

Duty and Assessment Team Transfer Policy

Children and Families service

POLICY INFORMATION SHEET

Name of Document	Duty and Assessment Team Transfer Policy
Service area	Children in Need and Child Protection
Target Audience	All Staff in Halton Borough Council Children and Family Services Department
Date policy was approved	25/09/2023
Date policy is effective from	25/09/2023
Status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory (all named staff must adhere to guidance) • Optional (procedures and practice can vary between teams) 	Mandatory
Location of Document	tri.x Halton Borough Council Children and Young People Social Care Online Procedures
Related document(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases transferring from the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to Child in Need Flowchart • Cases transferring from Children's Social Care to Early Help Flowchart • Child / Young Person Transfer – Quality Assurance tool (Duty & Assessment) • Child Protection Procedures • Halton Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership • Transfer of cases between teams (CiN/CiCCL)
Superseded document(s)	Duty and Assessment Team Transfer Policy 2020
Responsible officer(s)	Principal Manager, Duty and Assessment Team, Children in Need

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	4
2. Outcomes of the Single Assessment Plan	4
3. Key Practice Guidelines	5
3.1 Child Focus.....	5
3.2 Siblings already open for assessment in one Team	5
3.3 Children closed within 3 months to the Child in Need Teams	5
3.4 Children transferring into Halton Children Services on a Child in Need / Child Protection Plan	5
3.5 Duty and Assessment Team request for a Community Support Worker (CSW)	5
3.6 No Delay	5
3.7 One Service.....	6
3.8 Improved Service.....	6
4. Procedure for Transferring of Social Work Responsibility	6
4.2 Child in Need.....	7
4.3 Child Protection.....	7
4.4 Emergency Protection Orders	7
4.5 Children in Care (Section 20)	8
APPENDIX 1: Cases transferring from Children’s Social Care to Early Help	9
APPENDIX 2: Cases transferring from the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to Child in Need	10
APPENDIX 3: Cases transferring from the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to Child in Need Team (CIN) following a Child Protection Conference	11
APPENDIX 4: Cases transferring from the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to Child in Need Team (CIN) following an Emergency Court Order	12
APPENDIX 5: Child / Young Person Transfer Quality Assurance Tool	13

1. Introduction

This document is the Case Transfer Policy which is intended to cover transfers across the department. The purpose is to ensure the effective and efficient transfer of cases between and amongst different Teams and Service areas in Halton Borough Council. Transfers should be timely, ensuring that children/families receive support with no gap in service provision. This document sets out agreed principles and processes regarding case transfers and the guidelines included in this policy should be considered as 'best practice'. All cases must be considered separately, and any changes to this process should be agreed at manager level and the justification recorded. This document includes the procedures regarding 'step up' and 'step down' to and from Statutory Services.

The Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) will receive all new Referrals from iCART, undertaking the Single Assessment Plan (SAP) and determining the level of need.

Dependant on the assessment outcome it will either close, step down to early help or transfer through the teams following a Child in Need (CiN) meeting or Initial Child Protection Case Conference (ICPC).

2. Outcomes Of the Single Assessment Plan

Outcome of the Single Assessment Plan (SAP) include either:

- The Duty and Assessment Social Worker recommends a plan is developed to meet the needs of the child / young person – this might be a Child in Need plan or a Child Protection plan. See *Appendix 2: Cases transferring from the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to Child in Need*,
or
- The recommendation from the social worker is that targeted support is required. The Early Intervention Service is requested to convene a Level of Need meeting where they will be allocated the child and family to provide support guided by a CAF (Common Assessment Framework). See *Appendix 1: Cases transferring from Children's Social Care to Early Help*,
or
- Where emergency protective action may be taken, the child/ young person may be removed to a safer home and become a Child in Care. The child will be transferred to Child in Need Teams at Initial Care Planning Meeting. See *Appendix 4, Cases transferring from the (DAT) to CiN Team following a Court Order*
or
- The child's needs may be met through a single agency response in Early Help.

3. Key Practice Guidelines

3.1 Child Focus

The primary consideration in all case transfer decisions and negotiations must be the needs and best interests of the child/young person and their family. The number of transfers will be kept to a minimum and wherever possible the child's wishes and feelings will be taken into account i.e. the Duty and Assessment Team will not transfer the child to the Child in Need Team/ Early Intervention service if direct work can be completed as part of the SAP and closed following this.

