



## **Children's Safeguarding and Family Help**

### **Working with families from other local authorities practice guidance**

Camden's Children and Learning Directorate uses relational practice as the foundation for all our work. Our integrative relational practice framework is based on our values, and is designed to help achieve the Directorate's purpose: to work with children, families and communities to make a positive, lasting difference to their futures, so they have the best start in life.

We recognise the impact of structural inequalities on the lives of the children and families we work with and as a service we will embrace inclusive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice based on our values and our mission to champion social justice.

Our practice framework centres on honest and compassionate relationships with those we serve and with each other. It is an expectation that all Directorate policies and procedures are implemented in line with our practice framework, and that any actions within policies and procedures reflect its ethics, values and practice expectations.

### 1 Introduction

- When families move across local authority boundaries, ensuring continuity of service for children can be difficult, especially if families move frequently. It is easy for the needs of these children to be overlooked because:
  - local authorities may be in dispute about case responsibility
  - families may have difficulties in accessing universal services such as health and education
  - families may lose contact with support networks from family, friends and professionals
  - information about the child's needs is not shared between agencies
  - agencies may not be aware that the child has moved.
- Camden aims to ensure that families moving in and out of the borough continue to receive the services they need and that the transfer of cases is carried out in a timely and efficient manner.
- Social workers should also be aware of the reasons for a family moving into Camden. Families with vulnerabilities are often at increased risk of moving due to issues such as housing problems, domestic abuse or risks from gang involvement or child exploitation. Families may be temporarily placed in another local authority by their own local authority or may choose to move in order to avoid contact with agencies.
- Where social workers work with families who are facing housing difficulties and are at risk of losing accommodation, it is essential to work in partnership with Housing services to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to enable them to remain in the borough in order to minimise disruption.

### 2 Scope of policy

- This policy sets out Camden's responsibilities with regards to:
  - transferring open cases to and from other local authorities where the family's move is permanent
  - working with other local authorities to agree provision of services for children and families who move into and out of the borough on a temporary basis.

## Families from other local authorities

- The policy covers child protection and children in need cases only; for Looked after children, the originating local authority (ie: the local authority who first looks after a child) remain responsible for that child as long as they have looked after or care leaver status.
- All cases transferring into Camden will be dealt with initially by the MASH team who will establish whether the case meets the threshold for a service from CSFH, and then allocated to a social work team via the daily discussion meeting.
- If the MASH assesses that the case reaches the threshold for a service from CSFH a letter will be sent to the transferring authority outlining the documents they need to provide.

### 3 Case responsibility

The following is based on section 6 of the London Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and will be followed by all London boroughs. It should also be used as a guide when discussing case responsibility with authorities outside of London.

#### General rules

- Where a child who is not already known to any local authority is found to be **in need**, the local authority where the child is living will be responsible for providing services whether they are resident on a temporary or permanent basis.
- However case responsibility will remain with any other local authority that is already providing a service to the child where the child is:
  - subject to a child protection plan or child in need plan
  - looked after or subject to a care order
  - subject to an on-going child in need or pre-birth assessment under section 17 or section 47.
- If the originating local authority is providing rent and subsistence as part of a child in need plan, responsibility for these costs will remain with the originating authority until the family's housing issues are resolved and they settle permanently. However, any other services and costs relating to the child's assessed needs should be provided for by the receiving authority.

## Families from other local authorities

- For unborn children, the originating local authority is responsible for carrying out prebirth assessments; if the mother is homeless the local authority where concerns arose will be responsible.
- Where the child is subject to any type of legal order, for example a care or supervision order, the home authority will retain full responsibility but may agree with the receiving authority to provide some services on their behalf for which the receiving authority may be reimbursed.
- Where the mother of a child in need is a looked after child or a care leaver from another borough, the authority where the mother is living will have case responsibility for the child but the placing authority must co-operate with any actions taken.
- Cases should be transferred as soon as possible but only after any on-going assessment has been completed.

### **Transfer following assessment/enquiry:**

- If, following an assessment, it is decided that an initial child protection case conference or a CIN review meeting needs to be convened, this will be the responsibility of the receiving authority.
- The originating authority should write requesting that the receiving authority make arrangements to hold the conference/meeting and this should be held within 15 working days of notification.
- The originating authority is responsible for providing reports; the receiving authority may delay any conference or meeting if a satisfactory report is not provided to help make a decision on the case. Any disputes regarding this must be resolved within 5 working days.

### **Children temporarily in another local authority area**

- Where concerns arise about a child temporarily in another local authority area, (for example at a school or hospital) responsibility for carrying out a section 47 investigation and taking any action needed to safeguard the child from any immediate harm lies with the local authority where the child is found.

