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Children’s Services Assessment Cancellation Policy

**Version Final v2.2**

**Approved by: Nicole Miller and Catherine Watkins**

**Approved Date: January 2024**

**Implementation: Immediate**

About this document

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| **Title** | **Assessment Cancellation Policy** |
| **Purpose** | **To set out the procedure for cancelling Child and Family Assessments in all teams** |
| **Updated by** | **Elaine Andrews/Libby Johnson/Lucy Holland** |
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**Intended Audience**

This document has been issued to the following people for Review (R) Information (I) and Review and Sign off (S). The Transfer protocol is mandatory and must be shared with all managers, and social work staff and with those holding cases in Early Help and Surrey Family Services.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Position** | **S/R/I** |
| Matt Ansell/ Tina Benjamin / Patricia Denney | Directors | S / R |
| Nicole Miller/Catherine Watkins | Assistant Directors | S |
| All Children’s Services Teams |  | I |
|  |  |  |

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# Purpose

**1.1** The purpose of this protocol is to outline the agreed process for cancelling Child and Family Assessments (C&F) and subsequent actions for children.

**1.2** It is essential that staff and team managers (TM) ensure they are clear and informed about this protocol to secure effective transition points that reduce drift and delay in case planning and interventions.

**1.3** The protocol only applies to C&F’s, other forms of assessment are not included in this policy.

# Principles

**2.1** All children progressed to C&F have been subject to an appropriate threshold application and therefore the decision to cancel a C&F should not be made lightly.

**2.2** Cancelling C&F’s override previously made decisions and therefore authority to cancel C&F’s is held at Service Manager (SM) Level.

**2.3** C&F’s should not be cancelled unless there are clear and specific reasons to do so and rationale evidenced through Management Oversight.

**2.4** Cancelling C&F’s should be completed within a within 48 hours of decision not to progress made.

**2.5** Any actions recommended because of cancelling a C&F should be progressed within 48 hours.

**2.6** Families must be informed of the decision to cancel a C&F and any subsequent actions unless there is a specific reason to not do so outlined in the Management oversight.

**2.7** If the child is seen, a C&F assessment should be completed unless clearly stated by parents they do not consent to this.

**2.8** If the family have been contacted and do not consent to visits but agree agency checks to be completed this information can be held within a C&F if family consent to this.

**2.9** Whilst the C&F cancellation is progressed, the child remains the responsibility of the allocated Social Worker (SW)

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# Criteria for Cancelled Assessments

# **3.1 All Teams**

This list is not exhaustive and should a C&F need to be cancelled which is not outlined on the list, this should be discussed with the appropriate line manager.

* Child does not exist – this child should be reported to My Helpdesk IT and the record deleted.
* Child has died - A Date of Death should be noted on the child’s demographics.
* Child has turned 18 shortly following the referral and not yet been seen.
* Child living in another Local Authority - update demographics to reflect child’s address.
* Family have gone on an extended period whereby the C&F would not be able to be completed within appropriate timescales – Family/Referrer to re-refer to Children’s Services following families return.
* Child has moved to another Local Authority prior to visit - update demographics to reflect child’s address and send referring concerns to new Local Authority
* Child has left the UK - update demographics to reflect child’s address.
* Consolidation Error - Child not living in the family and not impacted by referral worries.
* Consolidation Error - Siblings opened, but issues specific to one child - cancel assessment with Management Oversight with full consideration to the impact of the circumstances on siblings.
* Consolidation Error - Information put on LCS about child that is not part of family and has no connections – My Helpdesk IT to delete all records.
* Threshold discussion/challenge upheld - Feedback decision to worker who made threshold decision.
* If the family have been contacted and state, they do not want an assessment and S47 threshold is not met - Oversight should consider that non-engagement may be indicative of risk/concerns and put clear rationale why escalation is not required.
* If the child has been subject to a Strategy Discussion where the threshold for S47 has not been met and the family subsequently do not respond/engage or refuse the assessment process, an assessment should be cancelled.

**3.2** **Family Safeguarding (FST)/ Safeguarding Adolescent (SAT) Teams**

* As above
* If you need to assess in order to review a situation the Family Programme should be used for this and NOT a C&F assessment.
* If the outcome of the S47 is No further action – continue to complete interventions using the Family Programme

**3.3 Looked After Children Teams (CLA) –**

* As above
* If outcome of S47 is No Further action - Updating information to be added to the next CLA review report.

