Case Transfer Procedure

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Version 1	November 2018	New document
Version 1.1	June 2021	Document updated
Version 1.2	September 2022	Updated terms for social work teams
Version 1.3	September 2023	Annual review completed
Version 1.4	November 2023	References to Ambleside removed

Contents

1. Principles Underpinning the Transfer of Cases

Children and their families should experience the minimum number of transitions in receiving our services.

Wherever possible, cases should follow the same caseworker to ensure the maximum continuity.

Where the transfer of existing cases to new workers is unavoidable, the children and families must be given the maximum information about impending changes, at the earliest possible opportunity.

In sibling groups, the children will have the same Social Worker, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not in the child's best interest.

Wherever possible, the siblings of a child who becomes looked after will be allocated the same Social Worker, even if the other children are not looked after themselves.

All disputes between Team Managers shall be referred to their respective Service Manager for final decision.

2. Case Transfer Standards

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

- Accurate demographic information (in front screen on Mosaic);
- Chronology must be up to date;
- Case summary completed during the last two months;
- Case notes must be up to date and finalised;
- A supervision episode completed during the last month;
- Case Transfer Document to be completed offering an up to date case profile including reasons for involvement, risk assessment, signposting to relevant documents on Mosaic (including Court statements) and the times of any future meetings(for example if a looked after child, Placement Planning Meeting, First CIC review, Initial health Assessment, Personal Education Plan, Pathway Plan - Part 1 and any Contact Planning Meetings;

- Record of Management Decisions and oversight as well as case supervisions;
- Agreement as to which outstanding tasks on Mosaic will be completed before transfer and which will be transferred to the receiving Social Worker.

Agreement for funding for any expert assessments/interventions detailed in the care plan should be agreed prior to transfer.

Before transferring, the case should be quality assured and signed off by the transferring manager to ensure all outstanding work has been completed.

The following case transfer procedure is a best practice example and social care teams should aim to meet this standard when cases are being transferred between teams and services.

3. MASH and Referral & Assessment (R&A)

All Children Social Care referrals start off by going to the MASH team, where a decision is taken within 24 hours as to whether an assessment is required. They will also make a decision as to whether a strategy meeting will take place. Other options open to MASH are signposting to another service, referral to the Early Help Hub, or closure.

When the decision is taken to complete an assessment which might additionally involve completing a S47 enquiry following a strategy meeting, a worker from Referral and Assessment (R&A) is identified to complete this work and they will be allocated the case on Mosaic. There will be a discussion between the Team Manager or their representative and the allocated Social Worker as to the agreed timescale for the assessment and this will be recorded on Mosaic.

Within R&A, when an assessment of a child is sufficiently progressed for the R&A Team Manager or representative to be clear that there will be a need for ongoing Social Worker involvement, with the threshold for CSC involvement being reached, the children will be added to the list for transfer which will be discussed in the next section. The other possibility is that a service could be offered by the Early Help Service. There is a separate document to discuss such transfers so they will not be considered here.

4. Case Transfer Meeting

The R&A Team will host a weekly transfer meeting which currently takes place each Friday morning as a TEAMS meeting. The R&A Team Manager will have responsibility for booking the meeting at least a day prior to the meeting taking place, and circulating an updated case transfer list. This document will list those children/sibling groups that need to be transferred and will include the name of the child and number of siblings, current Social Worker, case status and a brief synopsis of the presenting issues.

At the transfer meeting, each child/sibling group needing to be transferred will be discussed and agreement will take place as to which team and Social Worker the case will transfer to. The discussion can also include exploring the threshold on cases, the case readiness for transfer and how the new Social Worker will be introduced to the family.

In readiness for the transfer meeting there is an expectation that the Team Manager or their representative will attend the transfer meeting with a list of workers in their team that have capacity to take new cases. The Team Manager or their representative from a receiving team needs to agree to a child or sibling group being transferred to one of their workers. The decision will take into account the worker's capacity and matching the requirements of the case to a worker's skills base.

Long term teams in Wokingham are not patch based so where the family reside in the Borough is not a consideration. During periods of high demand, those cases needing to be transferred will be prioritised with Child Protection cases with a date for an initial child protection conference usually taking priority. If there is no agreement about the transfer of cases, particularly those of a high priority, the view of the Service Manager for Safeguarding will be sought. The decision of the Service Manager will override decisions made at the transfer meeting by Team Managers.

Following the transfer meeting taking place, the minutes of the transfer document will be updated by the R&A Team Manager or their representative. The updated minutes will include taking off any children where the transfer has been agreed on Mosaic by the receiving Team Manager and adding the name of the team and Social Worker as agreed in the meeting. There is an expectation that the updated transfer document will be emailed to the relevant Team

Managers within 48 hours of the meeting having taken place.

Although most cases transfer from R&A to one of the long-term teams, there are also transfers between long-term teams including Brambles, Conifers or Children with Disabilities (CWD) to Here4U. There is an expectation that the Team Manager of the outgoing team will email the Team Manager from R&A or their representative prior to the updated list being sent out (24 hours before the meeting), to advise them of cases they would like to be added to the list.

Although not considered best practice and should be avoided if at all possible, cases can also be added to the list of cases to be considered at the transfer meeting itself.