## Families from other local authorities

- The host authority must notify the home authority as soon as possible but will retain responsibility for taking action to safeguard the child until it is confirmed that the home authority accepts responsibility. The home authority is expected to resume case responsibility following the strategy meeting.

## 4 Transfer of child protection cases

### General rules

- Case responsibility for child protection cases may only pass to another local authority once it is confirmed in writing that the authority accepts case responsibility, normally following a transfer in conference.
- Case responsibility will only transfer if the child is to live permanently in another borough.
- Case responsibility remains with the originating local authority where:
  - the child goes to live with relatives in another borough for a short time and will return home;
  - the child is staying in a hospital or residential setting for health or education reasons and will return home;
  - the child has been remanded in custody or received a custodial sentence;
  - the child and family have been temporarily rehoused in another borough for a period of less than 4 weeks;
  - the child has been moved to another borough due to concerns around child exploitation (up to 3 months);
  - care proceedings are likely to be issued immediately and the move has been instigated to avoid proceedings or may result in further harm to the child; however case responsibility can be transferred where the case has entered the PLO and assessment is still ongoing.
- Camden should consider retaining case responsibility where the family frequently moves in and out of Camden and transferring the cases would make it difficult to implement the child protection plan. A decision to retain case responsibility should be made by the team manager on the advice of the chair of the conference.
-

## Families from other local authorities

- Where case responsibility is being retained, social work managers may negotiate alternative arrangements for the responsibility and conduct of a case but this must be set out in a written agreement within 48 hours of discussions which should take place at a senior management level.

## Child protection cases transferring to Camden

***The following applies where a family moves into Camden and the child is subject to a child protection plan in another borough.***

- If the child will be living in Camden on a **temporary** basis, they must be made the subject of a temporary protection plan in Camden. Notification from the home authority may be made to the MASH team or directly to the Quality Assurance Unit.
- All information must be passed to the LADO and QA Support Officer who is responsible for loading this information onto MOSAIC so that the child's child protection status is flagged up. The Quality Assurance Unit will then notify this to Camden hospitals and the local police in case the child comes to their notice.
- Where a family moves into Camden **permanently** and the child is subject to a child protection plan in the home authority, section 6 of the pan London safeguarding procedures applies and the following should be carried out;
  - If notification from the transferring authority is initially made to the MASH team, the team will notify the Quality Assurance Unit who will make the child the subject of a temporary child protection plan prior to the transfer conference taking place.
  - If notification is made to the Quality Assurance Service in the first instance, the LADO and QA Support Officer will notify the MASH Manager.
- The MASH team will contact the transferring local authority requesting relevant case documents. When received, these should be uploaded into the *CP transfer in* step on MOSAIC and *the CP transfer in record* completed. The documents are:
  - current CP plan
  - minutes of any case conferences
  - any up to date assessments
  - chronology
  - up to date case summary.

## Families from other local authorities

- The *CP transfer in* step should be *Finished* as soon as all documentation is received and the conference must be held within 15 days of receiving the documentation in line with section 6.2.3 of the pan-London procedures. The timescale begins as soon as the social worker' clicks *Finish* on the *CP transfer in* step.
- The Business Support Officer must be contacted immediately to arrange a conference to ensure that the 15 day timescale is met.
- The MASH manager will then pass the case to the CIN team manager for allocation.
- If it is thought the documentation provided is not sufficient or the documents are not received in a timely manner, this should be referred to the relevant manager to take up with the home authority. The London child protection procedures requires any disagreement to be resolved within 5 working days of the date the documents are received. A decision may be made by the manager and the CPO to postpone the transfer in conference and the transferring local authority should be informed.
- The allocated social worker should begin the child protection workflow and liaise with the CPO and the transferring authority to make arrangements for the transfer in conference. Camden will be responsible for sending out invitations for the conference.
- Please note that a transfer in conference is treated as an initial conference and the relevant procedures should be followed. A copy of the minutes must be sent to the transferring authority as proof that Camden has accepted case responsibility.

## Child protection cases transferring out of Camden

- ***The following applies where a child who is subject to a child protection plan in Camden moves to another authority.*** It is essential that Camden notifies the host local authority whenever a child with a child protection plan moves into their area.
- If the child is moving to another borough on a **temporary** basis and Camden will retain case responsibility, the social worker should notify the LADO and QA Support Officer and will be asked to complete a *temporary registration request* that will be sent to the receiving authority.