**3.4 Children with Disability Teams (CWD)**

* As above
* Family do not engage following request for support/package of care – evidence attempts to engage the family.

# Process

**4.1 Social Worker**

If a Social Worker identifies a child whose C&F needs to be cancelled. They need to discuss with their line manager. This discussion should not be delayed until formal supervision.

The Social Worker should update their case recording to reflect discussions and information which has indicated that the C&F should be cancelled.

If the C&F is being cancelled due to lack of consent, this discussion should be clearly noted alongside possible escalation processes that could follow as a result of a request for a C&F cancellation being made, an example being progressing to strategy discussion.

The Social Worker should keep the family up to date of any changes through the process.

The Social Worker is responsible for all actions set as a result of C&F cancellation and remains the allocated and responsible worker whilst the C&F cancellation process occurs.

**4.2 Team Manager**

The Team Manager is responsible for recording the C&F discussion with the Social Worker on a Management Oversight.

The Team Manager should alert the Service Manager through the Management Oversight function.

The Team Manager has the authority to refuse the C&F cancellation request and the process will end unless challenged (see section 5).

Should the Team Manager refuse the request, then clear rationale of decision making should be evidenced within the management oversight. The Team Manager should add any actions and timescales which need to be resolved as a result of the C&F cancellation request to the oversight.

The Team Manager should set out actions and timescales (see section 4.5) within their oversight.

**4.3 Service Manager**

The Service Manager will be alerted to the C&F Cancellation Request via a case note alert by the Team Manager.

Within the same Oversight, the Service Manager should record that they have read all relevant information provided to them and whether they agree/disagree with the request to cancel the C&F.

If the C&F cancellation is approved, then the Service Manager should refer to the criteria for C&F cancellation (Section 3) within their oversight. If the reason is not outlined within the criteria list, then clear rationale of decision making should be evidenced.

The Service Manager should review the actions set by the Team Manager and add any additional tasks with timescales if required.

Once the Service Manager has approved the C&F cancellation, the C&F can be cancelled by the Service Manager, outlining in the comments box “see oversight DATE”.

If the Service Manager does not approve the C&F cancellation, further actions may be set by the Service manager which need to be resolved as a result of the C&F cancellation being refused.

**4.4 Timescales**

All C&F Cancelation requests

SW and TM should escalate C&F cancellation requests to Service Managers within 24 hours of identification.

The Service Manager should conclude the cancellation request within a further 24 hours, meaning the whole process (except if challenged) will be completed in 48 hours of identification.

Cancellation approval

All children who have a C&F cancelled should have the following actions carried out on them: -

* Letter to family and linked professionals to inform of outcome.
* Chronology to be updated.
* Case Summary to be updated.

If the child progresses to No Further Action (L1), or Early Help (L2), or Targeted Help (L3), with services already in place the child’s record should be closed following all outstanding actions being completed within 24 hours of the cancellation being approved.

If the child progresses to Early Help (L2) or Targeted Help (L3), where services need to be referred to and/or a TAF held, the child’s record should be closed following all outstanding actions within 5 working days hours of the cancellation being approved.

If the child continues on a Level 4 plan (CIN, CP, LAC), the C&F, any additional actions set as a part of the cancellation request should be progressed within 5 working days and normal plan actions continue.

Cancellation request is not approved

If the child’s cancellation request is not approved, as above, this decision should be made in 24 hours by a Team Manager, or 48 hours by the Service Manager. Whilst the cancellation request is being progressed the Social Worker should continue to follow timescales set by their line manager and according to the statutory timescales according to the level of service being provided to the child.

# Challenge of Decision Making

**5.1 Team Manager**

A Team Manager may decide that a C&F cancellation request cannot be progressed without escalating to a Service Manager for approval. Should the Social Worker challenge this decision, then this should be escalated to the Service Manager who will make a decision on the outcome within 24 hours of the challenge being made.

**5.2 Service Manager**

If the Service Manager does not approve the C&F cancellation request but Social Worker and/or Team Manager challenges this decision. Then the Service Manager should escalate the challenge to a Service Manager peer for an independent review. The outcome should be concluded within 24 hours of the challenge being made.