

## Newham Children’s Services

### Policy for transfer of children and families - Updated March 2021

Introduction .....	2
Principles underpinning the transfer of children through services .....	3
Preparation for transfer .....	3 - 4
Requesting a transfer .....	5 - 5
Transfer preparation by receiving teams .....	5 - 6
Dispute Resolution .....	6
Transferring team post accepting transfer .....	6 - 7
Allocation to receiving team and handovers .....	7 - 8
Appendix 1 - Child and Family Centred Principles Underpinning the Transfer of Cases .....	9 - 10
Appendix 2 - Point of Transfer .....	11 - 12
Appendix 3 - Transfer Flowchart .....	13

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## Introduction

This document covers the transfer of children and families between teams within Children's Services including Families First Service. It does not apply to:

- The reallocation of children and families within teams
- The allocation of work to teams from MASH, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) assigned directly to Children in Care (CiC).
- Transfers from CiC to Leaving Care, ordinarily started at 17 years 9 months.
- Children aged 17 years 9 months whose service from 0-25 SEND will cease at 18, ordinarily alerted to the leaving care team to assign a personal advisor during transfer to adult social care.
- Requests for support from No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)
- Step up to social care from other services.
- Children transferring from other Local Authorities or direction made by the court to complete Section 7/37 reports.

This document should be read in conjunction with other procedures such as Permanence for Children and Transfer of Children from Children in Care to Leaving Care. This document includes terms of reference and process flowchart of the transfer process. The transfer alert form and CiC transfer checklist are available by emailing [CYPStransfers@newham.gov.uk](mailto:CYPStransfers@newham.gov.uk)

## **Principles underpinning the transfer of children through services**

The transfer panel is underpinned by 'best practice' principles regarding a child's journey through services. These principles should be read in conjunction with the '*Child and Family Centred Principles Underpinning the Transfer of Cases*' in appendix 1. In order for the process of transfer to work as soon as possible for the child and family a degree of professional judgment will be required in many instances to decide when to transfer. At all times the needs of the child is paramount. A change of practitioner is a significant event for a child and their family and needs to be reflected in sensitive and careful handling by service managers, practice leads and practitioners. When transferring children and families we will adhere to the following principles:

- Work together in the best interests of the child.
- Ensure we do not allow delay or drift once the need to transfer is identified.
- Ensure we do not allow issues with process and paperwork to delay a child moving to the right service.
- Ensure that the child's casefile is prepared in line with the expected standard before the transfer.
- Challenge constructively when we are not working collaboratively.

There is an expectation that managers cannot refuse a transfer when the quality of the child's file is not up to standard. In these instances the receiving service manager or delegated practice lead should document any missing or inadequate information to the transferring practice lead to correct or provide within five working days. Where a worker has left the service it is the responsibility of the transferring practice lead to allocate resources to complete this.

## **Preparation for transfer**

Social workers and practice leads should identify through supervision where children and families should move to a different service and when this applies should begin to prepare for transfer at the earliest opportunity.

The transfer alert form lists the documents that must be completed before a transfer is accepted. Although these will not apply for all children and families transfers should not be initiated without an updated pen picture, current assessment, genogram and Section 20 agreement for LAC children. However, it is an expectation that upon the point of transfer (please see appendix 2), key documents such as chronology, updated supervision and all other relevant documents are on the file (please refer to the transfer alert form). A separate checklist applies for children transferring to the CiC service.

It is the responsibility of the practice lead to ensure these documents are not only completed but are of good quality. Preparing for transfer should be seen as a quality assurance task.

An important element of preparation for transfer is ensuring the child and family are aware of what is happening and the reasons for it and this is recorded. The practitioner and practice lead may also wish to take the opportunity to reflect in supervision on the impact on the child / family. A handover / joint visit should take place before the point of transfer as part of good practice standard.

**Practice note statutory visits:** When arranging statutory visits for a child or family being prepared for transfer please take account of the required visit frequency. Sufficient time should be allowed between the last visit and the next visit falling due for the transfer to take place and a practitioner to be allocated. Transfers where tasks are about to fall overdue is a frequent reason for delays to the process.

### **Requesting a transfer**

Once the child / family's file is prepared for transfer the relevant form should be completed. The completed form must be sent by the practice lead, requests from practitioners will not be accepted.

Requests should be sent to [CYPs-transfers@newham.gov.uk](mailto:CYPs-transfers@newham.gov.uk) by 12pm on Friday for CYPs business support to produce and circulate the list of children that require transfer to another service by no later than 2pm on the same Friday.

