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Children’s Services

Children Moving Between Teams Protocol

**Version Final v.5.4.4**

**Approved by: Tina Benjamin, Matt Ansell and Patricia Denney**

**Approved Date: October 2024**

**Implementation: Immediate**

**About this document**

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| **Title** | **Children Moving Between Teams - Transfer Protocol** |
| Purpose | **To set out the procedure for children who move between teams / areas / services** |
| Updated by | **Children’s Services Leads** |
| **Approved by** | **Tina Benjamin, Matt Ansell and Patricia Denney** |
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This document is only valid on the day it is printed.

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| 03/06/2019 | 2 | Updated final version to reflect new structures | K Peddie |
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| 2022 - 24 | 5.4 | Review/amended by Children’s Services leads | Various AD and SM leads |

**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 services.

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| **Name** | **Position** | **S/R/I** |
| Tina Benjamin, Patricia Denney and Matt Ansell | Directors | S / R |
| Siobhan Walsh, Jenny Brickell, Catherine Watkins, Jackie Clementson, Fiona Wraith, Catherine Watkins, Jo Rabbitte, Nicole Miller, Thomas Stevenson and Janet Jones | Assistant Directors | R |
| All Children’s Services Teams | All Staff | I |

Children Moving Between Teams - Transfer Protocol

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| **1.** | **INTRODUCTION** |
| 1.1 | **The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that:**  *(Please note that the term children refer to all children and young people agreed 0-18)*   * Children and families receive continuous needs-based support from the right service at the right time * The support is timely, and children move between teams in a timely way in order to progress the support that has been identified for them. * That a whole service approach and commitment is taken to supporting children moving between teams – preventing any delay. |
| 1.2 | Needs and support for children and families can change and therefore the services to support them need to be responsive to these changes in line with the [Continuum of Support](https://surreyscb.procedures.org.uk/zkyqqt/managing-individual-cases/continuum-of-support-for-children-and-families-living-in-surrey#top). Continuum of SupportThis guidance is to ensure that the support provided from different parts of the service is seamless and family focused. |
| 1.3 | Children moving on to another part of the service should be a partnership decision between the child, family and the allocated service. The exception would for children where it is deemed a safeguarding response is needed. It is also important to ensure that other professionals involved with the family are aware of a move to another area of the service. |
| **2.0**  2.1  2.2  2.3  2.4  2.5 | **PRINCIPLES**  Communication between teams is key  Capacity of a team to receive a child should not cause delay – a whole service approach is required.  Requests for children moving between teams should not be rejected on minor recording issues; co-working can take place, and records can be updated by the transferring team if some minor actions identified are outstanding.  Any disagreements about a child moving to a team in terms of threshold should be resolved between Team Managers in a timely way and only escalated to a Service Manager where this has not been promptly resolved.  Team responsible for the assessment is the decision maker if there are any professional differences in respect of this, these needs to be discussed manager to manager in the first instance. Escalation to SM only if resolution not resolved. |
| **3.0** | **FRONT DOOR PATHWAY DECISIONS** |
| 3.1  **3.2**  **3.3**  **4.0**  4.1 | **Children moving between CSPA and the Assessment Teams:**  Once it's decided that a child needs help and support from Children's Social Care, they should transfer from the CSPA to the appropriate assessment team within one day.  Before this takes place, CSPA will inform the parent/s or guardians. If this can’t be achieved within one working day, CSPA will document why.  The Assessment Team will then contact parents/guardians to explain the Assessment process and address any consent issues.  If there are immediate concerns about the likelihood of significant harm to a child, the CSPA manager should talk to the manager of the Assessment team to schedule a strategy meeting In line with strategy discussion requirements.  When the child is transferred, the child's file will be sent to the receiving team's duty tray. If the Assessment team wants to change the decision made by the CSPA (MAP), the Assessment service manager will review the child's circumstances and document their reasons.  **Children moving from CSPA directly to Family Safeguarding Teams**  *Please note a pathway from CSPA to the Adolescent Service will be developed in 2025*  There are some situations experienced by families that mean their needs are best met at an earlier stage by the Family Safeguarding Teams. These are;   * Unborn Babies: Where siblings have been supported by a Child Protection plan or subject to legal procedures within the last 2 years. Unborn Babies or other identified children where a sibling is already open to the service. * Children supported by a Child Protection Plan in another Local Authority - this will be through the agreed transfer in process and proceed to FST/AS If a Supervision Order is granted and designated to Surrey County Council and the child is not currently open to the service. * Court ordered s37.  Other transfer points for CSPA  * Children and Families with Immigration, recourse and Asylum needs will be transferred to the Assessment service for consideration of assessment and support. * For Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), the UASC protocol will be followed, and an age assessment will be completed, if required. If there is any doubt about the child's age, it will be assumed they're under 18 and they will become looked after and transfer to the SE-UASC CLA duty via [UASC.CLAduty@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:UASC.CLAduty@surreycc.gov.uk) * Homeless young people aged 16 and older will be moved to the Adolescent Service for assessment. They will remain supported by the adolescent service under Section 17 or Section 20. If they choose to become Section 20, they will be transferred to the care leavers service after 13 weeks and completion of the child’s Pathway Plan. * All missing episodes for children and young people are initially screened within the CSPA in line with the Missing Pathway.   **Children moving across team’s process for all children**  Children may move between teams during our involvement with them, based on their support needs and the remit of the support being offered. This will include children moving between (but not exhaustive)   * Assessment and IFSS * Assessment and Family Safeguarding * Assessment and the Adolescent Service * Assessment and CWD * Assessment and Family centres * Family Safeguarding and the Adolescent Service * Family Safeguarding and CLA * Family Safeguarding and CWD * Family Safeguarding and IFSS * Family Safeguarding and Family Centres * CLA and Care Leaver service * Family Centres and CSPA   In all situations, the following process applies  Child identified to move to another team/service area within 2 weeks  Team Manager (TM) discusses the child and family with the potential receiving Team Manager. Proposed plan must be discussed and any differing views about the type of plan to support the child be resolved at this stage  Once child’s move agreed, allocated worker ensures all key recording is up to date and on EHM/LCS. Specifically  Demographics (including name, DoB, addresses, ethnicity, gender, religion etc); Relationships (including other professionals working with the family); Case Summary; Chronology; Genogram; Case Notes; Visits; Assessments; FNM, Court Orders and packages of support.  **Please note that there needs to be a flexible approach to this to ensure the child moves to the most appropriate team in a timely way. Minor file updates should not delay a child moving teams.**  Details as outlined above as well as any planned meetings and current SW details to be included in transfer spreadsheet by TM (at least 48 hours prior to transfer meeting)  TM reviews child’s record, ensures all management oversight and supervision notes are up to date, completes transfer summary with Social Worker (SW) and signs off child’s record ready for transfer  **Transfer weekly meeting**  Receiving TM reviews child’s record and discusses any issues with transferring TM. If there are minor details that have not been completed, **this should not delay transfer**. This information must be completed within 1 week of transfer by originating team.  Receiving TM discusses the child with proposed allocated worker and then allocates to the new worker on LCS / EHM adding clear oversight.  Best practice would be a joint visit to the child and family prior to a transfer point (CIN review, ICPC, Core Group CLA review TAF meeting etc) if this is not achievable such meetings can be used and, in all situations, a joint visit must take place within one week of the child moving teams.  **Note:** All children will move to their new teams within 2 weeks of the start of this process. Any challenges in terms of best plan to support the child, quality of recording on the child’s record, team capacity need to be resolved before the transfer meeting. No child can be unallocated, and the originating team retain responsibility for the child until move across is complete. |
| **5** | **Specific Guidance**  5.1 Children moving between Assessment, Family Safeguarding Service and Adolescent Service.  The Assessment Team social worker will create the child's plan in partnership with the child and family as informed by the findings and analysis of the assessment.  If the outcome of the Assessment is that the family be supported by a Child In Need (CiN) plan, a CiN meeting will be convened within 10 working days of completion of the assessment. The relevant receiving team will be notified, and the child will be added to the transfer list (spreadsheet). The receiving team will attend the CiN meeting, and the child will transfer at that point.  The Assessment team will chair and present at the CiN meeting, the receiving team will minute the meeting and upload.  If the outcome of the Child & Family Assessment is a recommendation that the child needs to be supported by a Child Protection Plan, the Assessment Team social worker will request the Initial Child Protection Conference within 15 working days of the strategy meeting that agreed S47 enquiries. The Assessment Team social worker and the social worker from the receiving team will attend the conference, and the child will move teams at that point.  When children open to the Assessment service need to be accommodated either under Section 20 or by virtue of an Interim Care Order, the child will move to the relevant Family Safeguarding Team at the first Court hearing, or the first Child Looked After review. **5.2 Children moving between Family Safeguarding Service and Adolescent Service to Looked After Children Service** Children should not change social worker or team until the completion of care proceedings. When a child is ready to move to the Looked After Children service, the transferring Team Manager will notify the receiving service as outlined.  Children accommodated under Section 20 will usually remain with their current team to work towards rehabilitation home. This should happen within a reasonable timeframe, agreed with the Team Manager and Independent Reviewing Officer. If rehabilitation isn't possible, a Legal Gateway Meeting should be considered, taking into account the age of the child and parental engagement with their care. If a Section 20 arrangement is part of the child's Permanence Plan, they will move to the Looked After Children team once the plan is agreed after review and permanence planning has taken place which is usually at or after the 2nd review and ratified by the AD.  For children above the age of 16 who are looked after under S20, the Pathway Plan should be completed prior to transfer.  For children accommodated by virtue of a Care Order, their move will happen after the Final Court Hearing and once the Permanence Plan is agreed. The Looked After Children Service should be invited to the Final Care Planning Meeting to support transfer and the receiving worker should attend the Final Hearing.  