



**Children's Safeguarding and
Family Help**
Step down to Early Help Services
Protocol

1 Introduction and purpose of protocol

Sometimes when working with families CSSW may consider it necessary to “step down” the family to Early Help Services and this may happen at the following points:

- When considering closure of child in need families, social workers and professionals working with the family may feel that the family will continue to require support from a targeted Early Help Service in order to sustain positive changes and avoid future escalation and/or re-referral.
- Following a child and family assessment, social workers may conclude the family do not reach the threshold for a service from CSSW but require support from Early Help Services.

This protocol sets out the procedures for CSSW social work staff and Early Help staff to follow when stepping down a families from CSSW at either of these points in a timely and efficient manner.

At all times there must be dialogue between the services in order to ensure a smooth and efficient handover of cases and parents and the professional network kept informed of any actions under this protocol.

If the family is open to CSSW and Early Help are simultaneously completing Targeted Early Help Support and the social worker would like to ‘step down’ the family to Early Help, these procedures must still be followed. This means that a referral still needs to be sent to the Early Help front door to be triaged. This will ensure that the correct workflow is recorded on MOSAIC.

2 Agreement to referral

CIN social workers should be aware that families must agree to a referral being made to Early Help Services on their behalf and that agreement must be obtained before approaching Early Help team managers or referral to the Early Help Step Down e-mail address.

3 Planning step down provision following Child and Family Assessment

If, during a child and family assessment, it is thought likely that the family will not meet the threshold for a service from CSSW but will require ongoing support, and the family agree to this, planning should begin to step down the family to Early Help Services.

Step down to Early Help

As soon as it is decided that step-down to Early Help is appropriate, the social worker should e-mail the Early Help Step Down team and include the following information for each child in the family : EHstepdown@camden.gov.uk

- child's name / MOSAIC ID number
- child's date of birth
- schools attended
- a brief outline of what support is needed from Early Help Services
- a copy of the most recent assessment / relevant documents
- reasons / concerns that led to CSSW intervention
- confirmation that agreement for the step down has been sought from the family and recorded
- at least 3 provisional dates that the social worker and family are available for a joint visit (the proposed dates must be within the 10 working day timescale for step down completions)

Within 10 working days of the assessment being completed, the family must be closed to CSSW and the social worker should complete the relevant section of the child and family assessment and select *Step down to Early Help* as the next step. Some sections of the step down episode copy over from the previous step (the child and family assessment) and some will be blank. Social workers should ensure that all parts of section 4. Social worker's assessment of the situation on the assessment (including the 'circumstances under which the family should be referred back to CSSW' question) are fully completed before tasking the episode to Early Help. This will ensure that Early Help colleagues are clear about what support the family need from Early Help going forward and have a robust outline plan to support the work. The family should not be closed to CSSW before a joint home visit with the social worker and newly allocated Early Help Family Work has taken place.

The Early Help Step Down email inbox is monitored by Early Help front door managers who will screen referrals and will take one of the following courses of action:

- Send information advice and guidance to the social worker on suitable services so that they can make appropriate referrals (this is when referrals are not suitable to step down to targeted Early Help services):
- Refer the family to the Early Help Panel (this is in exceptional circumstances where it is unclear which Early Help service is best placed to complete the intervention or for complex families which require discussion about which Early Help service, or combination of services, might be needed). In these circumstances, the social worker would be invited to present the family at Early Help Panel

Step down to Early Help

- Contact the social worker and relevant Early Help team manager so that the step down to that service can be progressed (this decision is based on the service specification of the Early Help teams).

If the family is suitable for a step-down service, the Early Help front door team manager will respond to the CIN social worker within 2 working days detailing the most appropriate Early Help team to which the family will step down. The Early Help team manager for that team will be copied into the e-mail.

The team manager for the provisionally identified Early Help team will then contact the social worker within 1 working day offering a formal consultation. Following the consultation (which should take place within 5 working days from the initial e-mail to the EH Step Down inbox) and agreement, the Early Help team manager will write back to the social worker confirming that the family have been accepted with the name of the allocated Early Help Family Worker. A joint home visit and the step down episode must be completed within 10 working days.

If the identified Early Help team do not agree with the allocation and feel that another Early Help team would be best placed to support the family, they must discuss this with the team manager of the team that they feel is the most appropriate to meet the family's needs and record their rationale based on the threshold document and the service specifications.

If team managers cannot agree on the most appropriate team, then they should refer the family to their service managers for their joint decision. If service managers cannot agree, they should refer the family to their Heads of Service, who will make a final decision. This must happen within the step-down timescale (10 working days or 15 working days for families that have been referred to the Early Help Panel).

