**Children’s Social Work and Safeguarding Step Down To Targeted Early Help and Other Early Help Service Guidance \*NB if social workers are requiring intervention from Targeted Early Help Services as part of a CP/CIN plan please see the pathway on overview sheet**

1. Stepping down from a Statutory social work assessment or intervention to either, Targeted Early Help or Early Help, requires a coordinated consistent approach by the social worker and the services receiving the request to provide support or intervention for a child or and family, to ensure it is effective. Stepping down refers to the process of enabling children and families to access the right services at the right time, at the right level, from Social Work to Early Help. The principals for this should reflect the theoretical model adopted in Shropshire, Relationship Based Practice, which puts emphasis and focus on how we work within relationships to provide excellent services for children and families in need of help and or support. This includes only intervening with statutory powers when neccerssary to keep children safe from harm and promote their welfare, and where safe to do so this should be at an Early Help level.

Feedback from our service users has highlighted the importance of effective step down at all parts of the process.

1. **These Question should inform the step down planning between the social worker, the child and family and the new Lead Professional:**

The social worker will have gained consent to share the following information with those involved in the stepping down process and the child and parent/carer(s) will be fully engaged with the requirement for a further plan to provide support and/or intervention.

* What were the risks and needs in this situation that required social work intervention?
* What work has been done to address/reduce level of risk and strengthen family functioning?
* What are the current protective factors? (the things that keep the child safe and well)
* Why is the case stepping down at this time?
* What are the outcomes that still need to be achieved through our integrated working model of Early Help?
* How do these outcomes relate to the Strengthening Family ‘problem’ criteria? (Social worker/LP)
* What would it look like if risk were to increase? (early warning signs)
* What actions should be taken if risk increases?
* Have you provided all the most recent information to the child, parent/carer and professionals that have been identified to engage with the next level of support and or intervention?
* Has a closure summary been fully completed which identifies all professionals involved and contingency for a step up should risk increase?

**Following questions are used as a checklist at the step down meetings see appendix A**

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| **3.a Step Down from Assessment Teams, to all Targeted Early Help Services** |

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| The Social Worker (SW) will discuss the case with their Team Manager who will be in agreement to step down to the appropriate level of service within Targeted Early Help (EH), as per the social work assessment (SWA) recommendations. | The SW will have shared their thoughts and intentions to step down with the child/young person & family and understood their views on this. Discuss contingency plan if risk of non-engagement plus alternative options if risk is not managed. |

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| The SW will talk to the child/young person and family about the agreed plan to step down to secure their full engagement and consent to sharing information with the agencies involved in the EH Whole Family Action Plan.  SW to obtain signed Strengthening Families (SF) consent form **\***  **Process:** SW to obtain a signed consent form from families to undertake their SW assessment, at the same time they also get families to sign a SF consent form **\***. Both forms are scanned onto carefirst under carestore. If a Targeted EH Service does not have access to carefirst, the EH Manager will forward the signed SF consent form onto them.  **\*At least a signature from one parent/carer living within the household is required before any request for intervention is accepted. Please consider the application of current GDPR consent guidance Article (8), Recital (38).**  <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016R0679&from=EN> | The EH Manager finds out identification of a worker across all Targeted EH Services to accept step downs by emailing the Targeted EH Operational Managers prior to step down meetings taking place. |

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| An EH Manager will meet with an Assessment Team Manager at a weekly step down meeting to step cases down to all Targeted EH Services. The SF consent form shared and checklist in appendix A discussed for all cases.  **Process:** Assessment Team Manager will share the carefirst numbers of all cases stepping down, share where the SF signed consent is saved on carestore, share the SWA and recommendations, discuss and agree with EH Manager the role of Targeted EH Service and discuss the checklist in appendix A for all cases stepping down. | The EH Manager will also be notified of all cases stepping down to EH Services at the weekly step down meeting.    Please follow guidance 3.b to step down to all other Early Help Services |
| The EH Manager will liaise with the Targeted EH Operational Managers who ensure a Lead Professional (LP) is allocated.  **Process:** EH Manager will share with the appropriate Targeted EH Operational Managers the carefirst numbers of cases stepping down, share where the SF signed consent is saved on carestore, share the SWA and recommendations, discuss, agree the role of Targeted EH Services for the cases and share information regarding the discussions that took place around the checklist in appendix A.  The Operational Managers will ensure the child/young person and family are added to ECINs. | |