3.2 Siblings already open for assessment in one Team

Wherever possible, one social worker should work with the whole family group. If a sibling is already open to a Social Worker in one particular Team (e.g., Child in Need / CICC) and a referral is made on a sibling not already open to that Team, the SAP will be allocated to the Team where other siblings are already open.

3.3 Children closed within 3 months to the Child in Need Teams

Children closed within 3 months to the Child in Need team will go back to the Child in Need team for a SAP to help maintain consistency for the child / young person and their family.

3.4 Children transferring into Halton Children Services on a Child in Need / Child Protection Plan

Children transferring into Halton on a Child in Need / Child Protection Plan will be allocated to the Child in Need Teams, a worker will be identified to attend the transfer in meeting. The Child in Need team will continue to assess and support the family.

3.5 Duty and Assessment Team request for a Community Support Worker (CSW)

Children who are open to the Duty and Assessment Team and assessed as requiring a CSW will have a referral completed for targeted intervention. The referral will be completed as part of the Single Assessment. The Single Assessment does not need to be completed for allocation of a CSW.

3.6 No Delay

Transfer should not cause delay to social work intervention with families and should not cause delay in the progression of the child's plan.

3.7 One Service

The successful transfer from Duty and Assessment Team to another is dependent upon both the current allocated worker and the receiving worker being responsible for adhering to expected transfer standards.

3.8 Improved Service

Moving to dedicated teams builds on standards of good practice in the delivery of effective and efficient services for children, young people and their families. Assessments of all children, young people and their families should be undertaken in a timely way and be evidence based. All children and young people receiving a service should have a clear plan subject to their status i.e. Child in Need, child subject to a Child Protection Plan or a Child in Care.

4. Procedure for Transferring of Social Work Responsibility

All decisions for transfers should be based on the best interest of the child at that time. When transferring the following process should be followed:

The child/ young person's case file should be fully complete, with an up-to-date assessment and plan with a transfer summary, to be audited by the Practice Lead / Principal Manager before transfer. See *Appendix 5: Child/ Young Person Transfer – Quality Assurance tool (Duty & Assessment)*

The transfer of responsibility should be discussed and agreed between the Practice Lead / Principal Managers. Where this cannot be agreed the matter will be escalated to senior managers to decide.

4.1 Transferring to Early Help (Stepping Down).

For all cases to be considered for step down from statutory services (Children Social Care), the social worker will complete a **level of need** form on Eclipse which will include family history, a proposed plan and parental consent for step down. The form should be assigned to Early Intervention Locality in-tray giving two weeks' notice for the Level of Need (step down) meeting to be convened. The Early Help Manager will review the case and confirm the meeting. Where the Early Help Manager feels that the step down to Early Help services is not appropriate, the case will remain with statutory services. However, if the referrer for step down wants to challenge that decision, the case must be escalated to the Head of Early Help (Divisional Manager). Once the case is accepted within Early Help, the Level of Need Meeting becomes the date of transfer. Early Help Case Worker and the statutory Case Worker will agree a date for a handover joint visit to the family to take place within 5 working days of the agreement to step down. Case responsibility remains with the statutory worker until the handover visit. Should family withdraw their consent for Early Help support at this stage the case responsibility remains with statutory service who will decide whether to close the case or keep it open.

4.2 Child in Need

A Child in Need meeting will be held and chaired by the Duty and Assessment Team. The meeting will be arranged giving the Child in Need Team / Early Help Team at least 10 working days' notice to ensure a member of the team is available. The parents, carers and child will be informed of the transfer prior to and during the Child in Need meeting. The Child in Need meeting minutes and plan will be loaded onto the child / young person's case file within 3 working days.

All other professionals involved with the child should similarly be notified of the case transfer and given contact details.

4.3 Child Protection

If at any point from the referral during the assessment there is a reason to believe the child / young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, Children Services have a duty under the Children Act 1989, Section 47, to make enquiries to find out what is happening to the child and whether protective action is required. Please see [Halton Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership Online Procedures](#).

The Section 47 enquiry needs to reach an informed decision about whether the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. If the child is deemed to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm an initial child protection conference should be convened in 15 working days of the strategy discussion. The Duty and Assessment Team will complete the Single Assessment in readiness for the conference. The Child in Need team will be invited to the meeting. If the child / young person is made subject to a Child Protection Plan then an Initial Core Group will be convened within 10 working days. The meeting will be chaired by the Duty and Assessment team Practice Lead and will be attended by the Duty and Assessment Social Worker and Child in Need Social Worker. This meeting will be the point of transfer.

