

Transfer of Responsibility for Children in Need Who Move from One Local Authority Area to Another

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This protocol is relevant to child in need who move between Local Authorities. The protocol does not cover children who go missing from home, or go missing from care.
- 1.2 The basic principles that underpin these arrangements is that these are vulnerable child in need of multi agency services and that the information about their needs should be available in whichever authority they reside. It applies to those cases where there is significant involvement by more than one agency. Timescales, actions and responsibilities are set out under specific headings.
- 1.3 The expectation is that professionals from all agencies will promptly verbally notify and discuss with their counterparts and that written/electronic information will follow at the earliest opportunity.

2. This protocol applies to any child who is currently:

- 2.1 - Subject of a Child in Need Plan
 - Formally assessed as a Child in Need under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989
 - Subject to Initial or Core Assessment (Single Assessment)
 - Private Fostering

3. Information to be shared

- 3.1 Any Initial or Core Assessment (Single Assessment) where child protection concerns have been identified historically or currently but there are no ongoing risk of significant harm.
- 3.2 Any assessment that identified that a child has additional needs which requires assistance of social care.
- 3.3 Previous child protection reports/plan and minutes where a child has been de-planned within the last 6 months but continues to be Child in Need.
- 3.4 Previous care plans where a child has been rehabilitated home in the last 3 months or when they have gone to live in alternative non regulated accommodation.
- 3.5 Any family support plan where a child has been in need of social care intervention and/or service re family support worker intervention etc.

4. Key Principles

- 4.1 It is best practice for children in need to receive services from agencies which are local to where they are living.
- 4.2 Where a Local Authority is providing a service to a child in need or has identified a child in need, and the child moves to a new address, it is therefore essential that these assessments and/or services are effectively co-ordinated and transferred to local agencies. No services should be withdrawn until the host authority has agreed the transfer and suite of services to be provided.
- 4.3 The child/ren's welfare is paramount and the family remain the focus of the transfer.
- 4.4 The host team may reassess the needs and risks of the child/family, to ensure the needs of this child/family are met within their area.
- 4.5 The making of defensible decisions is in the best interests of the child as well as managing service provision within inter-authority arrangements

5. Finances

- 5.1 The home authority is unable to agree resources on behalf of the host authority without prior agreement (the host authority may reassess). Any financial agreement should take place at the transfer meeting or in writing if no meeting is held.

6. Private Fostering

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

7. Dispute Resolution

- 7.1 Requires the negotiation of agreed actions between managers within respective authorities and confirmation of these agreements in writing.
- 7.2 If the referring authority disagrees with the host authority's decision, the home authority' Head of Service should liaise with the host authority Head of Service in writing with a clear rationale about the concerns and risks if the case or services are not allocated.

When it is known that a child who is a current open case 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.	Inform the family that you are making a Child in Need referral to another authority and inform the appropriate district social care office within the other Local Authority of the move, and of any relevant details, and confirm this information in writing.	Social Worker	Within 2 days unless there are safeguarding concerns.
In writing	2.	Inform the Social Work Team Manager.	Social Worker	Within a day
In writing	3.	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
	4.	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
	5.	<p>Host authority will arrange a transfer meeting if appropriate. A transfer meeting must take place (if practicable) if the family require ongoing social work intervention.</p> <p>Please note: The general expectation is that consent to share information is sought from the family by the Local Authority making the disclosure i.e. the referral/transfer. 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 Host 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>	Duty Manager via Duty Social Worker	10 working days
IT systems to be	6.	The child will remain on referring/Home Authority Social Care caseload until written notification has been received	Team Manager / Senior Practitioner	15 working days

updated		from the receiving Host Local Authority confirming that the case has been accepted.		
	7..	Transfer meeting to be held with social work staff from the receiving Host Local Authority where possible. 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. The receiving Host authority will need to undertake their own assessment of the need and allocate according to their own thresholds. Any concerns in receiving Host Authority about the appropriateness of their response should be raised in writing with the Team Manager.	Team Manager / Senior Practitioner	15 working days
	8.	In the event that the referring 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 Host Authority, requesting the information is supplied immediately.	Team Manager / Duty Manager	15 working days
	9.	On receipt of the relevant information, it is essential that Host Authority carry out its own assessment of the case. The Team Manager should then consider whether the case warrants intervention or no further action.	Team Manager / Senior Practitioner	On receipt of Transfer Summary
	10.	The Host Authority takes responsibility for the family following this decision.		
	11.	A letter acknowledging the receipt of the transfer summary/oucome of transfer meeting informing the Home 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 Host Authority do not feel the threshold for intervention is met a written explanation should be sent to the referring authority within the same timeframe.