



**Step Up/ Step Down Process and Transfer Protocol**  
**within Childrens Social Care and Early Help Services**

**Refreshed May 2017**

**Education and Children's Services**  
**~ supporting children and young people to be safe, learn, achieve and grow**  
Leicester City Council  
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## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

Leicester City Council is committed to achieving excellence through continual improvement where children and their families are at the heart of everything that we do. Therefore, we need to provide improved and sustained early help, safeguarding and child protection, looked after services which facilitates a focus on supporting and promoting the interests and welfare of children and young people in Leicester City.

In order to achieve our aim for services to children and families to be of high quality, easy to access and provided by skilled staff, Leicester City Council's Children Services has undergone a realignment of services at the front door and has redesigned the interface between Early Help Services (EHS) and statutory Children's Social Care Services (CSC)

This protocol sets out the pathway and process for transfer and step up/down of cases between early help and social care within Children's Services.

The implementation and monitoring of this protocol will be via:

- a) Induction
- b) Staff Meetings
- c) Tri-X Procedures
- d) Supervision

This protocol is for all frontline staff and managers within children's early help and social care services and has been approved by the Children's Directorate Management Team.

This protocol has been built into the LiquidLogic system for both Early Help and Social Care. This protocol will be reviewed annually and is owned by the Heads of Services for Children, Young People and Families.

The protocol is to be read in conjunction with the LSCB agreed thresholds document.  
<http://lrs.cb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

## **Chapter 2 - Interface between Early Help Services EHS and Duty and Advice Services (DAS)**

In January 2017, the 'one front door' was implemented by Leicester City Council through the development of the joint Early Help and Children's Social Care Front door. This development was aimed to in provide better customer services at the point of initial contact/ referral and promote the 'no wrong door principle' regarding the requests for advice, guidance, assessment and intervention relating to children and families in Leicester City.

### **Initial contact received by DAS in relation to a child already opened to council EH Services**

If a contact is made by a professional in relation to a Child already opened to council Early Help Services, the DAS SW will consider and appraise the information provided (as per the IC/Referral guidance) and create/ complete an Initial Contact on the Children's Social Care Liquid Logic. Based on the information provided, threshold will be applied and a decision will be made relating to the outcome of the IC. In these cases, the information should be considered by DAS and not just signposted to MASP (Multi Agency Support Panel for early help cases). A record of the decision and management oversight will be recorded in an Initial Contact.

Transfer of calls from DAS to Early Help Response (EHR) – when threshold for Children’s Social Care is NOT MET

If contact is made by a professional via the DAS option, however, the reported concerns do not meet threshold for Children’s Social Care (but it may meet Early Help thresholds) – the SW will have a discussion with the EHP, agree action and then advise the caller of the decision around threshold and provide them with the opportunity to be transferred to the EH practitioner present in the room. Once the call is transferred, it is the responsibility of the EHP to gather all the relevant information and record an Initial Contact on the Liquid Logic Early Help Module.

In this scenario there will be no record of the contact on the Liquid Logic Social care system.

**The Early Help Initial Contact needs to be completed and endorsed by Manager within 72 hours (working days only)**

Transfer of calls from Early Help Response (EHR) to DAS – when threshold for Children’s Social Care is MET

If contact is made by a professional via the EH option, and the reported concerns do meet threshold for Children’s Social Care (not Early Help) – the EH will have a discussion with the SW, agree action and then advise the caller of the decision around threshold and inform them that the call would be transferred to the DAS SW present in the room. Once the call is transferred – it is the responsibility of the DAS SW to gather all the relevant information and record an Initial Contact on the Liquid Logic Social Care Module. In this scenario there will be no record of the contact on the Liquid Logic Early Help Module.

