



Children's Safeguarding and Family Help

Child in need and case management procedures

1 Purpose and scope

This document sets out the local procedures for the management of child in need (CIN) cases and should be read together with the *Child in need plans and reviews* policy: [Child in Need Plans and Reviews](#)

Children's Safeguarding and Family Help (CSFH) has a duty under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to provide services and support to children who are in need. A child in need is defined as **a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development**, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

2 Meeting with the family

- Full details on requirements for visits in CIN cases are set out in the *Home visits* policy. [home-visits-policy.pdf](#)
- Following allocation, social workers must make contact with families as soon as practicable to ensure parents are aware of the referral and the concerns held. Social workers should establish with the Contact Service/ MASH team whether families have been informed of the referral and if not, the reasons for this.
- *Working together* requires children to be seen by a qualified social worker as soon as possible after the referral and it is Camden's policy that a home visit should be carried out within **7 days** of a referral being accepted.
- When making contact with families, social workers should ensure that they make provision for any communications difficulties such as ensuring an interpreter is available.
- Where social workers have difficulty in making contact with families at this point, or they are experiencing hostility from families or cannot see the child alone, this should be immediately reported to the manager so that action can be taken; please see the *Working with non-engaging, resistant and hostile families* policy. [working-with-non-engaging-resistant-and-hostile-families.pdf](#)

3 Network checks and consent to information sharing

- As part of the assessment process, social workers must carry out network checks to gain background information on the child and their family from other professionals who are working with them.
- Social workers should check with the MASH team to find out what checks have been made.
- It is essential that where possible, social workers should explain to parents what information will be gathered during network checks, from whom, and what the information will be used for.
- CSFH has a legal basis under the Children Act 1989 to gather information from other agencies about the child and their family in order to safeguard children and do not need to obtain parental consent.
- However, it is best practice that parents are informed that information will be sought unless:
 - the child is in immediate danger and this will put the child at risk of further significant harm **or**
 - it would prejudice a criminal investigation **or**
 - it could lead to unjustifiable delay in enquiries.
- Parents should be made aware of the CSFH privacy notice that sets out the division's legal basis for and approach to information sharing available at:
[Social work services - Camden Council](#)

Network checks should be repeated on open CIN cases where a section 47 investigation is to be carried out where child protection concerns have arisen.

4 Planning and review processes for CIN cases

- The child and family assessment should contain **an outline plan** listing the recommendations made by the social worker detailing what actions and interventions are needed to support the family and meet the child's needs.
- The first CIN meeting will develop the outline plan to become the CIN plan based on the information contained in the child and family assessment which will be the social report to this meeting.

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- For subsequent CIN review meetings, social workers should update the assessment and record this on the *Child's plan* form on MOSAIC and this will be the report used at the meeting.
- Where an initial CIN review meeting is being held for a child who has returned home from a care episode the social worker must repeat the child and family assessment within the 4 week timetable. The *Repeat child and family assessment* task will be sent to the social worker's in-box after the CLA review where the decision was made.
- Details for recording CIN processes on MOSAIC can be found at: [CIN processes | Children's Policy & Practice Hub](#)

5 Timescales for CIN meetings

- The initial CIN meeting should be held within 2 weeks of completion of the child and family assessment.
- The second CIN review meeting should be held within 3 months of the initial meeting.
- Subsequent reviews should be held at a minimum of **every 3 months**.
- Where a case is stepped down to CIN from a child protection plan, the first CIN review will be held within 3 months of the date the child protection plan was discharged at conference.
- Where a case is stepped down to CIN from a care plan because the child has returned home, the first CIN review will be held within 4 weeks of the child being discharged from care.

6 Procedures for CIN meetings

6.1 Chairing the meetings

- CIN review meetings will normally be chaired by either the team manager or an Advanced social worker in the team. Social workers can also chair meetings where they have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience.
- If the case is held by a student social worker, their practice assessor should chair the meeting.

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- Initial CIN meetings held on cases where the child has returned home following a CLA episode may be chaired by the allocated CLA IRO where this is thought to be necessary due to the complexity of the case and to ensure the continued implementation of the child's plan.

6.2 Attendance

- Meetings should be attended by:
 - the manager or Advanced social worker where they are chairing the meeting
 - the allocated social worker
 - members of the professional network
 - the parents.
- Children of secondary school age should be encouraged to attend all or part of the review meeting where this is practicable and/or to meet with the chair to discuss the case.
- The allocated social worker is responsible for arranging meetings and sending out invitations for CIN meetings using the meetings episode on MOSAIC. The dates of ongoing CIN review meetings should be set at each review meeting.
- Chairs are responsible for taking notes of what was discussed at review meetings but the Safeguarding Meetings Team may be asked to provide a minute taker for complex cases where there is a large professional network

6.3 Meeting agenda

All CIN review meetings should address the following:

- What are we worried about?
- What is working well?
- What is not working well?
- What needs to happen?