Permanence plans include children in foster or residential placements and children placed with parents or connected persons as approved foster carers. Children who are supported by Secure Orders and placed in secure settings should not move social worker or team until the exit planning from the secure setting is finalised and the child has left secure accommodation to move back into the community.  If the Permanence Plan is for the child not to return home within a clearly planned timescale (e.g. 3-9 months), the child should transfer to the Children Looked After service. Children should not transfer to the Children Looked After Service without a Later Life Letter/Life Journey Letter.  Looked After Children teams should be notified of the proposed Permanence Plan before the Final Court Hearing so they can identify a worker. The identified worker should be invited to the final care planning meeting. Before any transfer to the CLA teams occurs, the life story book should have been started, and be brought up to date by, the social worker.  Both the allocated worker and the identified Looked After Children should visit the child together and the Transfer Checklist should be completed prior to transfer –  <https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/22086/transfer-in-cla-audit-checklist-march-2024.docx>  **5.3 Transfers into Looked After Children’s Teams**  Children transferring into the Looked After Teams will have a confirmed plan of long-term care, with interventions having been completed with children and their families to explore whether children can safely return to the family or wider network.  Children over the age of 17 yrs 6 months will not transfer into the Looked After Children’s team given the limited time this allows for relationships to be developed with them ahead of involvement from the Care Leavers Service, the exception being asylum experienced young people who will transfer directly to the asylum team on entry to care.  **5.4 Transfers from Looked After Children’s Teams to other teams and services.**  **Discharge of S31 Care Order**  In most situations where a Care Order has been discharged, the child and their family will have been supported by the Reunification Support Service for at least 12 weeks to inform the discharge plan.  If there is an ongoing need for statutory services post the discharge of the Care Order the child will transfer to the relevant safeguarding team within one month of the discharge of the care order having occurred.  For “relevant” children over the age of 16 they will continue to have an allocated personal adviser from the Care Leavers service.  **Ending of S20 status**  When a parent withdraws S20 consent or a child over the age of 16 who has capacity to do so indicates they wish to end consent to S20, an updating Child and Family Assessment should be completed by the allocated social worker in the Looked After Team to inform about the appropriateness of the proposed arrangement and any ongoing needs identified.  The IRO should be informed and a looked after child review meeting convened.   For any child accommodated for more than 20 days which would be nearly all children in the looked after teams and over the age of 16, agreement to this decision is required from the nominated officer.  The Child and Family Assessment should indicate whether there are any safeguarding concerns for the child through S20 being ended and whether planning under safeguarding, child in need or early help services is required.  Arrangements should be made for the child to transfer to the relevant safeguarding team.     For “relevant” children over the age of 16 they will continue to have an allocated personal adviser from the Care Leavers Service who will continue to review their pathway plan.  If safeguarding concerns arise discussion should take place with the Safeguarding Adolescents Service about safeguarding or child in need planning.   **5.4 Children moving to Care Leavers Service** Children aged 16 and over who are looked after and eligible for a Care Leaving Service, irrespective of which service they are allocated to, will be allocated a Personal Advisor within the Care Leavers Service, however responsibility remains with the Social Worker until the child is 18.  When a child turns 15 years and ¾ or being above the age of 16 and being looked after for 13 weeks, the Care Leavers Service will be notified to allocate a Personal Advisor via the Area Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service and be invited to the Pathway Plan review.  The Personal Advisor will meet with the child 4 times a year, or more, if required between the ages of 16 and 17 and will attend the Children in Care Review closest to the child's 18th birthday.  At 18 years of age, the allocated Social Work team will de-accommodate the child within 5 working days of their 18th birthday and transfer responsibility to the Care Leaving Service within 10 working days of the child’s 18th birthday.  The Care Leaving Transfer Checklist should be completed prior to transfer –  [https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/22087/transfer-checklist-from-looked-after-team-to-care-leavers-service-march-2024.docx](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/22087/transfer-checklist-from-looked-after-team-to-care-leavers-service-march-2024.docx ) **5.5 Children moving from Social Work to Early Help teams** If a child and family no longer require ongoing social work services but still have unmet needs, consideration should be given to their support moving to Early Help services in line with the Continuum of Support. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 states it may be appropriate for a referral to be made to non-statutory services; this is known as ‘step down'. Early Help provides support from various agencies (schools, family centres, health services) to address these needs.  The following needs to be considered;   1. **Identify a Lead Agency:** Determine which agency (like a school or Family centre or Intensive Family Support Service) has an existing relationship with the family and can best provide ongoing support. 