Negotiations should take place through dialogue and not a series of email exchanges and should only occur in exceptional circumstances. Protracted discussion about which team is the most appropriate is not helpful for families and should be avoided.

Once a final decision has been made, the allocated team must complete the step down and allocate an Early Help Family Worker.

If it is unclear which Early Help service is best placed to complete the intervention or for complex families which require discussion about which Early Help service, or combination of services, might be needed, the Early Help front door team managers will convene a meeting at the next available session (meetings are scheduled every Tuesday).

Following a decision at Early Help Panel, Early Help front door team managers will contact the CIN social worker within 2 working days to confirm which team will be providing the step-down service. Families that are referred to the Early Help Panel should be closed to CSSW within 15 working days.

4 Planning step down provision following CIN intervention and CSSW closure

CIN families can only be closed following a final CIN review and it is at this meeting that formal handover to the Early Help service for step-down provision will take place.

When preparing for closure, planning for step down should begin at least 20 working days in advance of the scheduled final CIN Review and should follow the process set out in section 3.

- The social worker should send an email to the Early Help Step down inbox providing all the information including the date of the next / final CIN Review and / or at least 3 provisional dates that the social worker and family are available for a joint visit
- The Early Help front door team manager will respond within 1 working day detailing the most appropriate Early Help team to which the family will step down. The Early Help team manager for that team will be copied into the e-mail.
- The team manager for the provisional identified Early Help team will then contact the social worker within 2 working days offering a formal consultation. Following the consultation (which should take place within 3 working days) and agreement, the team manager of the team that will be providing the step down service will write back to the social worker confirming that the family have been accepted and the name of the allocated Early Help Family Work.
- If the step-down receiving team do not agree with the step-down allocation and feel that another Early Help team would be best placed to support the family, they must discuss this with the team manager of the team that they feel is the most appropriate to meet the family's needs as described above in section 3.

When a family is stepped down following a CIN intervention, the final CIN review will also be the initial Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting and it is essential that the Early Help Family Worker allocated to the family is invited to and attends this meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to enable the professional network to plan step-down provision that meets the continued needs of the family by agreeing services to be provided and assign roles and responsibilities to the TAF.

The meeting should provide an opportunity for the allocated Early Help worker to meet the family and allow the CIN social worker to formally "hand over" the families. The meeting should agree an outline plan that includes the following:

Step down to Early Help

- the name of the Early Help worker taking over the family on step-down
- the support the family needs to receive
- any outstanding work to be carried out
- which professionals will form the TAF.

If necessary, the Early Help worker can meet the family again directly after the meeting to discuss the continuing work together.

The agreed outline plan should be recorded on the CIN chair's report by the chair and distributed to the professional network and the family by the social worker within 10 working days of the review meeting.

Within 10 working days of the CIN chair's report being distributed, the family must be closed to CSSW and the Chair / social worker should complete the relevant section of the chair's report and select *Step down to Early Help* as the next step. Some sections of the step down episode copy over from the previous step (CIN plan) and some will be blank.

Social workers should ensure that all parts of section 3. The plan (including the 'circumstances under which the family should be referred back to CSSW' question) on the CIN plan step are fully completed before tasking the episode to Early Help. This will ensure that Early Help colleagues are clear about what support the family need from Early Help going forward and have a robust outline plan to support the work.

If the final CIN review has been missed and the Early Help Family Worker was not able to attend, the initial TAF (which does not need to be attended by CSSW) organised by Early Help should be held within 10 working days of the final CIN Review and a joint visit should be held within 5 working days. The family should not be closed to CSSW before this joint visit has taken place.

5 S

6 Safeguarding concerns following the step down

Where safeguarding concerns become apparent following step-down, the Early Help Service should consider escalating the families to CSSW under the *Step up from Early Help to CSSW* protocol. [step-up-from-early-help-to-cssw-guidelines.pdf](https://www.camden.gov.uk/step-up-from-early-help-to-cssw-guidelines.pdf) ([camden.gov.uk](https://www.camden.gov.uk))

- If, following step-down from a CIN review, Early Help Services have safeguarding concerns about a child then the family should be presented to Daily Discussion to consider whether the threshold for CSSW service is met.

Step down to Early Help

If a family is not engaging with Early Help Services, efforts will be made to ensure engagement (for example home visits, emails, texts, use of colleagues in the network) and these will be clearly recorded in the family's file.

If after 2 weeks has lapsed and engagement has not been possible after multiple attempts, Early Help Services will either close the family (where there have been no additional concerns) or escalate the family to CSSW under the *Step up from Early Help to CSSW* protocol if there are on-going concerns and the family meets the threshold for a social work service.

