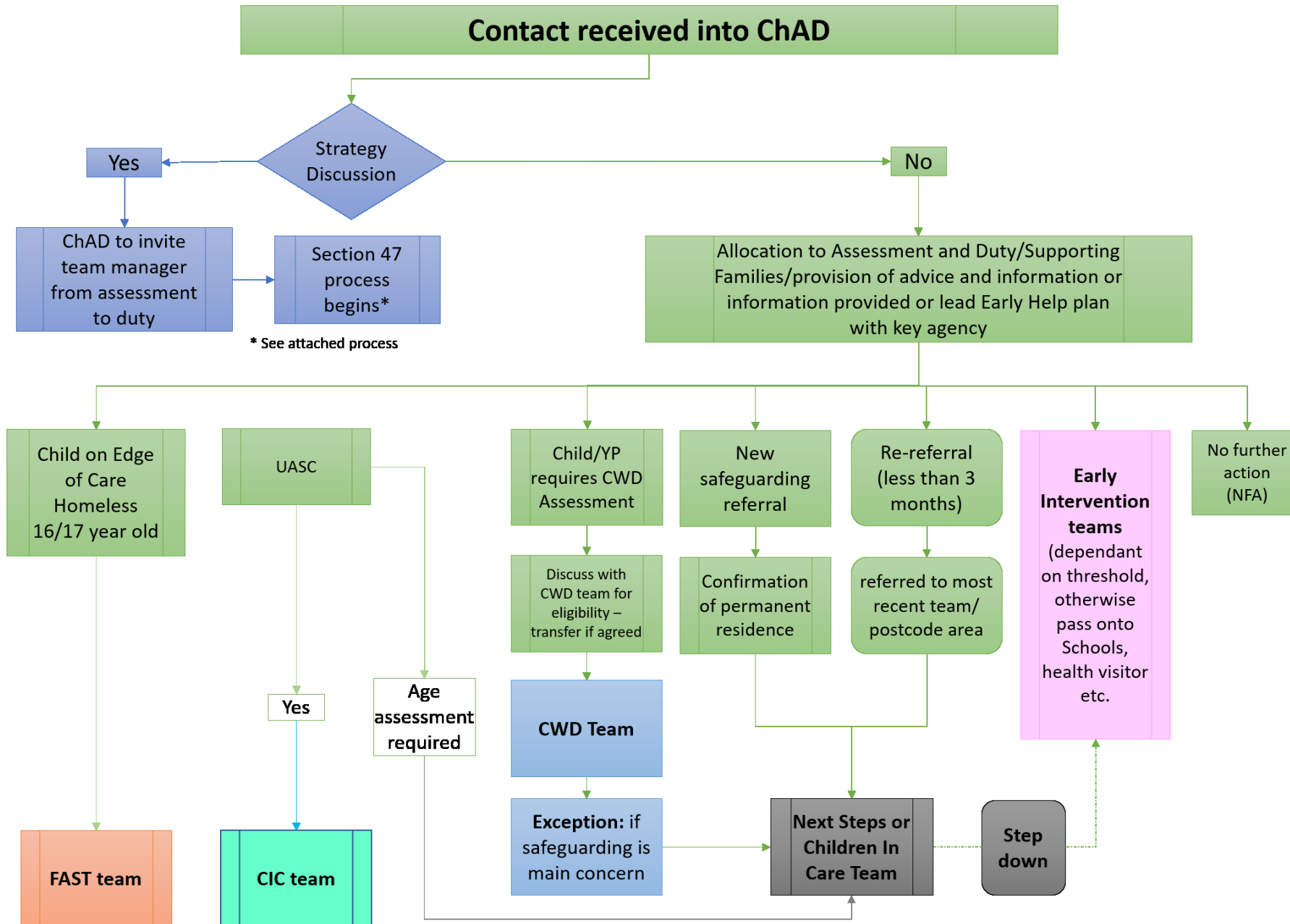
Children/young people temporarily living in Stoke-on-Trent and who are registered as 'children in need' in another local authority remain the responsibility of the other local authority and a referral should not be processed.

However, necessary duty visits can be negotiated between the relevant authority and the assessment and duty team where the children/young people are temporarily based where this is in the child's best interests.