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| The LP to thoroughly read the SW Assessment prior to arranging a visit to meet the child/young person and family and arranging the first EHPM.  **Process:**   * First visit LP to meet the child/young person and family. * Second visit LP will be responsible for arranging Early Help Partnership Meeting (EHPM). * Third visit LP to complete and record Whole Family Webstar on ECINS | The LP will invite agencies who will be involved with the family by contacting the parent/carer and child/young person(s) to inform them of the EHPM date and agencies to be involved as per the SW Assessment recommendations.  At this EHPM the LP will be responsible for developing the EH Whole Family Action Plan which will be, monitored and reviewed on ECINs.  LP to set date for next EHPM at this meeting. |

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| The LP will be responsible for coordinating future EHPM, recording the EH Whole Family Action Plan on ECINs and monitoring and reviewing the progress of the plan, including updating the plan on a regular basis. | If short breaks at Havenbrook are in place, the registered manager for Havenbrook should be invited to the EHPM and a review date for the short breaks should be in place. | A contingency plan should be agreed in the first EHPM, discussing risk of non-engagement and alternative options if risk is not managed |

The line manager of the lead professional must monitor, support, and review cases that have been stepped down from social care to ensure a co-ordinated support package is maintained until closure. This will ensure the Early Help Whole Family Action Plan outcomes have been achieved. If new concerns arise or family dis-engage, a consultation with an Early Help Social Worker via COMPASS can be accessed if there are concerns regarding the welfare of a child. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported following the appropriate procedure and always followed up with a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).

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| **3.b Step Down from Assessment Teams, to Early Help Services with Lead Professional (LP) identified** |

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| The Social Worker (SW) will discuss the case with their Team Manager who will be in agreement to step down to the appropriate level of service within Early Help (EH), as per the social work assessment recommendations. | The SW will have shared their thoughts and intentions to step down with the child/young person family, multi-agency partners and all will be in agreement that an EH Whole Family Action Plan will meet the needs of the child/young person and family.  Discuss contingency plan with child/young person and family if risk of non-engagement plus alternative options if risk is not managed. |

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| The SW will talk to the child/young person and family about the agreed plan to step down to secure their full engagement and consent to sharing information with the agencies involved in the EH Whole Family Action Plan.  SW to obtain signed Strengthening Families consent form **\*** and discuss checklist in appendix A with the LP before stepping case down.  **\*At least a signature from one parent/carer living within the household is required before any request for intervention is accepted. Please consider the application of current GDPR consent guidance Article (8), Recital (38).**  <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016R0679&from=EN> | The EH Manager will be notified of all cases stepping down to EH Services at the weekly step down meeting.  EH Manager to liaise with Strengthening Families (SF) team who will be responsible for adding the child/young person and family to ECINs before the first Early Help Partnership Meeting (EHPM). The SF team will allocate cases appropriately to Locality Development Officer (LDO) to support and monitor case management.  **Process:** The Assessment Team Manager will share the name of setting, name of identified Lead Professional (LP), date of step down meeting due to take place with setting/family/other agencies involved and SW, to monitor EH activity is taking place.  EH Manager to email SF team this information and where the signed consent is saved on carestore to enable them to add the family onto ECINs (SF team will only add EH Service step down cases onto ECINs). SF team to notify the relevant EH Service LP that the case is on ECINs. |

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| The SW will have identified the LP and be responsible for arranging the first EHPM, inviting agencies who will be involved with the family and contacting the parent/carer and child/young person(s) to inform them of the meeting date and agencies to be involved as per the SW assessment recommendations. | At this EHPM the LP will be responsible for; coordinating and recording the Whole Family Webstar, formulating and completing the EH Whole Family Action Plan and ensuring it is sufficiently monitored and reviewed on ECINs.  LP to set date of next EHPM at this meeting.  Cases allocated appropriately to Locality Development Officer (LDO) to support and monitor case management.  Oversight by LDO remains until outcomes achieved.  Cases managed by universal agencies, will be checked by Strengthening Families Team for activity, and monitored for eligibility for claim submission. |

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| The LP will be responsible for coordinating future EHPM, recording the EH Whole Family Action Plan on ECINS and monitoring and reviewing the progress of the plan, including updating the plan on a regular basis. | If short breaks at Havenbrook are in place, the registered manager for Havenbrook should be invited to the EHPM and a review date for the short breaks should be in place | A contingency plan should be agreed in the first meeting, discussing risk of non-engagement and alternative options if risk is not managed. |

The line manager of the lead professional must monitor, support, and review cases that have been stepped down from social care to ensure a co-ordinated support package is maintained until closure. This will ensure the Early Help Whole Family Action Plan outcomes have been achieved. If new concerns arise or family dis-engage, a consultation with an Early Help Social Worker via COMPASS can be accessed if there are concerns regarding the welfare of a child. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported following the appropriate procedure and always followed up with a MARF.