4.4 Emergency Protection Orders

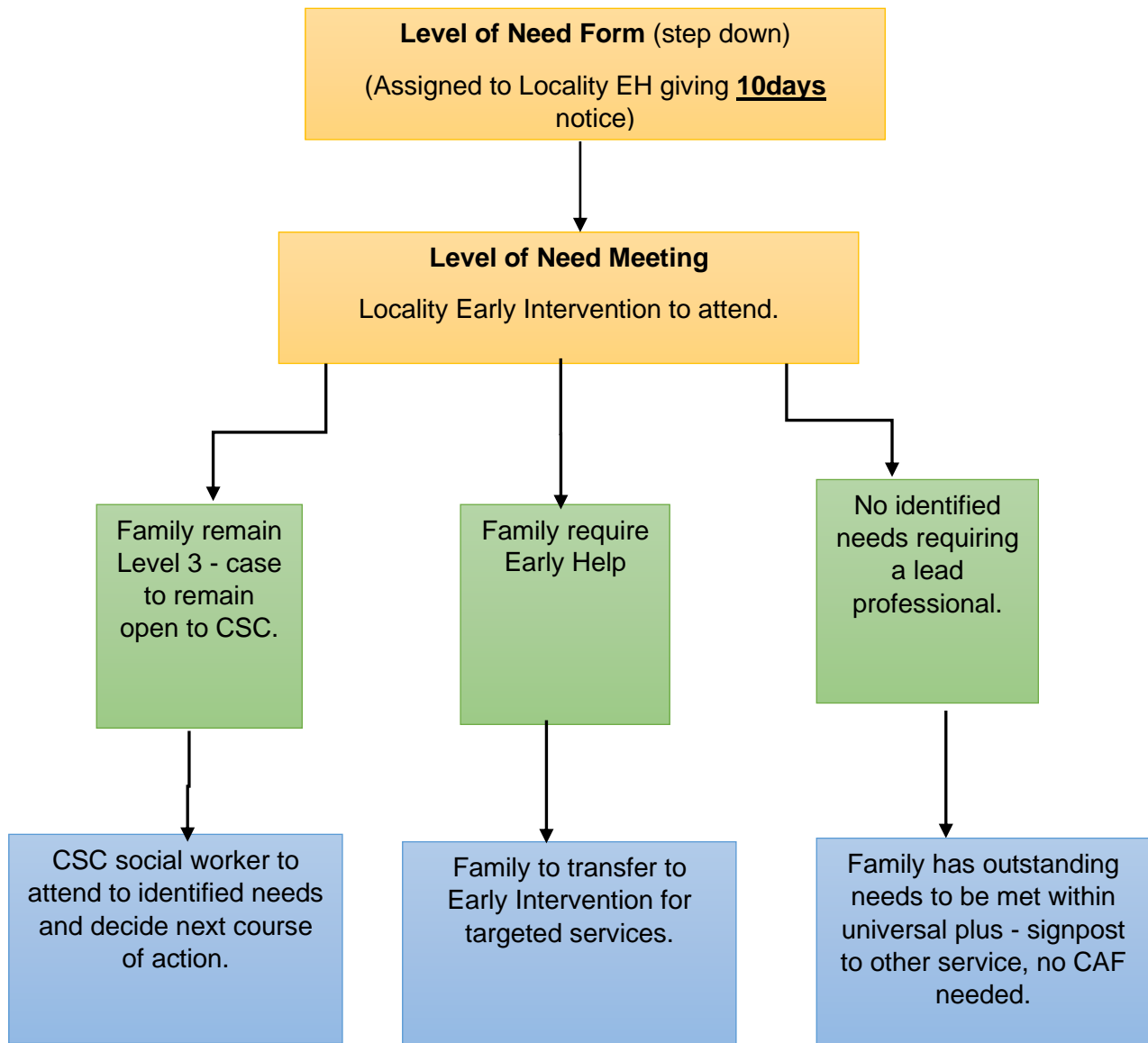
If a child / young person is open to the Duty and Assessment team and requires immediate measures to protect them from harm then the Duty and Assessment team will seek emergency legal advice. The Duty and Assessment team will progress/ present the case to Legal Advice Meeting. A Principal Manager from the Child in Need team will also attend. If threshold is met for Care proceedings, then the Duty and Assessment team will complete the legal documentation required for the initial hearing. The Duty and Assessment team will attend the initial hearing and will invite the Child In Need team. The initial care planning meeting will be held within 72 hours of the order being made. The initial care planning meeting is the point of transfer to the Child in Need team.

