

Children's Social Care

**Scheme of delegated case
management decision-making
framework**

POLICY INFORMATION SHEET

Name of Document:	Scheme of delegated case management decision-making framework
Purpose:	To set out the authority required to undertake a range of key case management decisions.
Service area:	Children Services, Children's Social Care
Target Audience:	All staff in Children's Services, Children's Social Care
Forum Policy/Procedure/Strategy was approved:	Children and Families Services Senior Leadership Team
Date policy is effective from:	June 2023
Date review due:	June 2024
Status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory (all practitioners and managers must adhere to guidance) • Optional (procedures and practice can vary between teams) 	Mandatory
Location of Document	tri.x – Halton Children's Services Online Procedures
Related document(s)	Halton Borough Council Children and Young People Social Care Online Procedures
Superseded document(s)	Not applicable.
Document Owner	Operational Director of Social Care

Application and Scope

This scheme of delegation case management decision-making framework sets out who has the authority required to undertake a range of key case management decisions. In each case the posts designated represent the minimum level at which the decision can be taken (i.e., a manager more senior than the post holder listed is also authorised to take this decision subject to them being in the same specialist management area).

Its purpose is to provide for consistency in the level and authority at which key case management decisions are taken throughout the service and to set out how we will seek assurance in relation to the range of key case management decisions. The document also describes arrangements for delegation of decision making to the Emergency Duty Team Manager and Emergency Duty Team Social Workers.

All the decisions set out in this framework must be recorded on the child's case file by the person who is making the decision on a management decision case note which concisely records the decision made, the rationale for the decision and any required actions as set out in the table below.

Decision:	<i>What decision has been made for the child/young person and who made the decision and when?</i>
Rationale for the decision:	<i>This should outline why the decision was made and be linked to the impact on the child and evidenced based where possible. This should be written so that a child coming to read their file understands why important decisions are made on their life.</i>
Action(s):	<i>What needs to happen: Who will do this: By when:</i>

Scheme of Delegation Case Management Decision-Making Framework

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Case Management Decision and guidance note.	Designated Managers with Specified Area of Responsibility
1. Decisions in relation to Children in Need of Help and Protection.	
Decision to step a contact down to Early help or to sign post.	Post title: Practice Lead ICart or ICart Advanced Practitioner in their absence.
Decision to progress a Contact to Referral	Post title: Practice Lead ICart or Team Manager EDT or EDT Social Worker in their absence.
Decision to hold a multi-agency Strategy meeting. The police, health professionals, teachers and other relevant professionals should be engaged.	Post title: Practice Lead all areas or Team Manager EDT or EDT Worker in their absence.
Decision to initiate a S47 enquiry when a child may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.	Post title: Practice Lead all areas or Team Manager EDT or EDT Worker in their absence. Decision to be made as part of a multi-agency Strategy meeting.
Decision to apply for an Emergency Protection Order if it is necessary to remove a child from their home, where the child's safety is at immediate risk.	Post title: Head of Service or Team Manager EDT or EDT Social Worker in their absence in consultation with the Senior Manager on call.
Decision to use Police Powers of Protection.	Police in consultation with the responsible Principal Manager and

<p>Note, PPP should only be used in exceptional circumstances where there is insufficient time to seek an EPO or for reasons relating to the immediate safety of the child.</p>	<p>Team Manager EDT or EDT Social Worker in their absence.</p>
<p>Decision to progress a child to Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC).</p> <p>*s.47 threshold decision. Decision is subject of Safeguarding Children Unit scrutiny.</p>	<p>Post title: Practice Lead in consultation with the Practice Lead. IRM</p>
<p>Decision to progress a child to Legal Gateway Panel.</p> <p>It is expected that there is a case discussion with the Principal and Service Manager before progressing to Legal Gatekeeping Panel.</p>	<p>Post title: Principal Manager and Head Of Service</p>
<p>Decision to enter pre-proceedings.</p> <p>The forum that considers and agrees pre-proceedings is Legal Gatekeeping Panel Chaired by Head Of Service. It is expected that there is a discussion with the Service Manager.</p>	<p>Post title: Head of Service, Legal GatewayPanel, Chair of LW Panel if dissenting views.</p>
<p>Decision to agree to Care Proceedings being initiated.</p>	<p>Post title: Head of Service, Legal Gateway Panel or Chair of LGW panel if dissenting views..</p> <p>Note: in exceptional circumstances when there is an immediate need this decision can be taken outside of Legal Gateway Panel. All decision to issue proceedings will be ratified by the Operational Director following Legal Gateway Panel.</p>