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| **4.a Step down from children’s Case management Teams, including Disabled Children’s Team (DCT) to Targeted Early Help Services**  **NB-**Cases can only step down straight from a child protection plan to Early Help without a period of child in need planning where there has been service manager approval. In most cases a period of child in need planning will take place which as a minimum will include one home visit where the child is spoken to alone and one child in need planning meeting where arrangements for the step down are agreed and planned. |

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| The Social Worker (SW) will discuss the case with the Team Manager who will be in agreement that the needs of the child/young person and family have been met and the actions within the CIN/CP plan have been achieved. | The discussion will consider if there are any outstanding support needs for the family, which require an Early Help (EH) Whole Family Action Plan. |

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| The SW will talk to the child/young person, family and multi-agency partners about the intention to step down to Targeted EH Services to secure their full engagement and consent to sharing information about the agreed plan. Discuss contingency plan with child/young person and family if risk of non-engagement, plus alternative options if risk is not managed.  SW to obtain a signed Strengthening Families (SF) consent form (signed on both sides and relevant boxes ticked on the consent form).  **Process:** SW to obtain a signed SF consent form from family when child/young person, family and multi-agency partners agree to step down to Targeted EH Services. SF consent form is scanned onto carefirst under carestore. If a Targeted EH Service does not have access to carefirst, the EH Manager will securely forward the signed consent form onto them. SW to arrange Step down to Early Help meeting (Final CIN review/CP core group) in advance of step down to ensure coordinated transfer to Targeted Early Help support. |

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| The EH Manager finds out identification of a worker across all Targeted EH Services to accept step downs by emailing the Targeted EH Operational Managers prior to step down meeting taking place.  The Case Management Managers and EH Manager will meet at a monthly step down meeting to discuss cases stepping down to all Targeted EH Services. | At the monthly step down meetings the dates/times of the Final CIN review/CP core group are shared, SF consent forms shared and checklist in appendix A is discussed for all cases with EH Manager.  **Process:** Case Management Managers will share the carefirst numbers of all cases stepping down, share where SF signed consent is saved on carestore, share the SWA and recommendations, discuss and agree with EH Manager the role of Targeted EH Service and discuss the checklist in appendix A for all cases stepping down. | The EH Manager will also be notified of all cases stepping down to EH Services at the monthly step down meeting.  EH Manager to liaise with SF team who will be responsible for adding the EH Services step down cases to ECINs before the Final CIN review/CP core group meeting takes place.  **Process:** Case Management Managers will share the name of setting, name of identified Lead Professional (LP), date of Final CIN review/CP core group due to take place. EH Manager to email SF team this information and where the signed consent is saved on carestore to enable them to add the family onto ECINs (SF team will only add EH Service step down cases onto ECINs). SF team to notify the relevant EH Service LP that the case is on ECINs. |

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| The EH Manager would liaise with the Targeted EH Operational Managers to ensure LP is allocated and, where possible, allocated worker to attend Final CIN review/CP core group.  **Process:** EH Manager will share with the appropriate Targeted EH Operational Managers the carefirst numbers of cases stepping down, share where the SF signed consent is saved on carestore. They will also share the SW assessment, CIN/CP plan, CIN/CP plan progress report, date and time of the Final CIN review/CP core group meeting discuss, agree the role of Targeted EH Services for the cases and share information regarding the discussions that took place around the checklist in appendix A.  The Operational Mangers will ensure the child/young person and family are added to ECINs before the Final CIN review meeting takes place. |

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| SW will arrange the Final CIN review/CP core group and the case will be formally stepped down to the LP. At the meeting the LP will be responsible for formulating and completing the EH Whole Family Action Plan, focusing on any remaining concerns set out as part of the CIN plan. This will be monitored and reviewed on ECINs, Webstar assessment scores can be completed as part of this meeting if appropriate. LP will be responsible for coordinating, recording and reviewing the Whole Family Webstar.  The LP to set date of next EH Partnership Meeting (EHPM) at the meeting and ensure that the whole family assessment and initial whole family plan are in place for the meeting. | LP will be responsible for coordinating future EHPM, recording, monitoring and reviewing the progress of the plan, including updating the plan on a regular basis. |

The line manager of the lead professional must monitor, support, and review cases that have been stepped down from social care to ensure a co-ordinated support package is maintained until closure. This will ensure the Early Help Whole Family Action Plan outcomes have been achieved. If new concerns arise or family dis-engage, a consultation with an Early Help Social Worker via COMPASS can be accessed if there are concerns regarding the welfare of a child. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported following the appropriate procedure and always followed up with a MARF.

