

## North West Notification and Transfer of Children Subject of Child Protection Plans across Local Authority Boundaries Procedure

### Introduction

1. This procedure is intended to apply to a child and her/his siblings, including unborn children. Specific reference should be made to *North West Pre-Care and Care Proceedings Notification and Transfer across Local Authority Boundaries Procedure* where care proceedings are being considered.

### Purpose

2. This procedure aims to:
  - i. Promote the safe and efficient transfer of children subject of Child Protection Plans in and out of the Local Authority area
  - ii. Promote consistent action and responses to the transfer of cases where children are subject of a Child Protection Plan to and from other Local Authority Areas

### Principles

3. This procedure should be applied with regard to the following:
  - i. The child's welfare and safety is paramount
  - ii. Promoting and creating positive communication and information sharing between referring and receiving Local Authority Areas in respect of children subject of Child Protection Plans
  - iii. Promoting effective Child Protection Plan case transfers to avoid drift and delay for the child and their parents/carers and to ensure children are safeguarded
  - iv. Ensuring services in the local area are identified and offered in a timely manner to children suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm who move across Local Authority boundaries
  - v. Child Protection Planning is robust and timely and takes account of all available information

### Movement of Children Subject of a Child Protection Plan from another Local Authority (Inward)

4. All requests for a transfer-in conference should be received and responded to by the Duty Conference and Review Officer (CRO) on the day of receipt. Where they are not available the request should be passed to the Team Manager, Conference and Review for their attention and action. Where a request is made by telephone by another Local Authority, the CRO should request that this is put in writing and either securely faxed, emailed or posted to the CRO.
5. It is the responsibility of the referring Local Authority to ensure the written follow-up is made in a timely manner. The 15 day timescale for convening the transfer- in conference will commence upon receipt of the written information.
6. Following a request for a transfer-in conference, the CRO will collate relevant information. As a minimum this will include:
  - i. Full details of the child – name, DOB, current address and planned address gender, ethnicity
  - ii. Details of any siblings – names, DOB, current address and planned address, gender, ethnicity
  - iii. Details of Parents and/or carers – names, DOB, current address and planned address, gender, ethnicity
  - iv. Background information relating to the case:-
    - a. Reason for the Child Protection Plan
    - b. Category of abuse

- c. Length of time the child has been the subject of a plan
  - d. Overview of the historical involvement with the child and their family, including any history of previous sibling adoptions or previous periods of being a Looked After Child
  - e. Assessment and intervention work undertaken
  - f. The organisations contributing to the plan
  - g. The planned outcomes for the child
7. Request the referring Local Authority to forward copies of the Continuous Assessment, Child Protection Plan, minutes of the Initial Child Protection Conference, Child Protection Review Conferences, all core group minutes and any other relevant assessments or information, including the Section 47 Child Protection Enquiry.
8. The receiving CRO will then:-
- i. Establish if the receiving Local Authority holds any historical information in relation to the child, their siblings, their parents or carers and record the information on the relevant format in the integrated children's system (ICS)
  - ii. Liaise with the Safeguarding Unit to request that information is shared to enable all relevant systems in Children's Services and in partner agencies are updated to include details of the child and their status
  - iii. Notify the Children's Social Work Team Manager in the district where the child is to be resident of the intention to convene a transfer-in conference and provide the background information to the case; sharing with the Children's Social Work Team Manager contact details for the referring Local Authority
  - iv. Request Conference and Review Clerks to convene the transfer-in conference within 15 working days of written notification of the permanent address
  - v. Include in the recommendations of the transfer in conference the need to undertake a Continuous Assessment in the receiving Local Authority.
9. The Social worker/ Children's Social Work Team Manager in the receiving Local Authority should always give consideration to the need to read the case records held in the referring Local Authority. Any historical records relating to the child or their family in the referring Local Authority should always be accessed and read by the allocated worker in the receiving Local Authority. Where the child and their family are moving to the receiving Local Authority and the planned address is temporary, e.g. a refuge, supported housing provision or other temporary accommodation, the CRO will collate the information as outlined above. The information should then be passed to the Team Manager, Conference and Review.
10. The Team Manager, Conference and Review will be responsible for liaising with the referring Local Authority on at least a monthly basis to monitor the progress of the case and continue to confirm plans to secure permanent accommodation in the receiving Local Authority area; where a permanent address has been secured the transfer-in conference should be convened within 15 working days of written notification of the permanent address by the Team Manager, Conference and Review, in line with the requirements above.
11. If after a period of three months the child and their family continue to live in temporary accommodation in the receiving Local Authority a transfer-in conference must be arranged within 15 working days. This will be the responsibility of the Team Manager, Conference and Review, in line with the requirements.
12. Responsibility for the Child Protection Plan during the period in temporary accommodation will remain with the referring Local Authority, (i.e. the Local Authority requesting the transfer-in Child Protection Case Conference) until the transfer-in Initial Conference has been held in the receiving Local Authority and a decision whether a Child Protection Plan is required.

