

How can Preventative services help after Locality Children's Social Care?

A guide to 'stepping down' to Families Plus

Step down good practice guide and principles

- **Early identification of the possibility of a step down from social care is key.** Once identified, early discussions with the Preventative services' (PS) team manager is required.
- When stepping down, **the social worker must identify a specific, measurable and timescaled piece of work** for the PS worker to complete.
- **Families will need to understand and consent to the ongoing work,** and that this involves a whole family, multi-agency approach, where we will expect them to actively work with a FSW and attend reviews every 8 weeks.
- **Preventative staff do not 'monitor' family situations** and will also not pick up pieces of work which should have been completed within the CIN plan unless there is good reason why the social worker has not managed to complete it.
- When stepping down, a good practice process has been devised as per below. This is **designed to assist with a smooth transition where appropriate and to avoid inappropriate step downs** which result in families quickly stepping back up to social care.

Step Down Process

The following provides a guide for Social workers and Families plus staff on expectations of both teams when considering a step down to Families plus.

Monthly Team Manager Meetings between Social care and Families plus.	Social work Team Managers to flag upcoming CIN closures as possible step downs.
Request to Step Down to Early Help	Social Workers to complete workflow step on Mosaic and send to appropriate Families Plus team
	Families plus Practice Managers to review requests and clarify any points with Social Workers, recording discussions on the form
CIN review meetings	Families Plus Managers to be invited to attend upcoming CIN meetings (if above steps are completed and adequate notice given).

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	Decision to agree step down or not taken at this point. If agreed, Families plus will ‘green tick’ the Step-Down request.
Allocated to Families Plus	Families Plus will then allocate a worker within a maximum of 20 working days but often sooner
Social Care to close their involvement	

Families Plus Team Manager and Locality Team Managers will have a monthly ‘Step Down’ meeting in both the North and South hubs. This will give us an opportunity to talk through and strengthen relationships between teams, encourage step downs to Families Plus from CIN and improve this process so that is quicker, easier and more effective for families (at this meeting consideration can be given to YPS involvement and the Families plus TM will take this back to the YPS manager for discussion).

Social Care Team Managers will bring to these meetings the families they are due to close to CIN in upcoming months *and* which would benefit from a focussed piece of work within Early Help. The dates and times of upcoming CIN reviews will be shared by Social Care. Discussions within these managerial ‘step down’ meetings does not mean Families Plus are formally accepting a step down.

Families Plus Team Managers will arrange for a Practice Manager to attend the upcoming CIN meeting wherever possible but need to be given at least 3 weeks notice AND the social worker needs to have completed a ‘step down to Early Help’ form on Mosaic and sent it to the relevant team (North or South 0-5 or 5-18). Within this form it is expected that the social worker will evidence a clear ongoing worry statement, a goal Families Plus will be supporting the family achieve and evidence of a clear safety plan sustained over time so that the risk of stepping back up to social care is reduced. With adequate notice of the CIN meeting and a step down form received, Families Plus will endeavour to attend the CIN review meeting.

The Practice Manager will review the history and needs of the child(ren) and discuss directly with Social Worker if necessary to clarify points. Any discussions will be recorded directly on the ‘Request to Step Down to Early Help’ form.

At the CIN meeting, the Families Plus Practice Manager will ensure it is appropriate to step down based on the most up to date information. We would expect within this meeting a clear worry statement and wellbeing goal to be shared with the family. Consent and willingness to work voluntarily with Families Plus will also be confirmed with the family.

The manager will provide the family and other professionals with contact details of the Families Plus team. This is where Families Plus will formally accept the request to step down and ‘green tick’ the ‘Request to step down’ form on Mosaic. The next

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action should be 'Early Help Review' and should be added by the Families Plus manager at this time.

It is from this date that Families Plus agree to allocate a Family Support Worker within 20 working days. Once step down is agreed, it is mandatory for a joint and meaningful handover visit to be completed between the social worker and the PS worker.

If between our monthly meetings, a social worker or team manager would like to discuss the suitability of a step down to Families Plus, or what Families Plus offer they are welcome to reach out to a Team Manager or a Practice Manager. However, a step down will not be formally accepted during these discussions.

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Footnote:

NB - We are planning an interface workshop with Response and Preventative Services team managers in April 2024 and separate guidance will come from that about step downs from Response to PS teams.