2. **Identify a Lead Practitioner:** the social worker will liaise closely with the lead within that agency to oversee the Early Help plan to ensure a shared understanding of the outcomes and recommendations of the plan 3. **Create an Early Help Plan:** Develop an Early Help plan specific to the needs of the child and family outlining the support needed and how it will be provided by the chosen agency.  **5.6 Transfer from Early Help to Social Work** All requests from Family Centres to step up a child for social care intervention should be made via EHM for consideration by the MAP Triage team. A Team Manager or Advanced Practitioner will review step up requests within 24 hours of receipt using the Continuum of Support.  MAP will liaise with the manager/senior from the Family Centre and will confirm whether the child and family will progress to assessment or remain with the early help service.  Children and young people who need to move from Early Intervention Adolescent teams to safeguarding teams due to concerns of intrafamilial abuse will transfer to the relevant Family Safeguarding team. |
| **6.0** | **Additional Information/Guidance** **6.1 Children with Disabilities (CwD)** Not all children with a disability and/or additional needs require specialist services.  Where the primary concern for child or their family is a safeguarding one, largely unrelated to their disability, they should be supported by the relevant safeguarding service.  If following the assessment, it has become apparent that in addition to the original safeguarding concerns, the child’s disability and/or additional needs are such that the child is likely to require specialist support, that may need to be lifelong that cannot be met by universal or targeted services, then at that point consideration should be given to the child being transferred to the CWD team.  The usual transfer protocols apply as outlined. **6.2 Siblings** Where possible, one worker should work with the whole family group. However, where this is not in the interests of individual children, a lead family worker will be agreed as a clear joint working arrangement is required. In these situations, the lead family worker will coordinate all actions in relation to the family and be the point of contact for the family. When siblings are held by different services, managers should complete joint supervision between teams at least once every other supervision cycle.  **6.3 Re-referral (Three month rule)**  Children and young people who are referred back to the service within 12 weeks of a previous closure, will be allocated immediately to the team that previously helped them. This will provide continuity for the child and family.  There may be exemptions if the previous service supporting was at a targeted level and the most recent need is a safeguarding one, or if the new needs are not best met by the remit of the previous service. In these circumstances, the child should be supported through the usual CSPA and Assessment route. If a child in the family was open to Adolescents Service previously and upon review it is decided that the family have different needs then transfer/consultation between Assessment and Family Safeguarding Teams should occur.  **6.4 Private Fostering Assessments**  Requests for private fostering assessments will be handled by the CSPA initially. They'll confirm that the child is living with someone who isn't a relative. Then, the child will be moved to the appropriate assessment team.  **6.5 Section 7 Reports**  For Court-ordered Section 7 assessment reports these need to be reviewed by MAP to identify if the child has been open to Children’s services in last month or significant involvement, prior to sending to area teams as per agreement. If criteria above not me then these need to be send to CAFCASS . For children who are not currently receiving our services, the CSPA will determine any previous involvement and move the child to the relevant assessment team, the 3-month rule also applies if there has been significant involvement.  **6.6 Process for Youth Justice Service safeguarding referrals**    In instances where a child is open to the Youth Justice Service with no current social work involvement and safeguarding concerns arise, the following should occur:    If the safeguarding concerns are extra familial, the Youth Justice Service Practitioner &/or Team Manager should request a consultation with the relevant area based Adolescent Service social work team. Post consultation a decision will be made as to whether or not threshold has been met for further assessment to commence with potential for additional intervention & support via the Adolescent Service. Alternatively, that the risk/concerns can be held and managed by the YJS and existing professional network. The decision should be captured clearly by managers on both LCS and the Youth Justice data base Core +.    If the safeguarding concerns are intra familial, the Youth Justice Service Practitioner &/or Team Manager should make a referral via C-Spa for consideration as to whether or not threshold has been met for further assessment to commence, with potential for involvement from the Family Safeguarding Service. Alternatively, that the risk/concerns can be held and managed by the YJS and existing professional network. The decision should be captured clearly by managers on both LCS and the Youth Justice data base Core +. |
|  | **7.0 Challenges in agreeing a child’s move across plan**  The principles that are documented within this procedure are key at avoiding any need for escalation and keeping children at the heart of all decision making.  It is central that any differences of opinion about a child moving teams or about the suggested plan to support them be resolved at the earliest level between Team Managers and always before the Transfer Meeting or equivalent.  If, in exceptional circumstances this is not possible, the originating Team Manager will inform their Service Manager who will work with their counterpart through direct conversation (not email) to resolve this within 2 working days of this coming to their attention.  It is expected that Service Managers will resolve all such issues. There should be no further need for escalation. If for any reason this does occur, the originating Service Manager will alert their Assistant Director who will work with their counterpart through direct conversation (not email) to resolve this within 1 working day. There is no further point of escalation. |