<p>Decision to approve a Final Care Plan for Court.</p>	<p>Post title: Head Of Service or Service Manager in their absence.</p> <p>*Subject to a case discussion with Principal Manager, Practice Lead and Social Worker.</p>
<p>Decision to approve Court Reports</p>	<p>Post title: Principal Manager</p> <p>*Subject to quality assurance reviews</p>
<p>Decision to progress Dols request to Legal Gatekeeping Panel.</p>	<p>Post title: Principal Manager</p>
<p>Decision to make application for a DOLS being initiated.</p>	<p>Post title: Head of Service , Chair of Legal Gatekeeping Panel or manager who deputises for them.</p>
<p>Designated Manager (Death or Serious Injury to a Child) Post title: Executive Director of Children and Young Peoples Services should be immediately notified in the event of death or serious injury to a child via the Operational Director of Social Care or Head of Service in their absence.</p>	<p>Post title: Practice Lead, Principal Manager or EDT Social Worker to advise Senior Manager on call.</p>
<p>Change of Social Worker. The manager who can approve to a change in social worker. Note: There is an expectation that the relationship between the child and their social worker is supported and only made in unavoidable circumstances.</p>	<p>Post title: Practice Lead</p>

<p>Decision to step down a case via case transfer or decide to close a Child in Need case.</p> <p>Note: This excludes cases that have been stepped down from Child Protection within the last three months, Strategic Lead approval is required in these circumstances.</p>	<p>Post title: Practice Lead</p>
<p>Decision to agree the timescale for a child assessment.</p>	<p>Post title: Practice Lead</p>

Designated Managers with Specified Area of Responsibility	Post Title and forum
2. Decisions in relation to Adoption.	
Should be placed for adoption (SHOBPA) - decision about whether a child should be placed for adoption or not.	Post title: Assistant Director of Social Care as Agency Decision Maker (ADM) or in their absence Executive Director of Children’s services.
SHOBPA re-confirm - decision to reconfirm that a child should be placed for adoption (SHOBPA) in circumstances where there has been new assessments or a change in circumstances since the original SHOBPA decision.	Post title: Assistant Director of Social Care as Agency Decision Maker (ADM) or in their absence Executive Director of Children’s services.
SHOBPA rescind - decision in relation to whether a SHOBPA decision should be rescinded.	Post title: Assistant Director of Social Care as Agency Decision Maker (ADM) or in their absence Executive Director of Children’s services.
Adopter Approval - decision in respect of whether individuals should be approved as adoptive parents	Post title: Service Manager, Together for Adoption In the absence of the Service Manager for TFA the Assistant Director of Social Care as Agency Decision Maker (ADM)

