**Transfer Panel – Terms of Reference January 2019**

**1. Principles Underpinning the Transfer of Cases**

These procedures set out ‘best practice’ principles and processes regarding case transfers. In order for the process of case transfer to work as soon as possible for the child & family, a degree of professional judgment will be required in many cases to decide when to transfer. At all times the needs of the child are paramount when considering a change of the adult who is helping them. A change of practitioner is a significant event for a child and family and needs to be reflected in sensitive and careful handling by managers and practitioners.

**2. Transfer Panel**

The role of the Transfer Panel is to managehandovers in the case pathway and access to post assessment services – eg Area Social Work services, Early Help.

The function of the Transfer Panel is to facilitate children and their families to access the right service at the right time for only as long as is necessary.

The Transfer Panel meets weekly on a Tuesday between 9.30am and 11.30 am and is chaired by an Area Manager and attended by Practice Managers from Social Care and Early Help Hub Managers from Early Help in each Area.

**3. The Transfer Process between Services**

Transfers between practitioners and/or services will be conducted in a timely fashion, ensuring as much continuity as possible for families. All transfers between services will be discussed and agreed through the weekly Transfer Panel.

1. The allocated practitioner completes the Transfer Request Episode on Framework I
2. The Request for Transfer should be submitted via Framework I by noon on the Friday prior to Transfer Panel where the request is being discussed.
3. On receipt of the notification, the Transfer Coordinator will add the child’s name to the next Transfer Panel Agenda and circulate to Area Managers and Early Help Hub Managers and Team Leaders by 4pm on the same day to allow for preparation prior to Transfer Panel. Preparation will include familiarising self with those children transferring in to own service and identifying names of workers that children will be transferring to. Preparation will also include being assured that the child’s case record is up to date and ready to transfer.
4. Practice Manager attends Transfer Panel to present reason for transfer;
5. Transfer Panel decides on transfer and agreed handover/transfer date is identified from the following;
	* 1. First Lac Review
		2. Initial Child Protection Conference
		3. First Court Hearing
		4. On completion of Assessment and at first planning meeting (CIN or Early Help)
6. Pending change of worker discussed with family and professionals;
7. Prior to Transfer Panel, Practice Manager oversight ensures child’s case file record is up to date and ready for transfer;
8. Handover meeting held with the family between transferring and receiving practitioners, within 5 working days of the Transfer Panel.
9. Letters dispatched to family and professionals confirming a change of service and/or practitioner and date of transfer.

**4. Transfers between Practitioners in the Same Service**

All transfers (re-allocations) between practitioners in the same service area will be decided and managed between Area Managers. The above steps (d) to (h) also apply to changes of allocated practitioner.

At no point should a child be left without a named allocated practitioner. If difficulties are experienced in transferring cases due to capacity this should be immediately escalated to the relevant Area Managers. The Head of Service should be notified in writing and a record kept of the agreement for each case that has been escalated.

If a family are receiving a service and move area within Medway, case responsibility will mostly remain within the area service to whom the case is originally allocated unless there is a meaningful and child centered reason to re-allocate.

**4.1 Transfer/closure summaries & case records**

Transfer arrangements will always be mindful of the need to ensure the safety of children. It is essential that good quality information is passed from the transferring practitioner/service to prevent gaps in knowledge and delay in activity.

Wherever a child experiences a transfer between practitioner and/or service, the transferring practitioner must ensure the child’s record is up to date with all relevant information. The Practice Manager is responsible for ensuring the case record is up to date before transfer.

**4.2 Handover meetings/visits**

Children, young people, their parents/carers and other professionals engaged with the family should always be advised of any plans to change practitioner and/or service in advance. Transfers should always involve a handover meeting or visit with the transferring and receiving practitioners, with the family. If this is not possible, the reasons will need to be explained to the family and recorded on child’s record.

**5. Transfers between Statutory Children’s Social Work Service to Non-Statutory Early Help and Targeted Services**

**5.1 Transferring a family from Early Help and Targeted Services to Children’s Social Care**

If at any time the family Lead Professional in Early Help and Targeted Services thinks the family’s difficulties are worsening and the Team around the Family has become worried that the child or young person’s needs are increasing, the Lead Professional must alert their line manager immediately. Following discussion between the practitioner and Early Help Social Worker in First Response, the Early Help Social Worker will discuss with Practice Manager to jointly make the decision whether or not to refer the family to Children’s Social Care. Where the issue solely relates to a child or young person’s disability, the 0-25 SEND social worker in First Response will be part of the decision whether it is appropriate or not to refer the family to Children’s Social Care. Non-engagement with Early Help Services is not a reason in itself to refer to Children’s Social Care.

If the child or young person is considered to be ‘in need’ of a statutory social work assessment, the family should be consulted, and consent sought for a referral to First Response using the portal. The current Early Help Assessment and Plan should be included with the referral to enable decisions to be made within First Response using the most current information. If threshold is met for social care involvement, the case record will remain open to Early Help and Targeted Services and the allocated social worker will join the Team around the Child to undertake the Child and Family Assessment (s47/ s17) and where required other particular pieces of work. If the outcome determines the need for ongoing services either as Child in Need or Child Protection, then the decision will be made at the relevant planning meeting (LAC, CP, CIN) as to whether there is an ongoing role for Early Help.

If the child or young person is considered to be at risk of, or suffering from significant harm, the family will be referred to First Response immediately and a Child Protection (Section 47) Strategy Meeting held. The Lead Professional and their line manager must attend the Strategy Meeting.