6.4 Voice of the child/young person and parents

- It is important that social workers are able to make the child or young person's wishes and feelings known to the CIN review. This should be facilitated through direct work carried out with the child or young person or from any hypothesis made about an infant or young child's views from direct social worker observations.

- As part of the process of preparing for CIN review meetings, social workers should meet with the child prior to the meeting to help them complete the CIN consultation form, available at:
[consultation-form-cin-4-10.pdf](#)
[consultation-form-cin-11.pdf](#)
- There are 2 forms for the 4-10 year olds and 11+ age groups that help children to explore their feelings, share information about how things are at home and school and enable them to express their wishes with regard to who attends their review and what they want to say to the meeting. Social workers should help the child to complete the form and upload it onto the MOSAIC case record and share the form with the Chair prior to the meeting.
- In order to monitor how well children and parents are able to take part in CIN reviews and how helpful they find the meetings it is an expectation that social workers provide any parent or child who attends a CIN review with a user satisfaction form to complete.
[user-satisfaction-feedback-cin-cyp-digital.pdf](#)
[user-satisfaction-feedback-cin-parents-digital.pdf](#)

6.5 CIN review meetings

- The allocated social worker is responsible for completing an updated assessment that should be recorded on the child's plan and made available to the Chair of the meeting and shared with the family at least 2 days before the review.
- This is a best practice standard as it allows the family to consider the contents of the report and make any representations or ask for corrections in advance of the meeting and supports their participation.
- The allocated social worker is also responsible for arranging CIN reviews and should ensure that invitations are sent out within 10 working days of the review.
- The CIN review should:
 - identify progress on implementing the plan
 - decide whether the plan is meeting the child's needs and improving outcomes
 - consider the impact of any changes of family circumstances or any significant events

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- decide what changes should be made to the plan in order to ensure that work can continue towards meeting the child's identified needs
 - monitor the child's development over time
 - agree any contingency plan including escalation to child protection procedures or legal planning meeting
 - where appropriate, plan for case closure or step down to Early Help.
- The outcome of reviews should be recorded by the Chair using the CIN Chairs report/ updated plan and once authorised, the social worker should distribute the record to all those attending within 10 working days of the meeting.
 - There is no requirement for a midway review to take place between CIN review meetings but the case should be discussed during case supervision with the supervisor.

7 CIN reviews after 12 months

- Where a CIN case has been open for 12 months, the next scheduled CIN review should focus on what progress has been made to date and decide on the likely trajectory of the case, ensuring decisions, actions and contingency plans are reflected in the agreed CIN plan. This is to avoid drift and ensure timely decision-making for the child.
- Decisions may involve escalating the case (to child protection or pre-proceedings) or closure and/or step down to Early Help. The case may also remain a CIN case but the plan must reflect robust actions to progress work with the family.
- The review may decide that there is no longer a need for a statutory social work intervention and that the case should be closed. This should only happen if the professional network has no concerns, otherwise the case should remain open.
- If it is thought that the family no longer needs a social work service but needs further support, and that the case is suitable to be stepped down to Early Help, this should be planned for within the CIN review process. Social workers should follow the procedures set out in the *Step down to Early Help Services* procedures. Preparation for step down to Early Help must begin at least 1 month before the date of the final CIN review at which the case will be closed. [step-down-to-early-help-procedures.pdf](#)
- If the case is to close with no step down to Early Help, the review meeting should look at how arrangements to continue support to the family can be made by universal services. It should be made clear that another agency, for example the

school, can take the lead professional role and continue to co-ordinate multi-agency support through the team around the family or monitor the child's wellbeing on an ongoing basis.

8 CIN cases following care proceedings/supervision orders

- Where a child has been subject to care proceedings that have concluded with no order being made or with a Supervision Order made, with support to be offered under a CIN plan, team managers must ensure robust oversight of case planning and intervention.
- An initial CIN review should be held within 4 weeks of the conclusion of the proceedings in order to ensure that the services and timeframe for intervention agreed in the proceedings is implemented within the child's CIN plan.
- The first and the final review should be chaired by an IRO or CPO. Please refer to the *Supervision Orders* policy for further details on the conduct of reviews held on cases where a supervision order is in force. [supervision-order-policy.pdf](#)

9 Stepping down to a CIN plan

Where a child protection plan ends or a child is discharged from care the child will automatically become a child in need and cases will not generally be closed at this point as children and families will need continued help and support which should be planned for within the multi-agency framework.

