

**PEOPLE DIRECTORATE**

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE**

**Duty and Assessment Team**

**TRANSFER POLICY**

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 | 21/09/2020 |
| Date policy is effective from | 21/09/2020 |
| Status:   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](https://www.proceduresonline.com/halton/cs/index.html)  [Procedures](https://www.proceduresonline.com/halton/cs/index.html) |
| Related document(s) | * 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](https://www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/halton/index.html) * [Halton Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership](https://hcypsp.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk/) * Transfer of cases between teams (CiN/CiCCL) * (CiN/CiCCL) |
| Superseded document(s) | NA |
| Responsible officer(s) | Principal Manager, Duty and Assessment Team, Children in Need |

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# **INTRODUCTION**

A pilot Duty and Assessment team (DAT) has been created in response to Halton’s recent [Ofsted children’s Services inspection](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80471) (March 2020). The Duty and Assessment Team is made up of a Principal Manager, Practice Lead and five social workers. The Duty and Assessment team will be taking all the social care assessments from ICART, undertaking the SAP 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.

Halton Children and Families Service have agreed timescales for completing SAPs for Children and Young People. All assessments must be completed, written up and authorised within 45 working days. In Halton, the expectation is that nearly all SAPs will be completed within 38 working days. The SAP will be concluded at any point from day 1 to day 45 if this is agreed by the Principal Manager / Practice Lead. Management oversight will capture this within case observations on the child / young person’s case file (Carefirst / Eclipse).

# **OUTCOMES OF THE SINGLE ASSESSMENT PLAN**

Outcome of the Single Assessment Plan (SAP) include:

* 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 1: Cases transferring from the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to Child in Need.*
* Ongoing intervention from the Child in Need teams is not required. The Early Intervention Service is invited to a Child in Need meeting to give advice on how children and their families can access targeted support to meet their needs on a CAF (Common Assessment Framework). See *Appendix 2:* *Cases transferring from Children’s Social Care to Early Help*
* On rare occasions, emergency protective action may be taken and the child / young person becomes a Child in Care either in the short to mid-term.
* The child’s needs may be met through a single agency response or through universal services.

# **OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES**

# **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 Help service if direct work can be completed as part of the SAP and closed following this.

# **Siblings already open for assessment**

Wherever possible, one social worker should work with the whole family group. If a sibling is already open to a Social Worker in the Child in Need teams and a referral is made on a sibling not open to the team then the SAP will be allocated to the Child in Need team.

# **Children closed within 3 months to the Child in Need team**

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.

# **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** **Flexibility**

This policy must be used flexibly and with discretion between teams in order to provide high quality services for children and their families. This will involve professional judgement, assessment, cooperation and effective communication between Practice Leads / Principal Managers and the teams they manage.

# **3.8 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.

# **3.9 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.

# **PROCEDURE FOR TRANSFER 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 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.

# **4.2 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 has 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](file:///C:\Users\ellisons\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\HQ7JSGT6\Halton%20Children%20and%20Young%20People%20Safeguarding%20Partnership%20Online%20Procedures).

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.

# **4.3 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.

# **4.4 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.



**APPENDIX 1**

**Cases transferring from the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to Child in Need**

Social Worker to circulate minutes/plan within 3 working days of the CIN Meeting.

Child / young person to transfer to the Child in Need Team.

CIN minutes/plan to inform support and intervention for the family.

CIN Meeting (Virtual) - assessed needs to be considered and discussed at the meeting - plan to be agreed by all agencies and family.

Allocated Social Worker to invite the Child in Need team to a planned CIN Meeting (which will be held virtually during covid19) via email – **10 working days** prior to date of meeting (minimum).



**APPENDIX 2**

**Cases transferring from Children’s Social Care to Early Help**

Allocated Social Worker to invite Locality Early Help to CIN Meeting (which will be held virtually during covid19) via email - **2 weeks** prior to date of meeting

If the CIN plan is for the child under 5 children Centre Early Help invite maybe more appropriate so please invite them

CIN minutes/plan to inform

CAF which **must** include what is required of level 2 support and a risk assessment

CIN Meeting (Virtual) - assessed need/s to be considered and discussed at the meeting - plan to be agreed by all agencies and family

Family remain Level 3 - case to remain open to CSC

Social Worker to circulate minutes/plan within 2 weeks of CIN Meeting

Family require Early Help

No current need/s identified - universal entitlement offered

Family has remaining needs and requires ongoing support

Multi-agency plan - Level 2

Family has outstanding needs to be met within universal plus - possible signpost to other service or level 2 support without CAF needed

**Covid19** -If a case is stepped down to early help the family must be informed that the request for face to face early help will be considered on a case by case basis. For most cases telephone and virtual meetings will be the support offered during lockdown restrictions.

**Also 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.



**APPENDIX 3**

**Cases transferring from the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to Child in Need Team (CIN) following a Child Protection Conference**

Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) held

Child / young person made subject to a Child Protection Plan

Child / young person is not at risk of significant harm. Child in Need procedures to continue

Child in Need meeting held within 10 working days. Child/young person to transfer to the Child in Need Team following this meeting

Initial Core Group meeting held within 10 working days. Child / young person to transfer to the Child in Need team following this meeting

**APPENDIX 4**

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

Emergency court hearing convened and Interim Care Order granted.

Initial care planning meeting to be held within 72 hours of the court hearing by the Duty and Assessment team.

Child in Need Social Worker to be invited.

Child / young person to transfer to the Child in Need team following the initial care planning meeting.



**APPENDIX 5**

**Child / Young Person Transfer – Quality Assurance tool (Duty & Assessment)**

|  |
| --- |
| **Child(ren)’s Name:** |
| **Carefirst / Eclipse number:** |
| **Worker/Co-Worker:** |
| **Transferring 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 |  |  |
| Date of last Supervision recorded on Carefirst / Eclipse. |  |  |
| Date of last Management oversight recorded on Carefirst / Eclipse. |  |  |
| Manager’s rationale for Transfer |  |  |

**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.