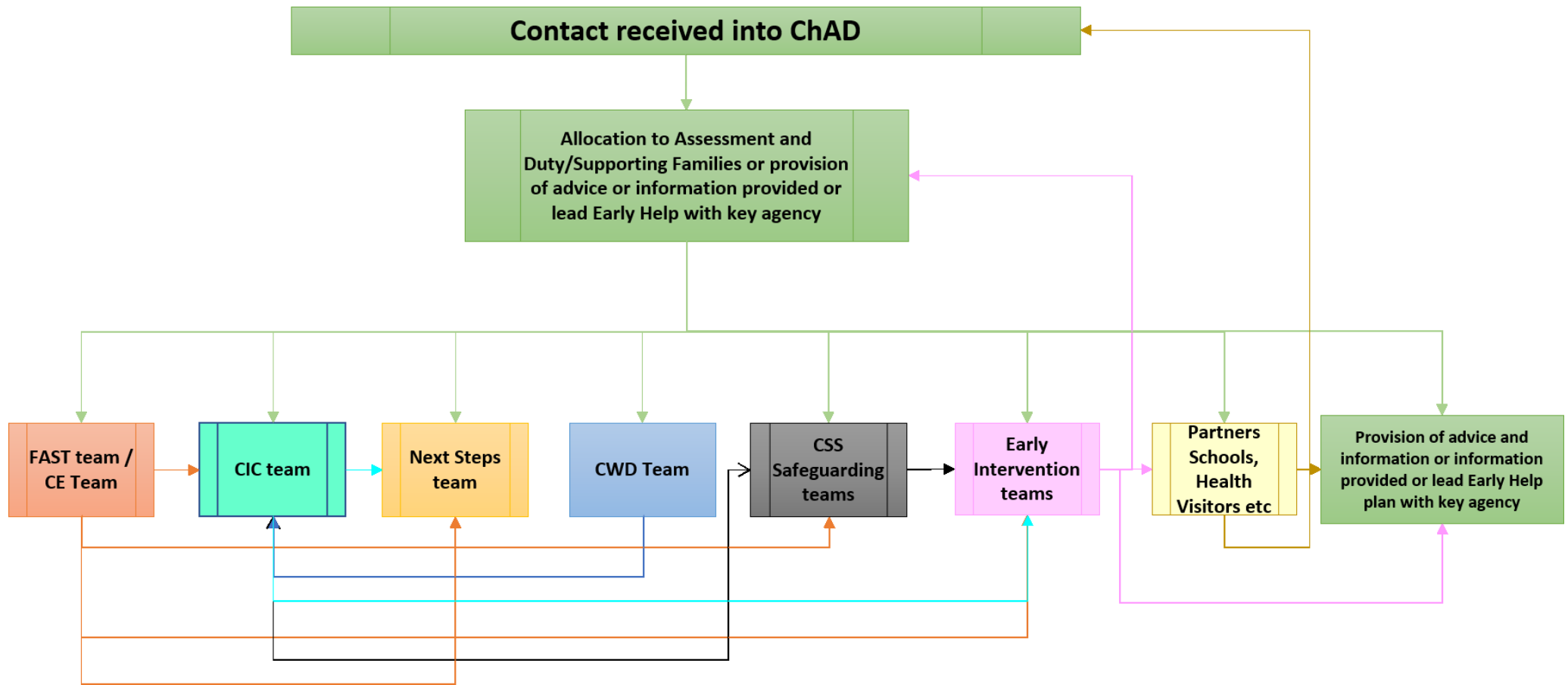
Visits should be recorded on email as 'case notes' and shared with their team manager, the relevant allocated worker and team from the children's permanent residence authority and uploaded on LiquidLogic.

A child subject to Public Law Outline, Public Law Care Proceedings or Private Law proceedings should remain the responsibility of their issuing Local Authority.

Transfer/Referral Pathways



Transfer into, from and between teams



Managing Allocation Pressures

The overriding principle for Stoke-on-Trent children's services is that all children and young people who meet the threshold to receive a statutory service should be allocated to ensure those children/young people who are assessed as the most vulnerable and meet the threshold criteria are allocated to a suitably qualified worker.

Therefore, there will be no statutory cases unallocated.

Where children/young people are subject of a child protection plan or are a looked after child, they must be allocated. This must be a matter of priority. Where this is challenging, it must be flagged up with the strategic managers who will support the service and explore all options. The assistant director must also be notified to ensure senior management oversight.