9.1 Stepping down from a care plan

- Children may leave the care system because they return home or move on to a permanent placement. Where possible, discharge from care will be planned via the CLA review system. The final CLA review held before the child returns home or a court order is made will consider what support is needed and will make arrangements to put the most appropriate plan in place.
- CLA returning home will be offered continued support via a child in need plan. Social workers should refer to the procedures set out in the *Reunification policy and practice guidance* available at: [reunification-policy-and-practice-guidance.pdf](#)

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- CLA who have been discharged from care following an adoption order will receive specialist adoption support from the Regional Adoption agency and these cases will be closed to CSFH.
- CLA who have been discharged from care following a special guardianship order will be transferred to the Family, Friends and Fostering service for on-going support.
- CLA who had been remanded into care and who are subsequently discharged following court disposal may receive continued support via a child in need plan where they have assessed needs.
- For CLA who were looked after for a very short time in an emergency, the case will be closed following discharge from care.
- Where the child will be a child in need following discharge from care, the CLA review will agree that a CIN review is held within 4 weeks, chaired by the team manager, in order to agree the CIN plan. The case will remain open to the CLA social worker. It is vital that the new professional network is available to attend this review.
- Where CLA are moving on to a CIN plan:
 - the allocated social worker should repeat the child and family assessment
 - the team manager should complete the *Discharge from care* episode on MOSAIC and task the *CIN review meeting* outcome to the IRO
 - the IRO should complete the *Initial CIN Chairs report/Updated CIN plan* with the outline CIN plan agreed at the final CLA review and book the date for the next CIN review within 4 weeks.
- The IRO may chair the first CIN review where it is felt that the case is complex and the IRO wishes to ensure a smooth transition, for example key support to the child and parents is in place and that the plan agreed at the last CLA review is being implemented.
- Where cases are straightforward, for example cases where the child was accommodated under section 20 for a short time and then returns home, these cases are likely to be chaired by the team manager.

9.2 Stepping down from a child protection plan

- A case cannot be closed directly after a child protection plan is discharged at a review meeting. Instead, the child will become a child in need and the case must

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remain open as a CIN case for a minimum of 3 months when the first CIN review is held.

- A decision to discharge a child protection plan will be taken at a review case conference with the agreement of the professional network. The review conference should then go on to agree a CIN plan that continues to support parents to meet their child's needs. The plan should include a contingency plan for what will happen should members of the professional network have concerns about the child's welfare.
- A child protection plan may also end because the child:
 - has died
 - has left the UK
 - is living away from home on a full care order.
- In these circumstances, the conference chair will follow the procedures set out in the *Discharge of child protection plans* policy in order to end the plan without the need to convene a review case conference. [discharge-of-child-protection-plans.pdf](#)

9.3 Ending a child in need plan

- A CIN plan will end when a CIN review identifies that planned outcomes for the child have been achieved, the child is no longer in need and the case may be closed to CSFH (see section 9).
- If the family will require further support, this may be provided by universal services. The final CIN review should identify the agencies that will remain working with the family and the name of the professional taking over the role of lead professional.
- If the family will require an Early Help Service, this should be identified and arrangements put in place prior to the final CIN review. Please see the *Step-down to Early Help Services* procedures for more details. [step-down-to-early-help-procedures.pdf](#)

10 Case and transfer summary

Case and transfer summary records are a way of encapsulating information from the case record so that it is easy to share with others. The summary can be used in the following ways:

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- to provide summary information for families that enables them to reflect on the progress made and work to be carried out
- to help social workers monitor the effectiveness of the child's plan and services
- to provide information for team members working on the case while the allocated social worker is on leave
- to provide information for social workers who take over a case on transfer.

A case and transfer summary should be completed every 90 days and also:

- following any significant change of circumstance
- when transferring cases between social workers and teams
- whenever the allocated worker will be away for a period of more than 2 weeks.

Case and transfer summaries should record:

- the reason for CSFH involvement
- a summary of work undertaken
- details of outstanding tasks and meetings
- any issues that may arise on the case.

The case and transfer summary record can be accessed on MOSAIC as a new episode from the personal details screen. Once the social worker has completed the summary, it should be tasked to the manager or senior for authorisation. If the summary is being completed as a transfer summary, managers will be prompted by MOSAIC to de-allocate/re-allocate the case.

9 Closing a case

- The decision to close a case must only be taken when it is in the child's best interests, identified outcomes have been achieved and the child no longer needs a social work service.
- Social workers should discuss closure of any case with their manager during supervision and agree a timetable for closure. Consultation should then take place with the family and the professional network.

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- Consultation and planning for closure should ideally take place at the next scheduled review, which should be attended by the family and the professional network. This review should agree a timetable for closure and consider whether the case will be stepped down to Early Help Services.
- The views of the family and the network should be taken into account whenever closure is being considered, and any disagreement settled at team manager level between the agencies concerned.
- Closure of cases should be recorded on the closure record contained in the closure episode on MOSAIC where work has been carried out with the family following assessment. If the case will close directly following assessment social workers should complete the case closure section of the child and family assessment form.
- Once a manager has selected the “Closure record” outcome at the end of an episode, the closure record and the case closure/transfer checklist will appear in the social worker’s Incoming Work folder.
- The closure record contains the following information:
 - a summary of CSFH involvement
 - details of progress and outcomes
 - views of the parties
 - manager’s comments
 - the reason for closure.
- The completed closure record should be tasked to the manager or senior for authorisation and to de-allocate the case. Social workers should ensure that the case record is up to date and all episodes completed using the case closure/transfer checklist.
- Social workers are responsible for informing the family and the professional network in writing that the case will be closed.