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| **4.b Step down from children’s Case management Teams, including Disabled Children’s Team (DCT) to Early Help Services** |

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| The Social Worker (SW) will discuss the case with the Team Manager who will be in agreement that the needs of the child/young person and family have been met and the actions within the CIN/CP plan have been achieved. | The discussion will consider if there are any outstanding support needs for the family, which require an Early Help (EH) Whole Family Action Plan. |

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| The SW will talk to the child/young person and family about the agreed plan to step down to secure their full engagement and consent to sharing information with the agencies involved.  The SW will discuss contingency plan with child/young person and family if risk of non-engagement, plus alternative options if risk is not managed. | The SW will discuss the intention to step down with the multi-agency partners, where there is agreement for this to happen a Lead Professional (LP) will be identified and timing of step down agreed.  The SW will discuss contingency plan with LP if risk of non-engagement, plus alternative options if risk is not managed. | Once agreed the SW will ensure the LP, child/young person, family and supporting members of the EH Partnership Meeting (EHPM) have all the relevant information to inform the EH Whole Family Action Plan.  SW to obtain a signed Strengthening Families (SF) consent form (signed on both sides and relevant boxes ticked on the consent form).  **Process:** SW to obtain a signed SF consent form from families when child/young person, family and multi-agency partners agree to step down to EH Services. SF consent form is scanned onto carefirst under carestore. |

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| The EH Manager will also be notified of all cases stepping down to EH Services at the monthly Case Management step down meeting.  EH Manager to liaise with SF team who will be responsible for adding the EH Services step down cases to ECINs before the Final CIN review/CP core group meeting takes place. SF team will notify the LP that the case is on ECINS.  **Process:** Case Management Managers will share the name of setting, name of identified Lead Professional (LP), date of Final CIN review/CP core group due to take place. EH Manager to email SF team this information and where the signed consent is saved on carestore to enable them to add the family onto ECINs (SF team will only add EH Service step down cases onto ECINs). SF team will notify the EH Service LP that the case has been added onto ECINS. |

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| SW will arrange the Final CIN review/CP core group and the case will be formally stepped down to the LP. At the meeting the LP will be responsible for formulating and completing the EH Whole Family Action Plan, monitored and reviewed on ECINs, Webstar assessment scores can be completed as part of this meeting. LP will be responsible for coordinating, recording and reviewing the Whole Family Webstar.  The LP to set date of next EH Partnership Meeting (EHPM) at the meeting. | LP will be responsible for coordinating future EHPM, recording, monitoring and reviewing the progress of the plan, including updating the plan on a regular basis.  Cases allocated appropriately to Locality Development Officer (LDO) to support and monitor case management.  Oversight by LDO remains until outcomes achieved.  Cases managed by universal agencies, will be checked by Strengthening Families Team for activity, and monitored for eligibility for claim submission. |

The line manager of the lead professional must monitor, support, and review cases that have been stepped down from social care to ensure a co-ordinated support package is maintained until closure. This will ensure the Early Help Whole Family Action Plan outcomes have been achieved. If new concerns arise or family dis-engage, a consultation with an Early Help Social Worker via COMPASS can be accessed if there are concerns regarding the welfare of a child. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported following the appropriate procedure and always followed up with a MARF.

**Appendix A**

**Step down meeting agenda**

**The following questions need to be discuss at step down meetings to ensure robust step down to Targeted Early Help/Early Help Services takes place;**

* The social worker will have gained consent to share the following information with those involved in the stepping down process and the child and parent/carer and fully engaged with the requirement for a further plan to provide support and or intervention.
* What were the risks and needs in this situation that required social work intervention.
* What work has been done to address/reduce level of risk and strengthen family functioning?
* What are the current protective factors? (the things that keep the child safe and well)
* Why is the case stepping down at this time?
* What are the outcomes that still need to be achieved through our integrated working model of Early Help?
* How do these outcomes relate to the Strengthening Family ‘problem’ criteria? (Social worker/LP)
* What would it look like if risk were to increase? (early warning signs)
* What actions should be taken if risk increases?
* Have you provided all the most recent information to the child, parent/carer and professionals that are required to provide the next level of support and or intervention?
* Has a closure summary been fully completed which identifies all professionals involved and criteria for a step up should risk increase?