Delays in allocating children and young people should be kept to a minimum. Where delays occur in allocation, families should be kept informed about the duration of any delay. Professionals working with the family should also be informed about any delay in allocation of the case and advised about progress in achieving allocation. A process for monitoring must be put in place and evidenced on the file.

Any periods where there are likely to be future or actual delays in allocating child protection or looked after children/young people must be reported to all senior managers including the director of children's services.

Managers need to ensure effective monitoring of workloads across teams and services and ensure discussions about workload and workflow are discussed in supervision. Staffing issues, capacity, and fluctuations of work should be pre-empted where possible to ensure there are no delays in allocation. Where persistent difficulty is evident both the assistant director children's services and the DCS need to be advised.

Checklist for a Children/Young Person Transfer/Closure

Before a children/young person's transfer or closure, relevant assessments must be shared with children/young people, families and the professionals involved. All professionals involved must be notified of the transfer or closure and reason for it alongside children and families.

On the LCS, all personal details, network details must be up to date and payments ceased where appropriate. Assessments and activities must be completed and an up to date chronology attached to the electronic record. Reason for transfer/closure must be clear within the most recent assessment or in the closure form.

Any paper records must be properly uploaded and filed on, and their location recorded on the electronic record. Any child in need episode and any contact episode must be closed before closure.

Appendix 1: Transfer Standards (Checklist)

The following tasks should be updated and/or completed prior to transfer:

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| Chronology must be up to date | |
| Up to date genogram | |
| Case notes must be complete, up to date and finalised | |
| An up to date assessment clearly identifying parenting capacity and risk and authorised by a manager | |
| Record of case management decisions and supervisions | |
| Accurate demographic information (in demographics tab on LCS) | |
| Signposting of relevant documents (including court statements) on LCS | |
| Notification of first child care review or first child protection conference to incoming team as early as possible | |
| Placement planning meeting (prior to start of, or within 72-hours of placement) | |
| Placement plan (within 5 working days) | |
| Initial health assessment (within 28 days) | |
| Personal education plan (within 10 working days) | |
| Pathway plan - Part 1 (where relevant) | |
| Contact planning meeting | |
| Case summary reviewed and updated | |
| Letter/email to all relevant agencies and family confirming the change of worker and identifying who the new worker is with contact details | |
| Agreement for funding for any expert assessments/interventions detailed in the care plan should be agreed prior to transfer | |
| Authorising Manager: Date audited and agreed ready for transfer | |

Before transferring the child/young person's file should be **audited and the checklist completed** and include all court documents to be saved to file. The letter is life letter is to be saved to file. Health checks are to be completed, to include dental checks, optician's ad details of immunisations. The transferring manager is to ensure any outstanding work has been completed.

All the above (where relevant) must be in place in order to transfer the file.

Appendix 2: Transfer Points

| Receiving team | Transfer process | Timescale |
|--|--|-----------|
| <p>Re-Referrals</p> | <p>LL to be checked to see if the child/young person has been closed within the 3-month timescale. An alert has been built in to LL to link DOB's/names to identify if the child was open within the 3-month rule.</p> <p>If the child's falls under the three-month rule and has been closed within that time then ChAD CSW will have a critical friend discussion with the previous social worker / team, in regard to what action is required based on the new presenting information and taking in to account the knowledge of the family history. The CSW will make reasonable attempts to contact the previous team in the 24-hour period following receipt of the referral. If contact with the previous team has not been possible then the CSW/team manager will make a decision on the referral based on threshold and process as they would any other referral, including information gathering.</p> <p>The child/young person will be allocated to the team who best meets their needs, this will not automatically be the previous team as it may be that the child/young person is now looked after / homeless and would also take in to account location of the child.</p> <p>This contact needs to be processed within 24 hours and must not be delayed for the purposes of the critical friend discussion.</p> | |
| <p>Strategy Meetings/ discussions</p> | <p>Strategy discussions on new children will be chaired by a CSW or Team Manager at CHAD. CHAD will alert the relevant CSS assessment team in order that the team manager and social worker can be in attendance, participate and agree to commence agreed actions. The contact and referral must be completed by CHAD, the minutes of the strategy discussion will be uploaded onto LL within 24 hours.</p> | |
| <p>CiN</p> | <p>If after assessment there is some change to the child's experience but insufficient to support closure then the child will continue to be supported through the child in need process. The assessment will identify any unmet need which will be the basis for the child in need plan. Good practice dictates that a joint visit to introduce the new worker prior to the CiN review should take place.</p> | |
| <p>CP - ICPC</p> | <p>The child/ren's case file will transfer following the initial case conference. It is expected that both the transferring social worker and receiving social worker will attend the ICPC. Good practice dictates that a joint visit to introduce the new worker prior to the ICPC should take place.</p> | |

