

Children in Need moving across Local Authority boundaries

Introduction

1. This procedure is applicable and the steps set out within should be taken when the following circumstances exist in respect of a child:
 - i. the child is known to the Children's Social Care service of one local authority area, **and**
 - ii. the child has moved to stay in another local authority area, whether on a permanent or temporary¹ basis, or
2. Where any other agency is notified of a Child in Need that moves in or out of their area then they must make arrangements for information to be shared with/received from the equivalent agency in the other area consistent with their agency's procedures.

Initial Steps

3. Notification of a Child in Need having moved/intending to move should be brought immediately to the attention of the Duty Manager for the Children's Social Care team in the area into which the child has moved (the 'receiving Local Authority area'). Usually this information will be transferred by using the receiving Local Authority's referral form. (Local authorities may agree to use the proforma attached at Annex A for reasons of consistency).
4. The Duty Manager in the receiving Local Authority area should consult records to see whether the child was previously known to services in their area.
5. The Duty Social Worker / Duty Manager should telephone the relevant Social Care office in the child's referring Local Authority area and discuss the case with the team manager in order to determine whether any immediate action is necessary.
6. If following this initial enquiry there is an indication that a child or children is/are at immediate risk of significant harm, the relevant Child Protection procedures should be followed.
7. If a child or children is/are not at immediate risk of significant harm the Duty Manager should request that the referring Local Authority provides a case transfer summary accompanied by copies of any Child Protection Plans or Child in Need Plans that have existed for the child/ren and minutes of the most recent meetings.
8. A letter confirming this request should be sent to the referring Local Authority within 2 working days. The request should state that the case transfer summary and copies of documents as in 7 is required in order to allocate the case. The transfer summary must provide details of previous Social Worker and other professionals working with the child, any special requirements relating to language or disability, details of other members of the family, including date of birth and gender of siblings.

¹ Temporary is taken to mean where the child(ren) and their family move, or plan to move, to an address which is temporary, e.g. a refuge, supported housing provision or other temporary accommodation.

9. In the event that the referring Local Authority does not provide written information about the child or children within the above timescales, a further letter should be sent from the Service Manager (receiving Local Authority) to the Service Manager in the referring Local Authority, requesting the information is supplied immediately. If the information is not forthcoming, an Initial Assessment of the family's circumstances should be carried out anyway, to ascertain whether the child/children continue to be Children in Need and whether services are required. This should take place within 10 days of the initial referral being received.
10. The Duty Social Care team in the receiving Local Authority area should check with local agencies (at least the equivalent agencies to those engaged with the family in the referring Local Authority area) about whether the child/ren is/are known to them.
11. The general expectation is that agreement is sought from the family regarding the referral and provision of information. Where agreement cannot be reached and there are historic or current child protection concerns, then the protection of the child is paramount and the referral must be made. If there are any doubts, advice is to be sought from legal services or the Caldicott Guardian.
12. Upon receipt of the case transfer summary, the Team Manager should consider whether an Initial Assessment or Core Assessment should be carried out or whether the case warrants no further action. Consideration must be given to the possibility that the move to the new area could have increased any previously identified risks or introduced new ones.

Next Steps

13. The child and his/her parents should be kept informed of the progress of case transfer.
14. A letter acknowledging the receipt of the transfer summary and informing the referring Local Authority of the decision as to whether the case will be allocated should be sent within 5 working days of receipt.
15. The receiving Local Authority has responsibility for convening a Child in Need (CiN) meeting – within 15 working days of receipt of the referral.
16. Until that time the child will remain subject to a CiN Plan in the referring Local Authority area and the key/lead worker in the referring Local Authority area should negotiate monitoring arrangements with the duty team in the receiving area so that the plan for the child continues to be overseen until the receiving Local Authority confirms its decision on case management and/or that a revised plan is in place.
17. This will include a requirement to visit the child in the receiving Local Authority area subject to an assessment of the risk associated with the need.
18. However if the receiving Local Authority decides that the referral requires a s47 (Children Act) assessment then the case will immediately be subject to monitoring by the receiving Local Authority.
19. If a funded package of care is in place in the referring Local Authority area then this will continue until at least the first CiN meeting in the receiving Local Authority.

Other Responsibilities (including for non Social Care agencies)

20. Although much of the procedure set out above concerns the actions of the Children's Social Care teams, responding to Children in Need is a multi-agency responsibility and all agencies must be alert to the circumstances of a Child in Need.
21. Any agency other than Social Care, that becomes aware of a child in their area who was/is a Child in Need from another area, should alert Social Care in their (receiving) area that they are aware of the move. This responsibility is intended to provide assurance and act as a safeguard within local partnerships. This may be necessary where other agencies become aware of a child where no referral has been made from Social Care in the previous area due to timescales of the move or them not being informed as to the whereabouts of the family following a move.
22. If a child in need leaves for an unknown location then the originating Local Authority must consider issuing an alert subject to risk assessment.
23. If 2 or more children in a family live in different areas then the planning should be as consistent as possible across both areas, subject to this being consistent with the best interests of the children.

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

24. Where there is dispute about case responsibility or delay in the receiving authority accepting responsibility for the case, which is likely to impact on the child, the Team Manager should inform their Service Manager.
25. The Service Manager will contact the Service Manager in the other Local Authority to reach agreement about case responsibility.
26. If within 10 days of the child's move, agreement has still not been reached, the Assistant Director / Head of Service in the referring Local Authority will contact the Assistant Director / Head of Service in the receiving Local Authority.
27. During any dispute the child's welfare remains paramount and the family must be presented with clear messages about services and expectations. Particular regard must be given to this in cases where the child(ren) and family are considered or known to be in temporary accommodation (see paragraph/footnote 1). Until any dispute is resolved, the referring (original) Local Authority must retain management of the case, unless Section 47 enquiries are started due to Child Protection Concerns. The minimum expectation is that a CiN meeting takes place without delay.
28. Many areas now have escalation procedures to assist agencies in the context of resolving a dispute and where necessary reference should be made to these procedures. It is also important to reference any other guidance that Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) publish to assist practitioners on ensuring effective pathways to services in safeguarding children.

CHILD IN NEED TRANSFER FORM TO ANOTHER AUTHORITY

Referring Authority

Referring Worker
E Mail Address

Are there any electronic attachments?

Yes

No

Will any paper/reports be sent by post?

Yes

No

Name of Child/Children (including any other names which they are known by)	D.O.B.	Gender	Ethnicity	First Language

Are any of the Children subject to a Child Protection Plan or have
been the subject of a conference

Yes

No

Date

Outcome

Significant Others Name	Address	Carers	Siblings etc	Relationship

Child's Address in Receiving Authority	Child's Address in (insert LA name) (if appropriate)

Reason for Referral being clear about what action you have assessed is needed

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Further Action By Referring Authority

Task		Date Completed	
Receiving Authority			
Duty Social Worker		Team Manager	
Confirmation of acceptance of referral sent		Date	