7 Resolution of professional differences

Where no agreement can be reached regarding Early Help provision to be provided or whether a family should be presented at panel, the matter will be decided under the framework of the CSCP escalation policy through discussion and agreement by managers.

<https://cscp.org.uk/professionals/escalation-policy/>

Families may also be reviewed under the *Step up from Early Help to CSSW* protocol to establish whether the case continues to meet the criteria for a CSSW service. [step-up-from-early-help-to-cssw-guidelines.pdf \(camden.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix 1: Step down to Early Help

Social work families can be stepped down to Early Help following:

- A **Social work C&F assessment** that ends in NFA for the SW service
- At a **CIN review meeting** where the family is to be closed to the SW service and passed to Early Help

Social Work Process

Step down after Child and Family Assessment

Specifically for step down to Early Help purposes, the Social worker completes the **Summary of concerns and child's needs that require support from an early help service**, **Outline step down plan** and **Please state the circumstances under which the family should be referred back to CSSW** sections in the **Child and Family Assessment (CSSW)** form.

The screenshot displays the 'Child and family assessment (CSSW)' form. On the left is a sidebar with a 'Sections' menu containing nine items: 1. Family / household details, 2. Assessment details, 3. Child and family background / history, 4. Social worker's assessment of the situation, 5. Resilient families outcome measures - Baseline, 6. Manager's decision, 7. Views of all parties, 8. Parental / child factors at assessment, and 9. Next actions. A legend below the menu indicates that a blue dot next to a section name means it is completed. The main form area contains several sections: a dropdown menu for 'Family Service' with a note 'If case is being stepped down, please specify the service taking the lead' and an 'If Other, please specify' text box; a section titled 'Only complete if the case is being stepped down to an early help service' containing a text box for 'Summary of concerns and child's needs that require support from an early help service'; a section titled 'Outline step down plan' containing a text box for 'Outline step down plan'; and a section titled 'Please state the circumstances under which the family should be referred back to CSSW' containing a text box for 'Circumstances under which the family should be referred back to CSSW'.

Step down after final CIN Review – (Child or young person in need plan (CSSW))

Social worker/Chair of meeting completes the **Summary of concerns and child's needs that require support from an early help service**, **Outline step down plan** and **Please state the circumstances under which the family should be referred back to CSSW** sections in the **Child's Plan (CSSW)** specifically for step down to Early Help purposes.

The screenshot displays a web-based form titled "Child's plan (CSSW) : Test Test (2075012) - Read Only". The interface includes a sidebar with a "Sections" menu containing six items: "1. Children's details", "2. Update on assessment (Review of plan)", "3. The plan", "4. Resilient families outcome measures - Progress", "5. Details of next review", and "6. Next actions". A legend below the menu states "indicates completed section". The main content area features three large text input fields. The first field is titled "Only complete if the case is being stepped down to an early help service" and contains the text "Summary of concerns and child's needs that require support from an early help service". The second field is titled "Outline step down plan" and contains the text "Outline step down plan". The third field is titled "Please state the circumstances under which the family should be referred back to CSSW" and contains the text "Please state the circumstances under which the family should be referred back to CSSW". At the bottom of the form, there are two checkboxes: "Plan completed by" and "Section completed", both of which are currently unchecked.

Step down to Early Help

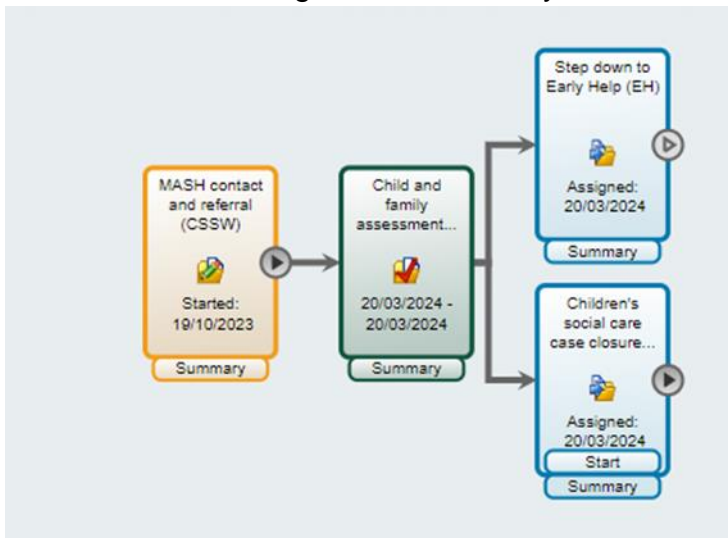
Next actions

It's important that the manager/chair signing off the **Child and Family Assessment** or **Child's Plan (CIN)** selects the relevant next actions to close the family on the social work side and to step down to Early Help.