**The Children Social care Initial Contact needs to be completed and endorsed by Manager within 24 hours.**

Emails transfer of Police contacts from DAS to EH when threshold for Children’s Social Care is NOT MET

If notification is sent by Police via the DAS secured inbox, but the reported concerns do not meet threshold for Children’s Social Care (but it may meet Early Help thresholds) – the email will be forwarded to the EH Secured inbox with the decision around threshold. It is the responsibility of the EHP to gather all the relevant information and record an Initial Contact on the Liquid Logic Early Help Module.

**The Early Help Initial Contact needs to be completed and endorsed by Manager within 72 hours (working days only)**

Emails transfer of Police contacts from EH to DAS when threshold for Children’s Social Care is MET

If notification is sent by Police via the EH secured inbox, but the reported concerns do meet threshold for Children’s Social Care– the email will be forwarded to the DAS Secured inbox with the rationale around threshold. It is the responsibility of the DAS SW to gather all the relevant information and record an Initial Contact on the Liquid Logic Social Care system.

**The Children Social care Initial Contact needs to be completed and endorsed by Manager within 24 hours.**

Step up from Early Help Response or Clusters to Social Care (DAS)

In the event of a contact within Early Help Response requiring a step up to EH worker and DAS social worker should initially have a threshold discussion and provide the information as per the summary headings used. If agreement about threshold is not reached, workers should escalate to their respective team managers.

If an Early Help Assessment (EHA) or single agency short term (TAR) case is in place and a referral is made to social care, Early Help service will remain in place until the outcome of the Single Assessment undertaken by children’s social care is known. If advised to take the case to MASP, the EH practitioner or lead professional must be complete a referral to MASP as per the protocol. Refer to page 6 onwards.

## Step up - Guidance to be considered by an Early Help Practitioner prior to making a referral to DAS

If a practitioner believes a child is in immediate danger you need to contact the Police or an Ambulance using the emergency 999 line. Thereafter, contact should be made with the Leicester City Duty and Advice Service on 0116 4541004. If there is no immediate danger to the child, but Child Protection concerns have been identified contact with Duty and Advice Service on 0116 4541004 is required .

Where the Lead Practitioner or a multi-agency group consider that the needs of a child have become more complex at an Early Help threshold and may need intervention from Social Care, an option is for a referral to be made to the MASP (Multi Agency Support Panel) for discussion and action agreed.

Alternatively, if, despite attempts/ work being undertaken with the family by the multiagency group, emerging safeguarding concerns arise (that cannot await the next MASP panel) - then contact should be made with Duty and Advice service without any delay. In these cases, the information should be considered by DAS and not just signposted to MASP (Multi Agency Support Panel).

Prior to the referral to the Duty and Assessment Team, the EH Worker or Lead Practitioner should;

- a) If relevant, review the current assessment and plan to ensure it identifies all changes to the child(s)/ young person(s) circumstances including newly identified needs.
- b) Communicate their concerns with the family and ensure they are fully aware of the steps being taken.
- c) Be familiar with the threshold criteria for level of need. (Refer to LLR Threshold Procedures)  
<http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

## Transfers from DAS to Early Help as an outcome from a contact/referral to social care and details of SC teams

Following the receipt of initial contact/ referral received, the DAS SW will undertake a range of Social work activities to inform any decisions made regarding the case progress. In the event where the need for subsequent intervention from EHS is identified, this is actioned using the 'request for early help' outcome within Liquid Logic IC/Referral forms.

## **Chapter 3 - Interface between Single Assessment/ CIN Team and EHS**

### Joint assessment between Single assessment Team SW and Early Help Practitioner

In some cases the need for early help support for families is apparent at the initial stage of the single assessment.

A request will be made by the Social Worker to the EH Response Team Manager for an early help practitioner to undertake a joint home visit with the allocated SW. This will provide both workers with an opportunity to build a rapport with the family and any required work required could be implemented without any further delay.

### Request for Early Help as part of an open social care plan

Early Help Services can undertake a specific piece of single agency work as part of a child in need, child protection or LAC plan. This can be requested by choosing the step down option and then selecting 'Joint work' within the transfer form.