## Families from other local authorities

- If the child is moving to another borough on a **permanent** basis:
  - Once it is known that the family is moving, the allocated social worker should contact the receiving authority's MASH/assessment team to notify them of the move and make arrangements for the transfer.
  - The receiving authority should provide a date for the transfer conference and this should be within 15 working days of Camden providing the relevant documents for London authorities but may be different in other areas.
  - The social worker should provide the receiving authority with:
    - copies of all assessments and updated assessments, chairs reports, conference minutes and any other relevant documents
    - a case summary
    - chronology
    - a list of those people to be invited to the conference
    - an updated assessment.
- At the end of the transfer conference, the social worker or manager should request written confirmation from the chair of the conference that the receiving authority is accepting case responsibility for the family as this will allow Camden to close the case.
- Once the transfer conference has taken place, the social worker or manager should write to the LADO and QA Support Officer to confirm this (and provide a copy of the letter) so that a transfer out episode can be generated ending the child protection workflow. The social worker can then complete the closure record and close the case.
- The CP Business Support Officer should also be notified so that the conference can be taken out of the child protection diary.

### **Children subject to section 47 enquires and/or assessment**

It is an expectation that case responsibility will remain with the originating authority during a section 47 enquiry or child in need assessment and should not be transferred between authorities until the enquiry or assessment is completed. Therefore, Camden will not transfer cases during section 47 enquiries and will not accept transfers until any on-going enquiry is complete.



## 5 Transfer of children in need cases

- The principles for deciding case responsibility where a child on a child in need plan moves to another local authority area can be found in section 4 of the *Child in need plans and reviews* policy: [Child in Need Plans and Reviews](#)
- All notifications from other local authorities or referrals for a family moving into Camden should be made to the MASH team and the MASH manager should write to the home local authority requesting copies of:
  - most recent assessments
  - The current CIN plans
  - a case summary
  - chronology
  - any relevant child protection documents.
- Where the child/ren have been subject to a child protection plan previously the case summary should include details of risks and protective factors. It should also be ascertained whether or not the originating authority intends to retain case responsibility and whether the move is temporary or permanent.
- The MASH manager will make a decision about whether or not the case meets the threshold for a service from CSFH or whether the family should be referred for an early help service. When making this decision, the manager will take into account the information in section 3 of this policy (case responsibility).
- This decision will be notified to the originating authority in writing and the case allocated to a social work team via the daily discussion meeting.
- The allocated social worker should complete the transfer in CIN summary, contact the originating authority to get as much information about the family as possible, and ensure copies of any assessments and plans are uploaded onto MOSAIC.
- The team manager or senior should decide whether or not a new child and family assessment should be carried out. New assessments should be carried out if the original assessment is more than a year old or the family's circumstances have changed.

## Families from other local authorities

- The allocated social worker should arrange a transfer in CIN initial review with the originating authority social worker and the child's professional network in order to review and update the current CIN plan for the child. The originating authority should provide a social work report for this meeting summarising their involvement with the family. At this point, the case will be formally transferred to Camden.

### **5.3 Working with families moving to Camden**

- Where families are moving into the area, social workers should:
  - ensure the previous local authority provides copies of all assessments and plans for the family
  - check that all the basic information provided, including dates of birth, is correct
  - find out the family's previous addresses going back at least 2 years
  - identify and get in contact with all agencies and professionals who have been working with the family
  - ensure the family are in receipt of universal services
  - consider why the family are moving; is it due to housing issues, are they fleeing violence or domestic abuse?
  - clarify who is part of the household
  - find out what support is the family currently receiving from agencies
  - find out what support the extended family can provide
  - be aware of any gaps in the professional network's knowledge of the family.

### **5.4 Children in need cases transferring out of Camden**

- Whenever a family is known to be moving to or living in another borough, the allocated social worker should discuss the case with their supervisor and notify the receiving local authority in writing immediately of the move. The notification should state whether Camden will be retaining case responsibility.
- The allocated social worker should also contact the receiving authority's duty team to discuss the case and provide copies of any assessments, plans and other key documents. Any requests for the original files to be transferred must be refused but arrangements can be made for the receiving authority's social worker to view the records at Camden's offices.

## Families from other local authorities

- The social worker should provide a report for any transfer in meeting as reasonably requested by the receiving authority and attend any transfer meeting as requested. It is recommended that the transfer summary may be a good structure for this report.
- The allocated social worker is responsible for completing the case closure episode but must ensure that they have received written confirmation from the receiving authority that case responsibility has been accepted. The case cannot be closed until this letter has been uploaded onto MOSAIC.
- The social worker should also notify the agencies in Camden who have been working with the family of the move so that they are able to contact their counterpart in the receiving authority to pass on any important information or transfer of records.
- If there are concerns that the receiving local authority is not providing services, this should be reported to the team manager who should take up the matter with their counterpart in the receiving local authority. If concerns remain, the matter should be escalated to the service manager or head of service to take action.

## 6 Transfer of cases involving supervision orders

Where a child from another local authority who is subject to a supervision order moves into Camden, the order will need to be transferred to Camden by the courts. Social workers will need to contact Legal Services to agree any action to be taken and what documents need to be provided to the court for the application.