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| Transfer in Child Protection Case Conferences | CHAD need to confirm permanent residence in Stoke – once confirmed this will transfer to relevant CCS service who will notify the safeguarding unit requesting a transfer in case conference be convened, they will complete the assessment and attend the conference. | |
| Court - Public law | Families not previously known or outside 3month window, requiring immediate court action e.g. police powers of protection to transfer from CHAD to the relevant CSS service. Families open to the assessment teams requiring court action transfer at initial hearing. | |
| Court / Private Law | <p>Where the court have ordered a S7 report to be completed and the case is already open to assessment and duty then this worker will complete the S7. If the case was closed to D&A or locality teams within the last 3 months then the S7 will refer back to the team who last held the case. When a S37 report is required, the case will transfer immediately to the locality team to complete the assessment as part of the S37 enquires.</p> <p>A S7 should only be picked up by the local authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child is the subject of a currently open case, in particular when subject to a cp plan, supervision order or accommodated under section 20; • An assessment is being undertaken or has been completed within the 3 months; • Children services are carrying out enquiries pursuant to S47; • An initial assessment has commenced and it has already become apparent that further involvement is likely; • The child is currently in receipt of services as a ‘child in need’; • The child is subject to a family assistance order. | |

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| <p>Court Team – ICO granted</p> | <p>Where children become subject to an Interim Care Order and placed within foster care, residential or with connected carers. The children will be allocated to the identified Court Team social worker following a joint visit with the CSS Social Worker and the transfer form above completed with all files up to date agreed in a formal handover meeting.</p> <p>The CSS Social Worker will need to request an Initial looked after child meeting and support the Court team social worker to complete the report for this. If the child was subject to Child Protection Planning it is the CSS Social Workers responsibility to ensure the Child Protection report for conference is completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attend the Initial Hearing with the CSS allocated Social Worker - Complete a joint visit to the children either prior to the court hearing or following the court hearing but within 2 working days of the ICO being granted. - Liaise with the allocated CSS Social Worker regarding completion of the Initial Health Assessment request. | |
| <p>CLA</p> | <p>Any children who require Local Authority accommodation under S20 at the point of referral, and is not an edge of care case or homeless presentation, they will be assessed by the assessment and duty service. If there is an opportunity to support the child/ren home during the assessment process, a FAST intervention worker could co-work the case with the assessing social worker who would remain the primary worker until completion of the assessment. transfer directly to FAST team. If these young people present as being UASC, these young people will transfer to the CIC team. Age assessments are completed within CIC team/ Next Steps team for all UASC.</p> | |
| <p>Private Fostering</p> | <p>Once it is established a private fostering arrangement is identified by social workers in CHAD the case will transfer directly to CSS for assessment.</p> | |
| <p>CWD</p> | <p>Where a request has been received by CHAD for children with disabilities assessment, contact to be made with the team to discuss the referral and eligibility – if the child is eligible for services from the children with disability service, the case will be sent for assessment. The only exception to this is where the primary issue is one of safeguarding. In these cases, the safeguarding and CWD teams will consult with each other to ensure that the needs associated with the disability are assessed and met.</p> | |

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| <p>Children/Young People on the edge of care and (from November 2023) those 16/17 year olds who present as homeless</p> | <p>These go directly from CHAD to the FAST Team who will assess with the young person's housing officer, and support the child back to family wherever possible. Following the assessment, if the young person will be remaining in care, they will transfer to Next Steps or children in care at the second statutory review</p> | |
| <p>Step Down to Early Help</p> | <p>Where statutory threshold is not met but the family require support to prevent risk escalating to statutory level, transfer to Early Help team in the area where the family live (see map attached for patches). Consent must be obtained prior to transfer. Where consent is not obtained and expressly noted on the referral, a joint visit should take place. NB If the level of support required does not meet the threshold for the early intervention service, the case can be transferred to a single agency for support (i.e. school, New Era etc).</p> | |