4.5 Children in Care (Section 20)

If a child / young person is open to the Duty and Assessment team and becomes Section 20 the Duty and Assessment team will assess and explore a rehabilitation plan. Upon completion of the Single Assessment and first Child in Care review the child / young person will transfer to the Child in Need team.

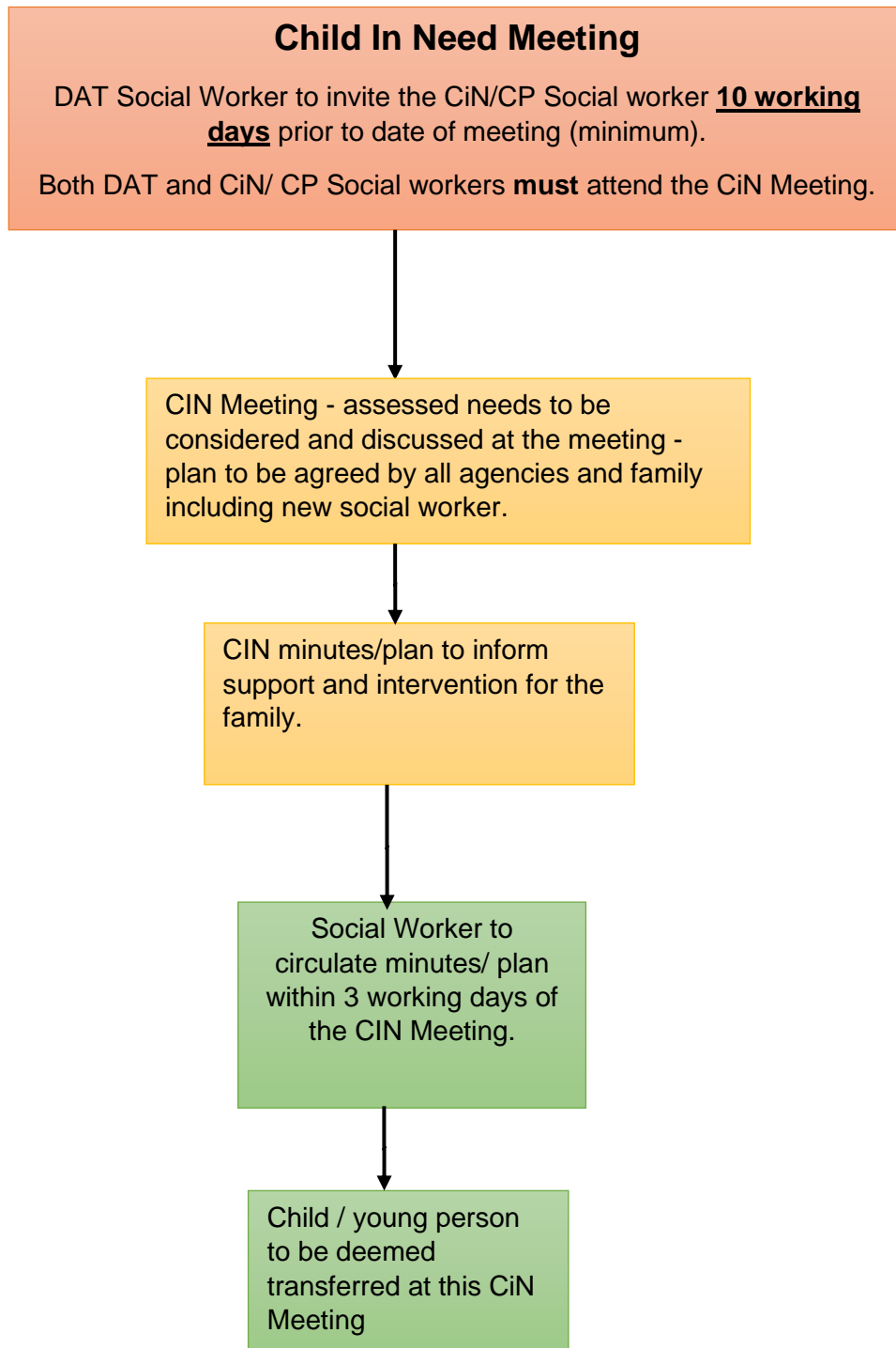
If a child / young person is open to the Duty and Assessment team and becomes Section 20 the Duty and Assessment team will assess and explore a rehabilitation plan. If rehabilitation is not in the best interests of the child / young person and the plan is permanency, then the child / young person will transfer to the Child in Care team following the first Child in Care review.

