

## Step Up/Step Down/Step Across July 2020

### Contents

<b>1. Principles Underpinning the Transfer of Children</b> .....	1
<b>2. Locality Step Up/Step Down Meeting</b> .....	2
<b>3. The Handover Process between Services</b> .....	2
<b>4. Handovers between Practitioners in the Same Service</b> .....	3
<b>4.1 Transfer/closure summaries &amp; case records</b> .....	3
<b>4.2 Handover meetings/visits</b> .....	4
<b>5. Handovers between Statutory Children’s Social Work Service and Locality Early Help Service</b> .....	4
<b>5.1 Step Up from Early Help Locality Service to Children’s Social Care</b> .....	4
<b>5.2 Step Down from Children’s Social Care to Locality Early Help Service</b> .....	4
<b>6. Handover Points between Social Work Services</b> .....	5
<b>6.1 Children who are disabled (CWAD)</b> .....	5
<b>6.2 Permanence Team</b> .....	5
<b>6.3 The Leaving Care Service</b> .....	5
<b>7. Dispute resolution</b>	
.....	6
<b>Appendix 1</b> .....	<b>The Early Help Pathway- Step Down</b>
.....	7

### 1. Principles Underpinning the Transfer of Children

This document sets out principles and processes regarding the handover of children moving to other teams. The document refers to the Early Help practitioner – this can be either an Early Help family worker or a practitioner within the Education Service both of which deliver Early Help Services.

For the handover of children to work safely and as smoothly as possible for the child & family, professional judgment will be required to ensure that this takes place at the right time for the child. At all times, the needs of the child are paramount when considering a change of the adult who is helping them. A change of practitioner is a significant event for a child and family and needs sensitive and careful handling by managers and practitioners.

We are committed to working transparently and openly with the families to support analysis of and response to needs and risks. This means the lead practitioner may agree with the family to invite further expertise from the locality team or local community to the Core Group or Team Around the Family at any time, for a given period, to bolster the plan. This will enable a gradual and warm handover should there be a clear need to step up, step down or step across to a different lead practitioner.

## **2. Locality Step Up/Step Down Meeting**

---

The Locality Step Up/Step Down Meeting will oversee handovers and co-working requests in the case-work pathway e.g., allocation of Personal Advisor, Step Down to Early Help.

In doing so the Locality Step Up/Step Down Meeting will facilitate children and their families to access the right service at the right time for only as long as is necessary.

The Locality Step Up/Step Down Meeting meets weekly on a Tuesday between 2pm – 5pm and is chaired by the Locality service manager for education and early help and is attended by relevant team managers.

## **3. The Handover Process between Services**

Handovers of children between practitioners and/or services will be timely, ensuring as much continuity as possible for families. All handovers between services will be discussed and ratified through the weekly Step Up/Step Down Meeting.

- a) The allocated practitioner completes the Handover Request – for now this is a paper form with a plan to build into Mosaic.
- b) The Handover Request should be emailed to Step Up/Step Down Meeting Administrator by noon on the Friday prior to Step up/Step Down Meeting where the request is being discussed.
- c) On receipt, the Step Up/Step Down Administrator will add the child's name to the next agenda and circulate to team managers on the same day to allow for preparation. Preparation will include familiarising self with those children transferring in to own service and identifying names of workers that children will be transferring to. Preparation will also include being assured that the child's case record is up to date and ready to transfer.
- d) Team manager and social worker attends Step Up/Step Down Meeting to present reason for handover or co-work request.
- e) Outcome agreed
- f) Handover is agreed at the following

- i. On completion of Assessment and at first planning meeting (CIN/Early Help)
  - ii. At subsequent Planning Meeting (CIN, Early Help, CIC Review)
  - iii. Within Permanence Planning Process
- g) Pending change of worker is discussed with family and professionals at relevant planning meeting.
- h) Prior to handover, team manager oversight ensures child's case file record is up to date and ready for handover.
- i) Handover held with the family between transferring and receiving practitioners, within 5 working days of the Locality Step Up/Step Down Meeting. (Where this is a handover between practitioners in the same service, the relevant managers will ensure its timeliness.)
- j) Letters sent to family and professionals confirming a change of service/practitioner/co-worker and date of change.

#### **4. Handovers between Practitioners in the Same Service**

---

Team managers will decide and have oversight of re-allocations between practitioners in the same service area. The above steps (f) to (j) also apply to changes of allocated practitioner as best practice. There may be occasions where this is not possible – for example when the re-allocation is required due to a team member being off sick.

Each child should have a named allocated practitioner at all times. If difficulties are experienced due to capacity, this should be immediately raised with the relevant Service Manager.

If a family are receiving a service and move locality within Dorset, case responsibility will mostly remain within the locality service originally allocated unless there is a meaningful and child centered reason to re-allocate.

##### **4.1 Transfer/closure summaries & case records**

Handover arrangements will always be mindful of the need to ensure the safety of children. It is essential that good quality information is passed from the practitioner/service to prevent gaps in knowledge and delay in activity.