5. Case transfer between R&A and Brambles, Conifers or CWD

The normal transfer points for transfer between R&A and the long-term teams is as follows:

(i) For Child Protection cases, the child/sibling group will transfer at the Initial Child Protection Conference and there is an expectation that the new Social Worker and a manager from the receiving team will attend this meeting. If nobody from the receiving team is able to attend the ICPC, there will need to be agreement reached as to how the new Social Worker can be introduced to the family. This could either involve there being a joint visit (member of the outgoing team and receiving team Social Worker) or the case transferring following the first core group meeting. If there is a decision to have a Legal Planning Meeting either before an ICPC or before the first core group, there will be an expectation that the Team Managers from both R&A and the long-term teams to attend.

(ii) For Child in Need cases, the child/sibling will normally transfer following the initial Child in Need meeting. This meeting will normally be chaired by a manager or experienced social worker from the receiving team and be attended by both the Social Workers from R&A and the receiving long-term team. If it is not possible for the receiving Social Worker to attend this meeting, normally there will be a joint visit arranged to see the family involving the Social Worker from R&A and the Social Worker from the receiving long term team before transfer.

(iii) For Children in Care, and in particular those that become accommodated S20, the transfer point will normally be the Placement Planning meeting. If the Social Worker from the receiving team is not able to make this meeting the case could transfer following a joint visit or at the first CIC review meeting.

There is an expectation that the outgoing Social Worker will inform the family and all involved professionals of the change in Social Worker. Cases only become fully transferred when the receiving manager from the long term team accepts the transfer request on Mosaic and changes the allocated team and worker on the Mosaic system. The process to reach this point is as follows:

(1) New Social Worker meets the family either at meeting involving previous Social Worker or completes a joint visit with them;
(2) Social Worker in R&A has prepared the file for transfer on Mosaic having consideration for all the points in section;
(3) A manager in R&A has audited the file on Mosaic and ensured that it is ready for transfer, going back to the R&A Social Worker and asking them to complete further work if required;
(4) When the case file has a positive audit, the R&A manager sends a request to the Team Manager or their representative in the long-term team to accept the case transfer;
(5) The manager in the receiving team accepts the transfer as indicated above.

There are some exceptions to the above including cases received from other local authorities where there is a request for a Transfer in Child Protection Conference. As these cases do not normally have an assessment by a Wokingham Social Worker following the referral being made, after the referral is processed by R&A, the case will transfer directly to the receiving long term team. Normally a manager from the receiving long term team and the Social Worker to be allocated the child/ren will attend the conference. The case will go through the normal transfer process, including being added to the transfer list and a team identified to take the case at the transfer meeting, as with other cases.

Another exception is when there is a re-referral within three months of a case closing to one of the long term teams. Under such circumstances, the referral is normally taken by Front Door/MASH but any subsequent assessment will be completed by the team that closed the case. It is considered good practice if the same Social Worker can be re-allocated the case to complete the assessment. Any need for ongoing work following the assessment will normally be carried out by the same Social Worker.

A further exception is when the mother of children who are open to Children Social Care becomes pregnant and they live in the same household. Normally, a pre-birth assessment will be completed by the Social Worker who is allocated the unborn child's siblings, 12 weeks into the pregnancy.

6. Transfer from Brambles, Conifers or CWD to Here4U

When the Care Plan for a Child in Care achieves permanency through continuing to be looked after, the child should transfer from one of the long-term teams to the Here4U Team. This will typically be where the plan is that the child remains in foster care or a residential unit. Additionally, it could be an older child who becomes accommodated under S20 and the plan is for them to remain looked after until they go onto independence. It does not include children where the plan is adoption; these children will remain at Brambles, Conifers or CWD.

When a child becomes eligible to transfer to Here4U, the Team Manager from Brambles, Conifers or CWD or their representative will ask for the child to be added to the transfer list for the next meeting. At the transfer meeting there will be a discussion between the Team Manager of the long term team and the Team Manager of Here4U about the timing of the case transfer and what outstanding pieces of work need to be completed prior to transfer taking place. The name of the receiving Social Worker, date of transfer and how the receiving Social Worker will be introduced to the young person will all be discussed and a plan agreed.

The transfer will not be complete until the Team Manager or their representative of the outgoing team has completed a positive audit of the child's case file and sent a request to the incoming Team Manager or their representative that has been accepted. The receiving manager will change the allocated team and worker on Mosaic as part of this accepting of the new case.

7. The Step Up and Step Down process

There is a separate procedure for cases that step up from Early Help to R&A or Step Down from R&A, Brambles, Conifers, CWD or H4U, so this will not be addressed in this document.

8. Case transfers within teams

Where a worker is leaving a team or has an extended period of absence, cases need to be reallocated within the team. The exiting Social Worker or their line manager will inform the child(ren) and family **verbally and in writing** of the arrangements to be put in place for the transfer of the case to a new worker either temporarily or otherwise. The exiting Social Worker or their manager will inform all involved professionals and members of the family network in writing of the same.

Wherever possible a joint visit should be undertaken between the exiting and receiving Social Worker to introduce the new worker to the child and family and to go through the child's plan.

There should always be case supervision with the newly allocated worker to go through the history, plan and trajectory to ensure a shared understanding of the case.

Exiting Social Workers should ensure that the file contains an up to date plan, all case recordings are up to date, including the chronology and that all details for the family and professional network are recorded correctly.