Cases transferring from Children's Social Care to Early Help

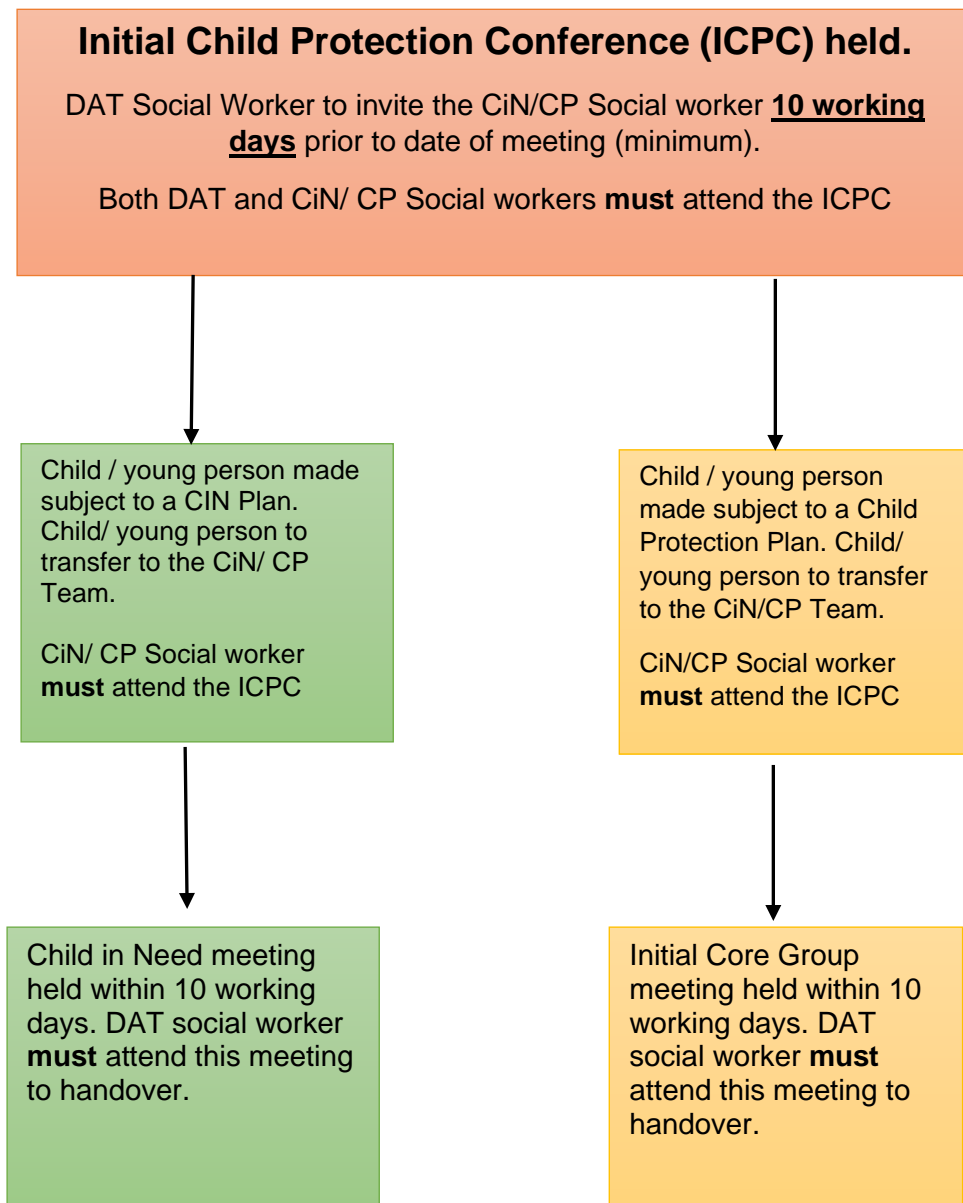


Always consider that early help does not always mean locality support and has a wider range of services and the most appropriate agency maybe school or health.

