**Transfer and Allocation (TAM) process between Children’s Social Work families open at assessment or CIN and Early Help Targeted Services (Family Intervention Service and Youth Intervention Service)**

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# **Introduction and Purpose**

This internal to CSC practice note shares the process for transfer to support consistent practice across the county in a right child and family, right service, right time practice culture.

The services provided within Devon County Council Children’s Services should all be in line with the Working Together 2018 guidance: [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65803fe31c0c2a000d18cf40/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

The Family Intervention Team (FIT) service specification describes how FIT works consensually alongside families to help them achieve their best, sustainable outcomes: <https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/ChildSocCare/Ifit/EXtpSWjkKlpIovEd2fuoB8YB3R11wXyQsmUlR8PudqpucQ>

# **Transfer and Allocation Meetings – Step Downs out of social work intervention**

Where a family has been working with statutory social work teams either at assessment or at Children in Need (CIN) level, a referral to FIT/YIT may be considered as part of the step-down support available. Where this is being considered, the decision making will be via a Transfer and Allocation Meeting (TAM).

Format:

* TAM will be current Social Work locality based. A FIT manager will represent the Family Intervention service areas that come under that SW Locality – i.e. one FIT manager to attend. The FIT manager may also represent the YIT, where requested to do so.
* TAM will be timetabled through Outlook on a regular weekly slot.
* The allocated social worker will have discussed with the family their ongoing support and intervention needs and whether this can be provided through the FIT/YIT before making any request to have a family presented at TAM.
* Families for consideration by FIT/YIT will be presented to the TAM by the social work Team Manager, ensuring that the agreed transfer remains a management decision.
* The social work Team Manager will notify the team FIT/YIT Manager which families they wish to discuss at the transfer meeting by email, at least one working day in advance.
* The FIT/YIT Team Manager will review the family record on Eclipse and cross reference with any information held on Right for Children (RFC) to have the best understanding of the family situation.
* TAM will utilise a consistent form of recording, detailing a brief overview of the discussion and agreed next steps, which will be uploaded to Eclipse and potentially also RFC if the family are stepping back into a multi-agency early help offer wider than targeted early help (FIT/YIT) alone.

Good practice guidance when a step down to targeted early help being considered by children’ s social work:

* It is required practice for the SW to discuss a potential step down to early help, with their manager prior to concluding the assessment to manage family expectations and ensure the right service at the right time.
* It is good practice for the social worker to speak to the local FIT/YIT Team Manager to ensure that the targeted early help service is right for the family and can meet the expectations of the ongoing intervention (closure) plan from the social work team
* There should be no emergency or quick access to Step-Down as this needs to be a planned move with a well-designed family intervention plan and full, informed consent to service delivery in place.

Good practice guidance when a step down to targeted early help has been agreed at the Transfer and Allocation Meeting

* A three-way (family, social worker and new FIT or YIT worker) introduction and / or a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting with all relevant partners is to take place before formal transfer of the family to targeted early help.
* Eclipse Social Work Closure Form to reflect the agreed next steps and ongoing plan for intervention.
* The family to be outcomed on Eclipse to Level 3 Targeted Services and the relevant targeted early help team. This will see the family appear in the relevant FIT or YIT manager’s worklist.
* The targeted early help manager will then allocate the family to a practitioner with an expectation of a first family contact within 5 working days.
* In exceptional circumstances, a targeted early hep manager may consider sending a waiting list letter (with their contact details) to the family with any wider support details possible until formal allocation.
* Any family on a waiting list MUST be reviewed at least fortnightly to ensure their needs remain relevant to targeted early help, with a managerial oversight added to Eclipse. Any noted re-escalation of family needs during any waiting period should be discussed with the social work Team Manager without delay (if within 3 months of closing) or potentially a direct referral to the front door if critical needs are apparent.

# **Step-Up** **including Urgent Step-Up for CP reasons.**

* Targeted early help services will utilise all their resources to prevent the need for a family to be moved through to statutory social work. Targeted early help services have a robust understanding of risk with regular supervision and consultation in the services for staff to explore their thinking about children and families and for assessments and plans to be reviewed to accommodate changes for children and families.
* For a case open to targeted early help, when risk and needs have escalated to the point a referral to social work services is considered necessary – the targeted early help practitioner will have a conversation with their manager before the manager takes the family to the TAM if they are in agreement that this is a next necessary action. As with step down families, the targeted early help manager will ensure the names and details of families for discussion are shared with the local social work Team Manager a minimum of one day ahead of the TAM taking place.
* If agreed a Request for Support form will be completed and forwarded to the front door as PRE AUTHORISED. Consent from families will be achieved beforehand unless there are clear safeguarding reasons not to do so.
* If the family have been closed to social care for less than 3 months, the targeted early help worker and manager will connect with the social work team at the point of closure for a conversation about reopening pre any approach to the Front Door.
* Targeted early help services will keep the child and family open during social work Child and Family Assessment to support families in this transition and to help build relationships and hand case responsibility over if the child and family move through assessment to CIN/CP. The roles of both parts of the services around the child and family during this time are to be agreed and shared with the family and any wider support network.
* **IMMEDIATE OR IMMINENT RISK OF SERIOUS HARM IN FAMILIES OPEN TO TARGETED EARLY HELP WILL BE REFERRED VIA PHONE IN THE FIRST INSTANCE DIRECT TO THE FRONT DOOR, WITH THE LOCAL SOCIAL WORK TEAM MANAGER COPIED IN FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES CLOSED TO THAT SOCIAL WORK TEAM WITHIN THE PRECEDING 3 MONTHS.**

# **Step In**

In some families, and whilst recognising the skills and experience held within the targeted early help staff group, the manager may consider asking for social work advice and guidance, perhaps via a 3-way meeting with the family, pre to any formal request for transfer at the TAM. Social work consultation will be offered as follows:

* An identified link social worker, who may be the duty worker, will be identified in each locality.
* Where targeted early help staff are concerned about a child or family’s needs escalating and reflective managerial supervision does not see a clear decision on a referral to statutory social work, the targeted early help manager and practitioner will have a consultation conversation with the link social worker where the work to date, family strengths, and family concerns will be reviewed.
* This may result in a continued Targeted Early Help intervention plan or consideration to opening to social work for a Child and Family Assessment. This should ordinarily be via the TAM process but may be by direct referral into the Front Door if advised as such by the step-in social worker.
* The social work / targeted early help consultation and decisions made will be recorded by the targeted early help worker or manager on Eclipse and shared with the Front Door as evidence of joint reflection and planning if the escalation is continued.

# **Resolving Professional Difference**

* The escalation process is available for targeted early help and social work teams to use if discussions and conversations do not reach a shared conclusion on level of need. [Case Resolution Protocol and Escalation Procedures - Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership (devonscp.org.uk)](https://www.devonscp.org.uk/training-and-resources/policies-and-procedures/case-resolution-protocol-and-escalation-procedures/)
* If a professional outside Children’s Social Care disagrees with a decision made to Step Up (or not) a child or family from targeted early help intervention to statutory social work intervention, relevant information on the reflective consultation which took place at TAM can be shared with them to ensure decision making is clear and understood (although it is acknowledged this will not always be a position agreed by all other involved professionals).
* In addition, the Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership escalation policy can be accessed.
* The targeted early help team or social work team who are holding the family or child case will clearly communicate with partners and ensure their views on the step-up /down are shared in the TAM as appropriate.