<p>Adoption Match - decision in respect of whether approved adoptive parents should be matched with a particular child.</p>	<p>Post title: Assistant Director of Social Care as Agency Decision Maker (ADM) or in their absence Executive Director of Children’s services.</p>
<p>Concurrent placement or Foster for Adoption - the decision in respect of agreeing plans for a Concurrent placement or Foster for Adoption placement.</p>	<p>Post title: Assistant Director of Social Care as Agency Decision Maker (ADM) or in their absence Executive Director of Children’s services.</p>
<p>Change of Name - the manager who can authorise the change of name of a Looked After Child.</p>	<p>Post title: Assistant Director of Social Care as Agency Decision Maker (ADM) or in their absence Executive Director of Children’s services.</p>
<p>Adoption Panel Appointments - the manager who can authorise appointments to the Central List of Adoption Panel members.</p>	<p>Post title: Principal Manager for Together for Adoption in Wigan as the host authority.</p>
<p>Adoption support - the manager who can authorise the level of adoption support to be provided to children, adopters (including financial support) and their family or birth family members.</p>	<p>Post title: Head of Service for Adoption and Principal Manager for Together for Adoption as appropriate.</p>

Designated Managers with Specified Area of Responsibility	Post Title and relevant forum
3. Decisions in relation to Fostering.	
Fostering Panel Decisions - the manager who can make decisions on fostering matters based on recommendations from fostering panel.	Post title: Assistant Director for CSC as Agency Decision Maker for Fostering. Or Head of Service for Safeguarding and QA in their absence
Fostering Panel appointments - the manager who can authorise appointments to the Central List of Fostering Panel members.	Post title: Fostering Panel Advisor.
Placement of a Child under Reg 24 with a relative - the manager who can authorise the placement of a child with a relative and approval of a viability assessment.	Post title: Assistant Director
Exemptions and Extensions from Fostering Limit - the manager who can authorise any exemptions from the usual fostering limit for foster carers living in the local authority area.	Post title: Assistant Director of CSC as Agency Decision Maker for Fostering. Or Head of Service for Safeguarding and QA in AD Absence
Long-term match of a child with foster carers - the manager who can approve a long-term match.	Post title: Permanence Panel Assistant Director Agency Decision Maker for fostering. ratified by ADM

Staying Put - the manager who can approve a Staying Put Arrangement.	Post title: Head of Service
Designated Managers with Specified Area of Responsibility	Post Title and relevant forum
4. Decisions in relation to children we look after and care leavers.	
Final Care Plan - the manager who can authorise the final Care Plan to be taken before the Court within Care Proceedings.	Post title: Head of Service responsible for the child's care plan.
Contact with Parents - the manager who can authorise the suspension or termination of contact between a Looked After child and his or her parents (subject to the Court's approval after 7 days for children on Emergency Protection Orders, Interim Care Orders or Care Orders).	Post title: Head of Service responsible for the child's care plan.
Decision to bring a child into the care of the local authority - the manager who can authorise a child becoming Looked After.	Post title: Legal Gateway panel, in emergency situations the Assistant Director for CSC or Head of Service in their absence
Placement of a child outside of England or Wales - the manager who can authorise the placement of a Looked after child outside England and Wales.	Post title: Director of Children's Services
Placements, including out of area - the manager who can authorise.	Post title: DCS Assistant Director of Social Care in absence or delegated

placements of Looked After children with external providers of residential care or foster carers from an independent fostering agency within Halton or a neighbouring local authority within 20 miles.	
Out of area beyond 20 miles , the manager who can approve the placement of Looked After Children beyond 20 miles of Halton.	Post title: Director of Children's Services, When unavailable Assistant Director
Unregistered Children's Home placement. Unregistered Children's Homes should not be used and only in exceptional circumstances where there are no other placement options should they be considered.	Post title: Director of Children's Services
Pathway Plan - the manager who can approve a Pathway Plan.	Post title: Practice lead responsible for child's care plan.
Marriage of a Looked After Child - the manager who can authorise the marriage of a Looked After child aged 16 - 18 years	Post title: Director of Children's Services
Notifications in relation to Looked After Children from another local authority placed in Halton - the manager who should receive notification and decide about whether challenge to the placing LA should be made.	Post title: Principal Manager - Safeguarding Children Unit in consultation with the Head of Service
Passports - the manager who can authorise a passport application for a Looked After child.	Post title: Practice Lead