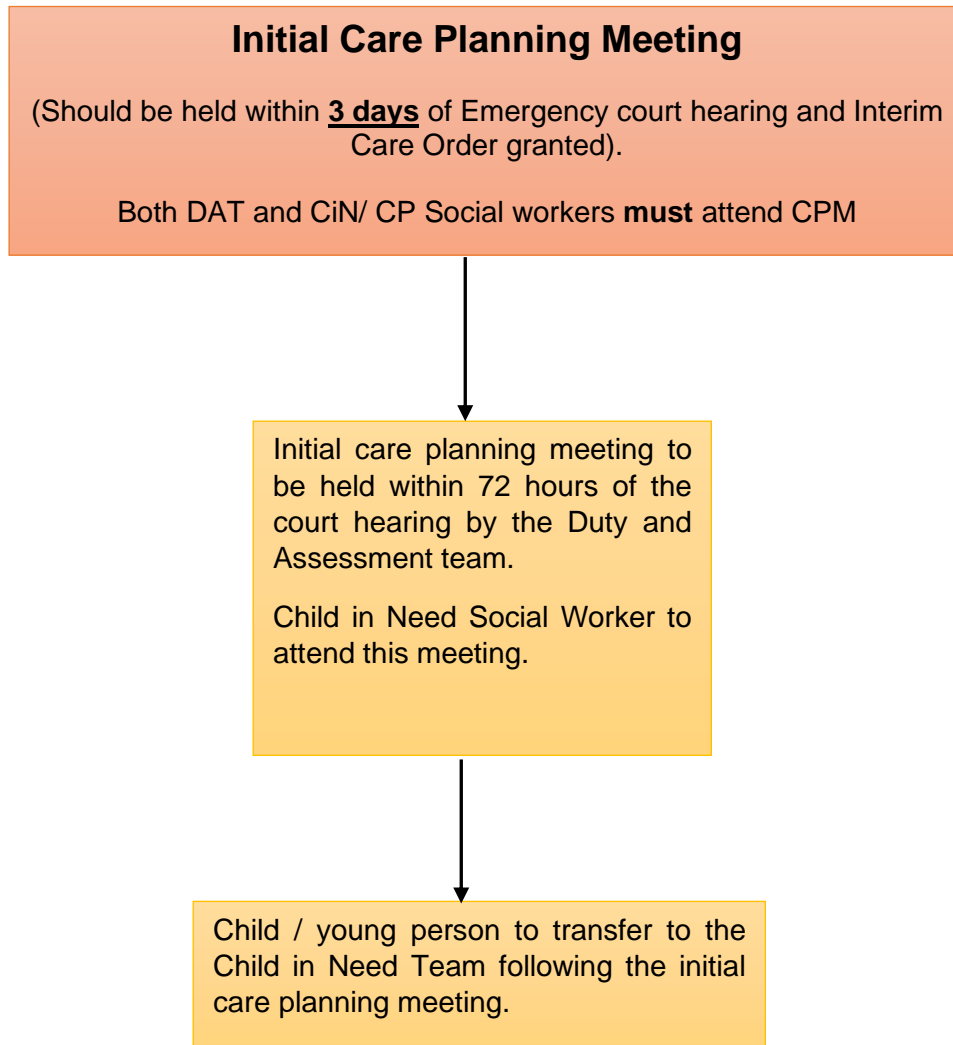
Child In Need Cases transferring from the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to Child in Need & Child Protection Service



Cases transferring from Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to Child in Need & Child Protection Service following a Child Protection Conference



Cases transferring from the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to Child in Need Team (CIN) following a Court Order



Child/ Young Person Transfer – Quality Assurance Tool

Child(ren)'s Name:
Eclipse number:
Worker/ Co-Worker:
Transferring Manager:
Receiving Manager:
Category/ Threshold:
Transferring to:
Date:

Action Required	YES / NO	Completed / Not completed / Manager's Comments
Child / young person's details are up to date and recorded accurately.		
Family details are up to date and accurate including telephone numbers, current address		
Relationships are up to date and include all family members and significant others (inclusive of phone numbers and addresses).		
Genogram completed (date)		
Single Assessment completed and shared with parents / carers and recorded on child / young person file.		
Date of the last visit to the child / young person.		
Current care plan on file (date last updated / completed)		
Date of last Review of Plan		
Date of next Review of Plan		
Date of next Core Group / Care Planning Meeting		
Chronology up to date		

Action Required	YES / NO	Completed / Not completed / Manager's Comments
Date of last Supervision recorded on Eclipse.		
Date of last Management oversight recorded on Eclipse.		
Manager's rationale for Transfer		
Transfer Agreed	Yes/ No	If transfer not agreed, why?

Please note a plan may not be in place at the time of the transfer request as there is a planned Child in Need Meeting/ Initial Child Protection Case Conference to be held.