



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

## **Allocation and transfer of cases**

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 Purpose of policy

- The movement of children's cases through CSFH teams from referral to case closure and the subsequent changes of social worker all contribute to the child's experience of having CSFH involved in their lives and defines "the child's journey".
- This policy sets out the process and provides the framework for allocating cases to a named worker following referral and transferring cases between CSFH teams as appropriate to the circumstances of the case.
- The purpose is to ensure the child, and their family receive a social work service from the most appropriate team and experience as few changes of social worker as possible throughout their journey.
- The policy applies to all CSFH social work teams.

## 2. Principles

To ensure an on-going focus on the child's journey, the following principles should apply whenever decisions are being made around transfer and allocation of cases:

- All cases should be allocated to a named worker at all times and managers should be aware that this is a statutory requirement for child protection and CLA cases.
- Interventions by CSFH should be "right first time" to provide timely and cost-effective help to families. Where possible, children should be allocated to the team most likely to provide the most appropriate service from the outset.
- Children and families should experience the fewest number of transfers of cases and changes of social worker as possible.
- Decisions about which team provides a service should balance the principle of fewest moves with the need to ensure the team with the most appropriate knowledge, skills and information is working with the child and their family.
- Allocation of cases to individual social workers should balance the needs of the child and family with the level of knowledge, expertise and experience of the social worker and their current workload.

## 3 Process for allocating cases

- New cases referred in for a service will be allocated to Family Intervention teams within the CIN service on a rota basis; each CIN service manager will be expected to accept new cases every 3 weeks and it is an expectation that service managers will have already identified potential named social workers who are able to take on newly allocated cases.
- Cases that are being stepped up to CSFH from Early Help will be considered at the daily discussion meeting convened by the Child and Family Contact Service manager to decide if the threshold for a statutory social work service has been met and to allocate the case to a team.
- Cases will transfer to the CLA service at the most appropriate point, namely the Initial Court Hearing or the first CLA statutory review (whichever is soonest). The transfer of cases will be overseen by the responsible service managers who will be responsible for ensuring the processes set out in section 7 are followed.
- As soon as the case trajectory for cases held by the CIN service is likely to involve the child becoming looked after, for example where the Care Pathways Panel recommends entering pre-proceedings, the case should be explored and considered for joint worked between the Family Intervention team and an identified CLA team and the responsible service managers should ensure this is facilitated.
- Any decision regarding allocation or transfer should consider the child's journey and agree the case pathway that is most in the child's best interest based on the principles set out in section 2.

#### 4 Criteria for allocating cases

- All new cases referred to CSFH, including cases being transferred to Camden by other local authorities, will be dealt with by the C&F Contact Service initially and referred on to the most appropriate social work team.
- Cases where the child is in need will be allocated to a Family Intervention Team. This includes cases where a request for a section 7 or section 37 social work report has been made.

- Requests for reports for Special Guardianship Order applications will be allocated to a Family Intervention Team but will be co-worked with the Family, Friends and Fostering service.
- Where a young person known to the CIN service is remanded into local authority accommodation by the courts the case will remain allocated to their current social worker but will transfer to the CLA team at the first review if the young person is to remain on remand. New cases where the young person is not known to CSFH will be allocated to the CLA team.
- Cases involving young people aged 16 and 17 who are presenting as homeless will be allocated to Family Intervention Team for assessment and, if accommodated following assessment:
  - will be allocated to a personal advisor in the Care Experienced team if aged 17 years
  - will be allocated to a social worker in the CLA team if aged 16 years.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children will be allocated to the CLA service for assessment and services.
- Cases being re-referred to CSFH will be allocated as set out in section 3.
- In general, cases involving an unborn child will be allocated to a Family Intervention team for a pre-birth assessment but may be allocated to a CLA team immediately where:
  - the unborn child has siblings who are currently looked after by Camden
  - a child has been removed from the family within the last 12-18 months
  - there are high levels of concern about parenting capacity and the trajectory of the case is likely to involve accommodation and/or care proceedings
  - the parent is a looked after child.
- Where a Camden looked after child is pregnant the unborn child will be allocated a separate social worker from within the CLA service.
- Cases where children who were previously unknown to CSFH but who are accommodated out of hours by the EDT will be allocated to the CLA team.