**5.2 Transferring a family from Children’s Social Care to the Early Help and Targeted Services**

When Children’s Social Care has been helping a family to improve a situation, the child or young person’s needs should have lessened, and the family may no longer require a statutory service. However, to embed the positive changes the family may need some continued help from a non-statutory service. With agreement, families who meet the Early Help and Targeted Services criteria and who want to continue to receive a service, can be transferred from Children’s Social Care to Early Help and Targeted Services. To transfer a family the nominated Practice Manager will need to present the case at the weekly Transfer Panel which is also attended by Early Help Hub Managers and Early Help Social Worker. Transfer process follows the Early Help Step Down Pathway (Appendix 1).

**6. Service Remit & Transfer Points between Statutory Social Work Services**

**6.1 First Response**

A child will transfer from SPA/MASH to the Assessment Service at the point at which it is agreed that the threshold for is met for a Child and Family Single Assessment either s17 or s47. If SPA receives a re-referral on a child previously known to any statutory service within 3 months of the case being closed, the child will be transferred back to the previous service and where possible to the previous allocated social worker.

A child will transfer from SPA/MASH to the 0-25 SEND Team at the point at which it is agreed by the 0-25 SEND social worker in SPA that the threshold is met for a Child and Family Single Assessment s17. All child protection enquiries are undertaken by First Response Assessment Team and where these relate to children with additional needs then specialist support may be accessed through co-working with 0-25 SEND Team. In all cases a child must be allocated to a social worker within one working day of the decision being made in the SPA/MASH.

**6.2 The First Response Assessment Service**

The First Response Assessment Service is responsible for undertaking Child and Family Assessment s17 CA1989 (other than when threshold is met for 0-25 SEND) and all Child protection enquiries s47 CA 1989. If the assessment concludes that the child is in need of a non-statutory Early Help service, or a statutory social work service, the children will need to be presented at Transfer Panel within 5 working days of completion of the assessment to transfer to one of the following services, dependent on help required:

* Early Help and Targeted Service;
* Area Service;
* Leaving Care Service;
* Disabled Children and Young Person’s Team.

Transfer will take place at the Early Help Step Down Meeting or Child in Need Planning Meeting as appropriate within 10 days of the completion of the assessment.

Children who require an Initial Child Protection Conference will be presented at Transfer Panel to identify the receiving social worker and team. Transfer will take place at the Child Protection Conference which will be attended by the receiving social worker.

If during the Child and Family Assessment, children have been identified as in need of accommodation s 20 CA1989 or in need of protection through the application to the court, they will be presented at Transfer panel and transfer will take place at the first Looked After Child Review or First Hearing respectively.

**6.3 Area Service**

This service includes four area teams who are responsible for providing help and services to children in need and children who are subject to a Child Protection Plans, who are in PLO, subject to care proceedings or who Looked After.

Children will need to be presented at Transfer Panel to transfer either into or out of Area Teams. Children will transfer from the First Response Assessment Team to the Area Service once the Child and Family Assessment has been completed and statutory services are required to improve outcomes for children as described above. Handover points will include the Child in Need Planning Meeting, Initial Child protection Conference, PLO meeting, first Looked After Child Review or in the event where an application for an order is made then this will happen at the first hearing.

Children may also transfer from the Area Teams to Early Help and Targeted Services in the circumstances and through the process stated above.

Children will transfer from the Area Service to the Leaving Care service at the age of 18 years. A final Lac review will be convened 3 months prior to turning 18 years old after which the young person will be presented at the Transfer Panel.

For all children leaving care the following must have been completed before transfer:

* Develop 18+plus pathway plan
* Chronology to be up to date
* Accommodation plan agreed.
* All LAC episodes to be completed/closed
* Any financial arrangements should be up to date

**Transfer in Conferences**: - The Transfer Coordinator must be advised by the Safeguarding Team of any request for Transfer In Conference at least 10 days prior to Transfer in Conference date. Transfer in Conference Requests will be added to the Transfer Panel agenda and allocated to a social worker in the receiving Area Team at the next Transfer Panel.

**6.4 The Leaving Care Service**

Young People that move to the Leaving Care Team are presented to the weekly Transfer Panel.

Children and young people in Medway are considered to be leaving care aged 18yrs. At 16, the Leaving Care Practice Manager will allocate a Personal Advisor to the young person. The Personal Advisor will co-work with the allocated social worker until the young person becomes 18yrs. Following the LAC review 3 months and prior to turning 18 years, young people transferring to the Leaving Care Team will be presented to Transfer Panel. This allows for a smooth transfer and introduction to the young person’s preparation to leaving care.

Young people who are remanded into local authority care under the LAPSOA 2012 who exceed 13 weeks in care and are subsequently sentenced will be referred to the Leaving Care team as relevant young people. Following sentence, a final LAC review will be convened to facilitate transfer to the Leaving Care Team. The social worker will complete the Develop 18+ pathway plan…

Where a young person’s service from the 0-25 SEND will be ceasing at 18, the young person is presented to Transfer Panel at the age of 17yrs 6 months. The Leaving Care Practice Manager will allocate a Personal Advisor to the young person at 16 years who will co-work with the allocated 0-25 SEND social worker until the young person reaches at the least the age of 21 years. This can be extended if required up to the age of 25 as outlined in the Children & Social work Act 2017 extension of the role of the PA to 25.

**7. Dispute resolution**

Managers will work co-operatively to resolve case transfer issues as they arise. **Resolution should in all cases be achieved within 1 working day.** The key aim is to ensure that the flow of cases is achieved by managers working together. In rare and exceptional cases, it will be necessary to refer the matter to the Area Managers where a decision will be made.