<p>Passport signing - the manager who can sign a child's passport application.</p>	<p>Post title: Head of Service</p>
<p>Placement Orders - the manager who can authorise an application for a Placement Order or discharge of a Placement Order in line with SHOBPA decisions.</p>	<p>Post title: Head of service</p>
<p>Education Health Care Plan - the manager who can authorise the social care advice for an EHCP assessment.</p>	<p>Post title: Principal Manager</p>

<p>Private Fostering - the manager who can approve assessments of private foster carers, impose requirements on private foster carers or decide to prohibit someone from acting as a private foster carer.</p>	<p>Post title: Head of Service</p> <p>*As outlined in the Private Fostering Policy.</p>
<p>Secure Accommodation/Use of PACE beds - the manager who can authorise:</p> <p>A placement of a Looked After child in secure accommodation for up to 72 hours without a Secure Accommodation Order; and/or</p> <p>An application for a Secure Accommodation Order; and/or</p> <p>A child's continued secure placement on the recommendation of the Secure Accommodation Review Panel; and/or</p> <p>Applications to renewal Secure Accommodation Orders on the recommendation of the Secure Accommodation Review Panel.</p> <p>Note: if the child is under 13yrs old secretary of state approval is required.</p>	<p>Post title: Director of Children Services, if unavailable Assistant Director</p> <p>*Secure Panel will be Chaired by the Head Of Service</p>
<p>Special Guardianship - the manager who can authorise Special Guardianship as the permanence plan for a Looked After child.</p>	<p>Post title: Head of Service</p>
<p>Special Guardianship support plan - the manager who can authorise the level of special guardianship and kinship carer support to be provided, including financial support to special guardians within agreed policy.</p>	<p>Post title Head of Service for Fostering.</p>

<p>Disruption of Education at Key Stage 4 - the manager who can authorise the change of placement affecting a Looked After child in Key Stage 4</p>	<p>Post title: Head of Service</p> <p>*Decision to be made in consultation with the Head teacher Virtual School.</p>
<p>Immediate Placement of a Looked After Child with Connected Person - the manager who can authorise the placement of a Looked After child with a family or friend ('Connected Person') who is not already approved as a foster carer.</p>	<p>Post title: Head of Service</p>
<p>Placement of a Looked After Child subject to Care Order or Interim Care Order with Parents - the manager who can authorise the placement of a Looked After child with a parent, person with Parental Responsibility. This will include placements made by the Court under Section 38 (6).</p>	<p>Post title: Assistant Director of Social Care or Head of Service in their absence.</p> <p>*Subject to Placement with Parent Regulations.</p>
<p>Discharge from Care Under S20 or revocation of a Care Order - the manager who can authorise a Looked After Childs accommodation under S20 to be ended or revocation of a Care Order.</p>	<p>Post title: Head of Service Placement /resource panel</p>
<p>S20 Ceasing for 16/17 yr. old – the manager who can agree to a S20 placement ending when a young person is 16/17 yrs. old. <i>Where a child has been looked after for at least 20 working days, the decision to cease to look after her/him must not be put into effect until it has been approved by the DCS under regulation 39(5).</i></p>	<p>Post title Director of Children Services Assistant Director in absence or delegated</p>

<p>Application for a Supervision Order - the manager who can authorise an application for a Supervision Order for a child.</p>	<p>Post title: Legal Gateway panel</p>
<p>Adaptations to a Carers Home - the manager who can approve adaptations to a Carers Home to enable them to care for a child.</p>	<p>Post title: Director of Children Services</p> <p>Review and advice will be provided by Assistant Director of Social Care and the decision will be subject of an Executive Decision.</p>
<p>Looked after child having a holiday in school term time - the manager who can agree for a looked after child to have time of school for a holiday in school term time.</p>	<p>Post title: Head of Service in consultation with the Head of Virtual School.</p>
<p>Approval of a child we look after to go into the Army - the manager who can agree for a looked after child to go into the Army.</p>	<p>Post title: Director of Children Services</p>