## 5 Allocations to the Children and Young People's Disability Service (CYPDS)

- To meet the criteria for a service from CYPDS, a child must score at least 2 moderate needs or 1 severe or profound need on the Functional Needs Assessment, which have been identified by the relevant professional and which can demonstrably affect their level of functioning.
- All referrals to the CYPDS are screened by the Duty Manager following a functional needs assessment that has been carried out by health professional working with the child and who met the child, to decide if the child meets the threshold for a service.
- The needs of all siblings in the family will be considered during the child and family assessment and where there are no parenting concerns, their needs will be considered when deciding any short breaks provision for the child.
- Where there are parenting concerns involving a child with a disability and their siblings, the case will be allocated to the CYPDS.
- Where parenting concerns relate only to the siblings of the child with a disability and do not arise from the parents' role in caring for that child, the siblings will be allocated to the CIN service.
- Where a child with a disability is not eligible for a service from the CYPDS the case will be referred to the Early Help Service for assessment.
- If a child with a disability is looked after, the CYPDS will hold case responsibility. If they have siblings, the CYPDS will hold the case until the conclusion of care proceedings after which the siblings will be allocated to the CLA service.
- Young people with disabilities or learning difficulties may be eligible for an adult social care service once they reach 18 years. Where this is the case, CYPDS social workers should begin work around this transition when the young person reaches 14 years to progress this transition.

## 6 Preparing cases for transfer

- Social workers holding a case that is about to be transferred to another worker should ensure the following tasks are carried out prior to case transfer:
  - All tasks on MOSAIC have been completed and all authorisations obtained from the team manager.
  - All episodes on MOSAIC have been completed.
  - All personal details for each family member are correct on MOSAIC.
  - All letters, emails, documents and minutes of meetings have been uploaded in the correct sub-category on MOSAIC.
  - The family and professional network have been advised in writing of the change of social worker/team allocation.
  - A chronology of significant events has been completed.
  - A *Case transfer and summary* is completed.
- The manager and service manager are responsible for overseeing this process and checking that records are up to date prior to transfer. The manager should also record the reason for the case transfer in the case records.
- If there are any health and safety warnings required, these should be noted on the personal details screen on MOSAIC using the Warning Note facility.
- Where it is known that a case will transfer to another team, the receiving team should allocate the case as soon as possible and the allocated worker should co-work the case as early as possible.
- Cases identified for transfer will be transferred by means of
  - timely provision of the case summary
  - a handover meeting/ discussion to be held between both teams, with the current allocated social worker and the identified social worker and their managers present.
  - a record of the meeting to be placed on the case file in case notes
  - a joint home visit to be undertaken to ensure the receiving social worker has been introduced to the parents and child/ren
- When cases are transferring within teams or within a service, it is an expectation that the same process is expected, with provision of case summary, handover meetings and where possible a joint home visit.

- When stepping down a case from CSFH to Early Help the social worker will ensure that the Early Help colleague will be invited to the meeting, which will serve as a point of transfer, should the case not have had a CIN review and is stepping down post assessment; a joint home visit to the family will serve as point of transfer.

## 7 Allocating cases to a named worker

- It is Camden's policy that all cases are allocated to a named social worker. Decisions on allocating a particular case to an individual worker should be based on the following:
  - The worker's level of post-qualification experience.
  - The nature of the case and the degree of complexity.
  - The worker's current workload.
- Newly qualified social workers should only carry 90% of the benchmarked workload and should not hold child protection cases on their own for at least 6 months.
- Qualified social workers from other boroughs starting work in Camden can be allocated any type of case immediately if they have the requisite experience and knowledge.
- As decisions are made regarding allocation to specific workers, the team manager should update the information on MOSAIC immediately.
- Supervisors should discuss the allocation with the individual social worker at the next supervision meeting, and agree what actions and tasks need to be carried out on the case.

## 8 Review of transfers and allocations process

The Heads of Service and service managers will regularly monitor and review this policy and the effectiveness of the child's journey meeting in ensuring smooth transfer of cases.