13. At the transfer-in child protection conference the CRO will ensure any gaps in information or the assessment are identified and action taken to address this, this includes the allocated worker completing a Continuous Assessment. Action and recommendations should be monitored at future child protection review conferences until fully completed.
14. Where a Continuous Assessment is not completed in time for the first Child Protection review conference in the receiving Local Authority then the CRO should ensure this is recorded in the minutes along with a recommendation for completion in 10 working days. The CRO should also ensure the relevant Team Manager and the Head of Service is notified.

#### **Movement of Children Subject of a Child Protection Plan to another Local Authority (Outward)**

15. It is the responsibility of the Social Worker, or in their absence their manager, to notify the Duty CRO or Team Manager, Conference and Review when a child who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan is intending to move or has already moved out of the area, whether this is to a permanent or temporary address.
16. The notification should be made within one working day from the information coming to the attention of the social worker or their manager.
17. The social worker/ team manager should provide the following information to the Duty CRO or Team Manager, Conference and Review:
  - i. The address to which the child has moved and confirm whether or not this is temporary accommodation
  - ii. The names of all adults who have moved with the child
  - iii. Adults with whom the child will be living with in the receiving Local Authority area
  - iv. The reason for the move
  - v. The arrangements made by the social worker/Team Manager to safeguard the child in the receiving Local Authority area
18. The social worker/ team manager must notify the receiving children's social care services providing the required information and determining the need for a transfer in conference.
19. The Duty CRO or Team Manager, Conference and Review will liaise by telephone with their equivalent in the area where the child has moved, providing the required information and determining the need for a transfer in conference.
20. If a transfer in conference is to take place this will be followed up in writing by the relevant Conference and Review Clerk. As a minimum the following information will be sent securely by the Conference and Review Clerk to the receiving authority:
  - i. Details of all child subject of a Child Protection Plan – name, DOB, current address and planned address gender, ethnicity
  - ii. Details of any siblings – names, DOB, current address and planned address, gender, ethnicity
  - iii. Details of Parents and/or carers – names, DOB, current address and planned address, gender, ethnicity
  - iv. Details of other adults who will be living at the planned address
  - v. Full details of the allocated Social Worker – their name, work address, telephone number and email address

- vi. Background information relating to the case – reason for the Child Protection Plan, category of abuse, length of time the child has been the subject of a plan, assessment and intervention work undertaken, the organisations involved and the planned outcomes for the child
  - vii. Request the responsible Local Authority to forward copies of the Continuous Assessment, Child Protection Plan, minutes of the Initial Child Protection Conference, Child Protection Review Conferences, all core group minutes and any other relevant assessments or information, including the Section 47 Child Protection Enquiry
21. All documents that are sent to other Local Authority areas should be sent securely, with a request that the receiving Local Authority acknowledge safe receipt; where confirmation is not received within 5 working days, the sender should follow this up.
22. The Conference and Review Clerk will notify relevant local partner agencies that the child has moved out of the area and the forwarding address. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Unit to ensure all information is sent and notifications are made in a timely manner.
23. When a date for the transfer-in conference in the receiving Local Authority has been set the allocated social worker or social work representative of the Responsible Local Authority must attend the 'transfer-in' conference.
24. The Child Protection Plan should not be discontinued until written confirmation has been given by the receiving Local Authority that the transfer-in conference has been held and a decision made whether the child remains subject of a Child Protection Plan. On receipt of this notification the originating Conference and Review Clerk should:
- i. Confirm the decision of the transfer in case conference in writing to all relevant organisations and individuals in the area
  - ii. Update ICS and discontinue the plan, recording the end date as the date the receiving Local Authority held the transfer-in conference and the decision was made

#### **Action to be taken in cases where there is dispute or delay in case transfer**

25. There may be occasions where difficulties arise in the transfer of cases between Local Authority areas. It is essential that any difficulties are addressed and resolved as swiftly as possible by the Team Manager, Conference and Review. In the first instance the matter should be addressed by telephone discussion between the Team Manager Conference and Review in the referring Local Authority and their equivalent in the receiving Local Authority area. It is anticipated that most matters will be resolved at this stage. This should be done within 2 working days of an issue with the transfer being raised.
26. Where the matter remains unresolved following this telephone contact, the Team Manager Conference and Review should discuss the case with the Head of Safeguarding. It may then be appropriate for them to contact their equivalent in the receiving Local Authority area, either in writing or by telephone (or both) in order to ensure the matter remains live and is resolved at the earliest opportunity. Progress should be reviewed on a weekly basis to minimise the risk of drift or further delay.
27. Finally where difficulties continue to persist in the transfer, the matter should be referred to the Assistant Director / Head of Service It will be their responsibility to liaise with their equivalent in the Local Authority area and reach ultimate agreement and a clear plan. It is anticipated that few cases should reach this stage.

#### **Review**

28. This procedure will be reviewed **not later than 31 March 2016**

## **Parties to the Procedure**

The following local authorities are party to this procedure by virtue of their membership of the North West Association of Directors of Children's Services

- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Blackpool Council
- Bolton Council
- Bury Council
- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Cumbria County Council
- Halton Borough Council
- Knowsley Council
- Lancashire County Council
- Liverpool City Council
- Manchester City Council
- Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
- Salford City Council
- Sefton Council
- St Helens Council
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- Trafford Council
- Warrington Borough Council
- Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
- Wirral Council