The transfer list will be sent out close of business on a Friday. The list of children will not necessarily be linked to any locality to allow children to be allocated more efficiently across

different teams. The transfer list will confirm that each child for transfer has an updated Genogram, Pen Picture and Assessment (on children subject to CIN) on the child's file.

### **Transfer preparation by receiving teams**

There will be two duty Service Managers from Intervention and Safeguarding Service (one from CiC) on a rota basis that will review children's cases. The nominated Intervention and Safeguarding Service Managers will be on duty for two weeks at a time to ensure consistency and timely allocation.

Service Managers from Assessment and the receiving service will meet on Tuesday morning to discuss any threshold issues (time will be arranged by CYPS BSO). CiC Service Manager will attend if they have any queries about children earmarked for their area.

Service Manager from the receiving service will provide a name of the social worker at close of business Thursday. This will allow the Assessment Service to book any joint visits or have case discussions.

From the point of a name of the receiving social worker being provided and point of transfer (usually up to 5 days), the Assessment Service will complete any outstanding documents. This will be overseen by the Service Manager in the Assessment Service.

Children will be allocated at point of transfer by the duty Service Manager in Intervention Service (and CiC where appropriate). Non-attendance at meetings / conferences by the receiving social worker / manager will not prevent the allocation of the child.

Any documents still missing will be brought to the attention of the Service Manager in Assessment Service and Head of Service in MASH and Assessment. They will ensure the documents are completed within 72 hours.

Although it is the responsibility of transferring practice leads to prepare the child / family's file the receiving service manager or the delegated practice lead should also assure themselves that work is completed so that delays do not occur. If the transfer checklist is not accurate CYPS business support should be notified so the child / family can be removed from the meeting agenda.

It is best practice for the transferring practice lead to also have a discussion with the receiving practice lead where appropriate after the transfer has been accepted.

### **Dispute resolution**

It is expected that managers will work collaboratively to resolve transfer issues as they arise. The key aim is to ensure that managers work together to achieve the best outcome for the child / family. In situations where threshold of ongoing intervention is not agreed, a conversation will take place between service managers from both transferring and receiving service to reach a consensus about the best intervention for the family. The recording of this conversation should be uploaded on Azeus case notes.

In rare and exceptional cases where a dispute cannot be resolved at a service manager level the decision of the Head of Service MASH & Assessment and/or Safeguarding and Intervention is final.

Where the child has not transferred at the point of transfer, the matter will be escalated to the Head of Service for Safeguarding & Intervention (or Head of service for Children in Care). Head of Service S&I / CiC will oversee case allocation within 24 hours of escalation.

### **Transferring team post accepting transfer**

Once the transfer alert has been received, the duty service managers in their allocation meeting should identify a social worker for the child / family equally within their service. Family's locality should not be used as a benchmark for allocation.

Following the child / family being accepted the transferring practice lead / service manager must ensure that all outstanding tasks identified are completed and approved in Azeus by no later than 5 working days.

For children transferring to CiC the following must be completed

- Most recent Looked After Child Social Workers review report;
- Placement Information Record;
- Initial Person Education Plan (PEP);
- Initial Medical should have been arranged and where possible taken place;
- Up to date Care Plan ensuring that permanence planning has been factored;

- A copy of all current Legal Orders must be scanned into the case file record. In the case of a child Looked After (on a Care Order under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989) a copy of the birth certificate will be retained, or (for children accommodated under Section 20) will have been requested;
- Up to date Permanence Planning Meeting (PPM) Minutes and date of next scheduled PPM;
- Evidence of meaningful life-story work being started and evidenced on azeus;
- Any financial agreements should be up to date.

**Practice note outstanding tasks:** Where there are outstanding tasks on the child's file that predate the transferring services period of involvement a request should be raised with the Azeus team for the task to be closed and a copy of the notification sent to the receiving practice lead.

### **Allocation to receiving team and handovers**

Receiving service managers or the delegated practice leads will identify the name of the social worker from their service once they have quality assured the child's file and ensure their service representative has this information. Once the name of the social worker has been identified, the duty Service Manager for Intervention and Safeguarding Service (or service manager from CiC where appropriate) will allocate the child to a social worker in their service at the point of transfer highlighted in the table below. The receiving practice lead will then provide management direction within one working day of the child being allocated to them.

A good handover is a crucial part of the transfer process and therefore the transferring and receiving practice leads should agree the best time for a conversation / meeting if an introduction between the two practitioners and child / family has not already taken place.

