

North East Regional

Transfer Protocol

For Child in Need

Transfer of responsibility for children who move from one Local Authority area to another

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This protocol is relevant to Children who move between Local Authorities who:
- Are in the process of being assessed to determine if they are a Child in Need.
 - Have been assessed as a Child in Need and have an active Child in Need Plan.
 - Are Privately Fostered.
 - Children subject of Public Law Outline Arrangements but not subject of a Child Protection Plan (whereby different procedures would need to be followed).
- 1.2 This protocol is not relevant to
- Children who go missing from home or care.
 - Children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan.
 - Looked After Children.
- 1.3 The key principles that underpin these arrangements are:
- Children in Need are vulnerable and ideally, they should receive services from agencies which are local to where they are living.
 - Information about a child's assessed needs should be available in whichever local authority they are living in.
 - The provision of support and intervention that is planned to meet the child's needs should continue whilst transfer/reassessment is taking place.
 - The transfer of services should be effectively co-ordinated and no services should be withdrawn until the receiving local authority has made a decision about whether to accept responsibility for the child.
 - The receiving authority may reassess the needs and risks of the child/family to ensure they meet their threshold for intervention.
 - The information about their needs should be available in whichever authority they reside.
- 1.4 Professionals from all agencies are expected to verbally notify their counterparts promptly and send written/electronic information at the earliest opportunity. This should be done within five working days.

2 Information to be shared

- 2.1 The most recent Single Assessment (formerly Initial/Core Assessment).
- 2.2 The last review child protection report/plan and minutes from the review meeting where a child has had a child protection plan which has ended within the last 6 months but continues to be Child in Need.
- 2.3 The most recent care plan.
- 2.4 Any family support plan where a child has been in need of social care intervention and/or service re family support worker intervention etc.

3 Transfer of Responsibility

Permanent Moves

- 3.1 A permanent move is defined in this agreement as a move where:
 - The family have moved to another area.
 - They are clear they are not planning to return to the area they previously lived in.
 - They have made the necessary arrangements to settle into the new area e.g. accommodation, education, health services etc.
- 3.2 Where there is evidence that the above arrangements have been-started, there should be no delay in case transfer. It is essential that any services are effectively coordinated and transferred to local agencies as soon as possible. However, no services should be withdrawn until the transfer has been agreed by the receiving local authority.

Temporary Moves

- 3.3 A temporary move is defined in this agreement as a move where:
 - A family are living in another local authority area on a temporary basis and are not seeking permanent alternative accommodation e.g. refuge etc.
- 3.4 In such cases, the home local authority retains responsibility and services should continue to be provided until permanent plans are made or the family return to the home local authority area.
- 3.5 There are also circumstances in which one child from a family may be staying with relatives in a different authority, whilst their siblings continue to receive social work support from the home authority. In these circumstances the home authority retains responsibility for that child.

4 Finances

- 4.1 The transferring authority cannot commit resources or financial support on behalf of the receiving authority without prior agreement (the receiving authority

may reassess). Any financial agreement should take place at the transfer meeting or in writing if no meeting is held.

5 Private Fostering

- 5.1 A child who is referred into the receiving authority under the Private Fostering Regulations becomes the immediate responsibility of the receiving area (where the arrangement is) on receipt of all relevant documents.

6 Key Worker Actions & Responsibilities

When it is known that a child in need but not subject to a Child Protection Plan is to move, or has moved to another Local Authority area, the key worker must:

How		Action to be taken	Person Responsible	Timescale
Telephone/letter	1	<p>Seek consent from family to make a Child in Need referral to another authority.</p> <p>Make a referral to the proposed new receiving local authority to inform of the move and of any relevant details. Confirm this information in writing.</p> <p>(In the event of consent not being obtained please refer to section 5)</p>	Social Worker	Within 2 days unless there are safeguarding concerns.
In writing/telephone	2	The Social Worker should ensure that other agencies involved with the case/plan are aware of the move and new address, so that they can contact counterparts as appropriate.	Social Worker	Within 2 days
In writing	3	Provide a written case transfer summary within 5 working days or Local Authority referral document accompanied with any contracts/assessments.	Social Worker	5 working days
	4	<p>The-receiving authority will arrange a transfer meeting if appropriate.</p> <p>A transfer meeting must take place (if practicable) if the family require ongoing social work intervention.</p> <p>This should always be done when the case history is complex, the child's needs are complex, or there have been child protection concerns, or it has been necessary to seek legal advice around safeguarding matters.</p>	Duty Manager via Duty Social Worker	10 working days

		<p>The receiving authority will need to undertake their own assessment of the need and allocate according to their own thresholds.</p> <p>Please note: The general expectation is that consent to share information is sought from the family by the transferring Local Authority. In most cases this will have been obtained at the outset of the work and will not need to be sought again to transfer the case. It is usually appropriate however in child in need cases to inform the family that you will be making a referral to the receiving Local Authority in that area.</p> <p>Where consent from the family was not obtained successfully at the outset or the family withdraws consent to make a referral/transfer and there are significant historical or current safeguarding concerns, then the protection of the child is paramount and relevant information should be disclosed to ensure the child is safeguarded. If there are any doubts, advice is to be sought from legal services or the Caldicott Guardian.</p>		
IT systems to be updated	5	The child will remain on transferring Authority Social Care caseload until written notification has been received from the receiving Local Authority confirming their decision about whether to accepted case responsibility or not	Team Manager/Seni or Practitioner	15 working days
	6	In the event that the transferring Local Authority does not provide written information about the child or children within the agreed timescales, a further letter should be sent from the Team Manager to the transferring Authority, requesting the information is supplied immediately.	Team Manager/Duty Manager	15 working days
	7	On receipt of the relevant information, it is essential that receiving Authority carry out its own assessment of the case.	Team Manager/Seni or Practitioner	On receipt of Transfer Summary

		The Team Manager should then consider whether the case warrants intervention or no further action.		
	8	The receiving Authority takes responsibility for the family following this decision.		
	9	A letter acknowledging the receipt of the transfer summary/outcome of transfer meeting informing the transferring Authority of the decision whether the case would be allocated. This should be sent within 5 working days.	Social Worker	5 days from receipt of Transfer Summary/ Transfer meeting

- Child in Need cases should be successfully transferred to the receiving authority within 20 days of request. If the receiving Authority does not feel the threshold for intervention is met a written explanation should be sent to the transferring authority within the same timeframe.

6 Dispute Resolution

6.1 Team Managers in the transferring and receiving authority should attempt to resolve any dispute in the first instance. However, where agreement between team managers cannot be reached this should be escalated to the respective Service Managers. Any agreements reached when resolving disputes should be confirmed in writing. Should there be a situation in which resolution cannot be reached the transferring Service Manager will escalate the case to the appropriate Assistant Director who will liaise with the receiving authority's Assistant Director for final decision making. This process must be concluded within five working days and result in a resolution regarding responsibility for the case.

Useful links:

Professional Challenge**