Wherever a child experiences a handover between practitioner and/or service, the practitioner must ensure the child's record is up to date with all relevant information. The team manager is responsible for ensuring the case record is up to date before handover.

## 4.2 Handover meetings/visits

Children, young people, their parents/carers, and other professionals engaged with the family should always be advised of any plans to change practitioner and/or service in advance and as part of the step up/step down process. Handovers will involve a meeting or visit with the transferring and receiving practitioners, with the family. If this is not possible, the reasons will be explained to the family and recorded on child's record.

---

## 5. Handovers between Statutory Children's Social Work Service and Locality Early Help Service

### 5.1 Step Up from Early Help Locality Service to Children's Social Care

If the child or young person is at risk of, or suffering from significant harm, contact must be made with a consultant social worker in ChAD immediately. If a strategy meeting is convened the Early Help practitioner will attend, to ensure that all information held is shared in a timely way.

If the Early Help worker thinks the family's difficulties are deteriorating over time and the Team around the Family has become worried that the child is 'in need' the Early Help worker will alert the Early Help team manager who will consider **Step Up to Children's Social Care** via Locality Step Up/Step Down Meeting.

The Locality Early Help Service will always work transparently, talking to the family about any concerns and informing them of our actions, unless by doing so would place the child at further risk of harm. If the child is 'in need' of a statutory social work assessment, the family will be consulted, and consent sought prior to attending Locality Step Up/Step Down Meeting. The current Early Help Assessment and Plan should be included so that decisions reflect current information. If the decision is made to Step Up, the child will remain open to Early Help and the allocated social worker will join the Team around the Family to undertake the Child and Family Assessment (s47/ s17) and where required other pieces of work. During this assessment period it will be agreed what Early Help services will continue as part of the original plan. If the outcome determines the need for ongoing services either as Child in Need or Child Protection, then the decision will be made at the relevant planning meeting as to whether there is an ongoing role for Early Help.

### 5.2 Step Down from Children's Social Care to Locality Early Help Service

When children's social care has been helping a family, the level of need may have improved, and the family may no longer require a statutory service. To meet ongoing needs the family may access continued help from a non-statutory service. With agreement, families who have a high level of need and who want to continue to receive a service, can **Step Down to the Locality Early Help Service** from children's social care. To 'step down' the social worker will have attended the

Locality Step Up/Step Down Meeting and will have confirmed the decision with family and professionals to ensure that the handover is managed well. Handover process follows the Early Help Step Down Pathway (Appendix 1).

## **6. Handover Points between Social Work Services**

### **6.1 Children who are disabled (CWAD)**

Step up and Step Down between early help and social care within CWAD is currently managed by manager-to-manager discussion within the service. Steps (f)-(j) still apply.

If following a social work assessment in CWAD it is agreed with family and professionals that a child's needs may be better met in the Locality social work service, the handover process between services described in 3 above will be followed. The same will apply if the handover is from the Locality social work service to CWAD.

### **6.2 Permanence Team**

A child will step across to the Permanence Team from the social work team either at, 2<sup>nd</sup> Child in Care Review if Looked After s20 CA 1989 (unless the plan is to return home) or,

Conclusion of Care Proceedings.

The Locality Step Up/Step Down Meeting will take place between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> review for children who are in care under s20 of the Children Act 1989. A social worker from the Permanence Team will come alongside and build a relationship with the child prior to handover at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Child in Care review.

For children who are subject to proceedings, attendance at the Step Up/Step Down Meeting will take place between 6-8 weeks prior to Final Hearing. A social worker will ensure that parallel planning is well embedded and that the final care plan is achieved in a timely way following conclusion of proceedings.

### **6.3 The Leaving Care Service**

To support a smooth and well-managed transition to Leaving Care services the allocated social worker will attend the Locality Step Up/Step Down meeting when the child is between the age of 15 ½ yrs. and 16yrs. The Leaving Care team manager will allocate a personal advisor who will co-work with the allocated social worker on specific pieces of work, to build relationships until the young person becomes 18yrs.

For all children leaving care the following must be completed prior to handover:

- Develop 18+plus pathway plan
- Chronology to be up to date

- Accommodation plan agreed.
- All Children in Care episodes are completed/closed
- Any financial arrangements should be up to date
- ID, Passport and National Insurance Number to be in place (by 16yrs)

Where a young person's is receiving a service from CWAD and is a Child in Care, the process above will apply. The Leaving Care team manager will allocate a personal advisor to the child at 16 years who will co-work with the allocated CWAD social worker until the young person reaches at the least the age of 21 years. This can be extended if required up to the age of 25 as outlined in the Children & Social Work Act 2017 extension of the role of the PA to 25 yrs.

## 7. Dispute resolution

---

Managers will work co-operatively to resolve case transfer issues as they arise. **Resolution should in all cases be achieved within 1 working day.** The key aim is to ensure that managers work together to achieve the flow of cases.

## Appendix 1 The Early Help Pathway- Step Down