In any event, transfer of the child / family's file and allocation to the receiving practitioner should take place no sooner than five working days from the initial transfer alert and no later than eight working days.

This information is tracked by CYPS business support who will escalate to the service manager in assessment service where timescales have not been met, the receiving service manager is expected to resolve this within one working day.

Children and families must not remain allocated to inappropriate teams or services as a result of issues such as capacity in receiving team or services. Where this applies the receiving service manager is expected to put arrangements in place to allow the transfer to take place.

**Practice Note on allocation:** Even where a social worker has been identified, transferring managers should not reallocate the child / family unless at the transferring point below. A child in need meeting, initial child protection conference or a first hearing is a significant event for a child. Therefore, it is mandatory for the receiving social worker or their practice lead to attend and participate in the child's plan. Non-attendance at these meetings will not delay in the child being allocated to the receiving social worker.



## Appendix 1

### Child and Family Centred Principles Underpinning the Transfer of Case

- Children and their families should experience the minimum number of transitions in receiving our services;
- Wherever possible cases should follow the same case-worker 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;
- If possible family members and members of the professional network should be informed of the necessary changes to social worker and management oversight arrangements 2-4 weeks (where possible) in advance
- In the first instance these changes should be communicated to family members by the currently allocated social worker in person during a home visit. The reasons for the need for a change in social worker should be clearly explained in a way that meets the needs of both adults and children.
- This conversation should support family members to reflect upon the purpose and focus of the work done together so far, achievements and aspirations: and the purpose and focus of the work to be taken forward together with the new social worker.
- This conversation should include clarity about what to expect next including the name of the new social worker, the new social worker's practice supervisor, the name of the team and service and a date agreed for the current social worker to introduce the new social worker in person.
- Current social worker should confirm the details of the proposed changes in social worker and the reasons why to the family in writing at least 2-4 weeks in advance or at the earliest opportunity if the change is unforeseen. Contact details of the new social worker, practice supervisor and team should be included in the letter.
- Current social worker should confirm the details of the proposed changes in social worker and the reasons why to the professional network in writing at least 2-4 weeks in advance or at the earliest opportunity if the change is unforeseen. Contact details of the new social worker, practice supervisor and team should be included in the letter.
- A handover visit between the current social worker and the new social worker should be carried out at least 2 weeks or at the earliest opportunity before the current social worker leaves. This discussion should include
  - Relevant background information

- Progress of interventions/work together so far such as assessment outcomes, plans developed, achievements and goals, direct work undertaken
- Successes and worries.
- Confirmation of contact details and arrangements going forward including date of next visit
- Outgoing social worker to mark their goodbye in writing in a way that meets the needs of adult and child family members including confirming the contact details of the new social worker.

## Appendix 2 - Point of transfer

The following table outlines the point of transfer

Transfer from	Transfer trigger	To	Point of transfer	Note
Assessment	Assessment complete CIN plan	Intervention	CIN meeting	No less than 5 and no more than 8 days from transfer alert.
Assessment	Assessment complete child protection plan	Intervention	ICPC	Early alert send to receiving team. Transferring and receiving team both attend. Child to be transferred at the ICPC.
Assessment	Care proceedings commenced	Intervention	First hearing	If the first hearing is more than 10 working days from issue, an earlier transfer will be agreed between the service managers. The transferring team will complete court reports and attend the first hearing.
Assessment	Pre-proceedings Commenced.	Intervention	First PLO Meeting	The PLO meeting will be chaired by the transferring team. However, the receiving team will be required to attend.
Intervention	Conclusion of care proceedings	CiC	5 working days from final hearing	Final order, care plan and permanency plan sent to CiC 5 days before submission to court. In respect of children placed for Adoption transfer will be explored and transferred if that is in the best interest of the child.
Assessment or Intervention	Section 20	CiC	2nd looked after review	Transfer booked 5 working days from ratification of permanency plan

Assessment	Assessment complete, no further statutory action but intensive early Intervention required	Families First	TAF to be arranged between 5 and 8 working days from the transfer alert	Families first criteria met
Intervention	No further intervention required, some further support required	Families First	As above	As above
Assessment & Intervention	No further statutory intervention required. However, family will benefit from some early help support.	Early Help	Discussion to take place with early help coordinators between 5 and 8 working days of the transfer alert.	Early Help criteria met.
NRPF / IH	Where escalation or additional CIN / CP support is required	Separate pathway applies	NA	NA

## Appendix 3 - Transfer Flowchart