Once the request has been processed, the Early Help Service will become a key agency attending future reviews and recording all work on the Early Help Module which is accessible by social care staff. The key agency will need to be added by the social worker, early help work will be recorded on the joint work workspace within the Early Help module.

Information on Targeted Early Help can be found here: [www.leicester.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/earlyhelp)

### Step Down from statutory intervention (CP, CIN, LAC) to Early Help Services

Social Care teams always aim to reduce their involvement as the child's needs are met. If a decision has been made that a child is no longer assessed as a child 'in need' (CIN) but ongoing support is required from Early Help services, and the family have given consent to the support and to information being shared then Social Care services should adhere to the following process.

The CIN meeting/ CP review conference where step down is being considered must be attended by a representative from the Early Help Response Team. This will serve as the first team around the family meeting (TAF) If a request for Early Help services is required either as an Early Help Assessment or short term single agency piece of work (eg) Family Support, Targeted Youth, Child Learning), the form within the LiquidLogic system must be completed by the social worker and passed through to the Early Help Response. The most recent review and plan must be up to date on LCS

The Social Worker should:

- a) Discuss with the family the benefit of continued support for Early Help services and gain written consent.
- b) It should be agreed whether this is in the form of an Early Help Assessment or early years/family support work as a single agency response.
- c) With the family's agreement, have a discussion with the Family Support Manager in Early Help (Response) and ensure EH Response are invited to the closure/review meeting.

EH Response will:

- a) Allocate the request to the relevant cluster
- b) The social worker should attend the first TAF multi-agency meeting to support family and ensure a smooth handover.

### Early Help Plans

The Team around the Family (TAF) meeting must prepare an action plan which identifies the key agencies, resources and services which will be needed to achieve the planned outcomes within the agreed timescales. The plan must include:

- a) The desired outcome
- b) Highlight the strengths of the family
- c) Describe the identified developmental needs of the child and services required to meet need.
- d) Include realistic and specific actions to achieve the desired outcomes.
- e) Include a contingency plan if circumstances change
- f) Include achievable timescales.
- g) Identify the key individuals and their responsibilities, including frequency of contact with family members/visits to the child.
- h) Identify review dates within the agreed timescale of 3 months.
- i) Further meetings can be organised earlier if there are changes in the family circumstances or more frequent tracking has been agreed.

### Multi Agency Support Panel (MASP)

Where a case is open to early help or social care and meets one of the following criteria, a referral can be made to MASP:

- a) High cost to the authority
- b) No improvement
- c) Escalation of problems

### 3.3 The purpose of the panel is:

- a) To provide a multi-agency management perspective between partner agencies for cases currently open to early help services, providing scrutiny and challenge, guidance and access to resources to prevent escalation and progress outcomes.
- b) To provide multi agency management oversight and enable decision making to ensure that wherever possible children and young people are supported to live with their family or within their kinship network unless by doing so their wellbeing or safety would be compromised.
- c) The panel will seek to ensure that children and young people have access to all relevant services that can support them to manage their needs and improve outcomes for the whole family.
- d) At an earlier stage as possible, the Panel will review cases where children are at risk of requiring statutory social care intervention using a range of statutory and non-statutory services to support both prevention and de-escalation.
- e) More importantly it will ensure that children and families will get the right help at the right time and reduce the number that escalate and require social care intervention. It will also provide an opportunity to identify trends in service provision and demand, to track outcomes and to enable a proactive approach to service design and commissioning and reducing costs.

### 3.4 Refer to the Tri-X procedures for the full terms of reference for MASP.

Please note the process for Early Help Assessments and council early help services are changing with the development of the launch of an Early Help Partnership Allocations Hub from June 17 and a review of the council's single current single agency response expected to go live from September 17. This protocol will be updated as and when appropriate with briefings for staff.