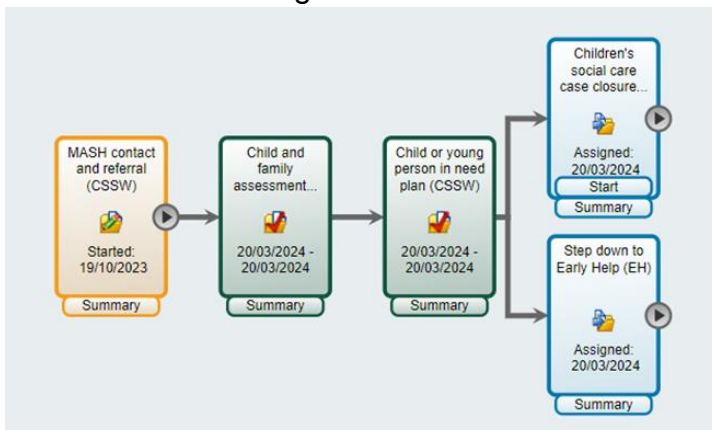
The screenshot shows a software interface for a 'Child or young person in need plan (CSSW)'. The main section is titled '6. Next actions' and contains a table of 'Next Actions'. The table has columns for 'Next action', 'Assigned to', 'Reason', 'Note', 'Priority', and 'Status'. Two actions are listed:

Next action	Assigned to	Reason	Note	Priority	Status
Step down to Early Help (EH)	Families in Focus				Proposed
Progress to early help - Children's social care case closure	Yetunde Bright				Proposed

Next actions following Child and Family Assessment:

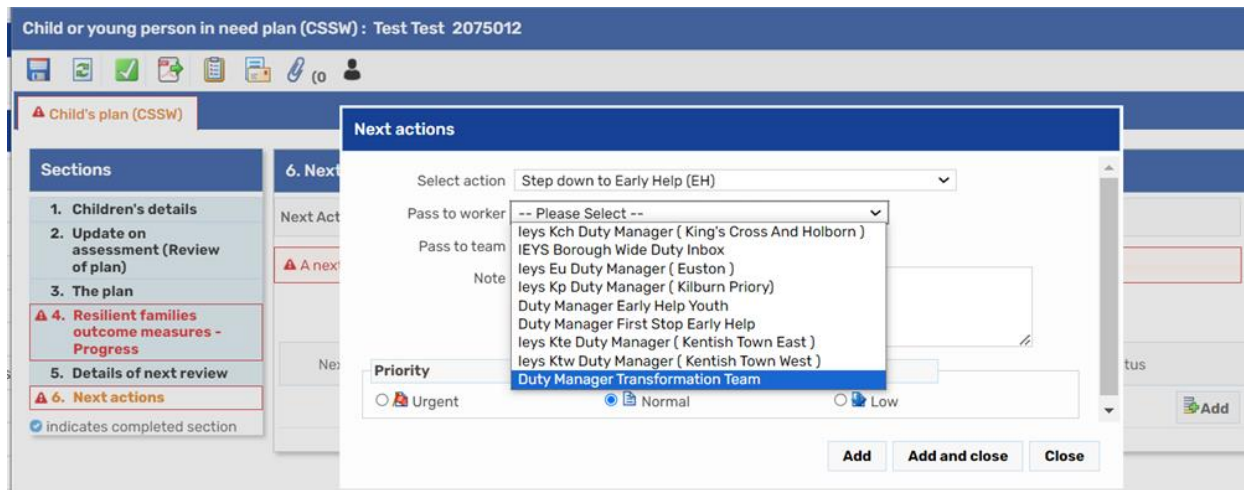


Next actions following the final Child in Need Review:



Step down to Early Help

It is important to ensure that the next action of **Step down to Early Help** is passed to the relevant **Early Help Duty manager**. **Please do not send the step down to the EH Duty Manager / Team until you have had confirmation from the front door about which team the family will be stepped down to.**



Child or young person in need plan (CSSW) : Test Test 2075012

Child's plan (CSSW)

Sections

1. Children's details
2. Update on assessment (Review of plan)
3. The plan
4. Resilient families outcome measures - Progress
5. Details of next review
6. Next actions

6. Next actions

Next actions

Select action: Step down to Early Help (EH)

Pass to worker: -- Please Select --

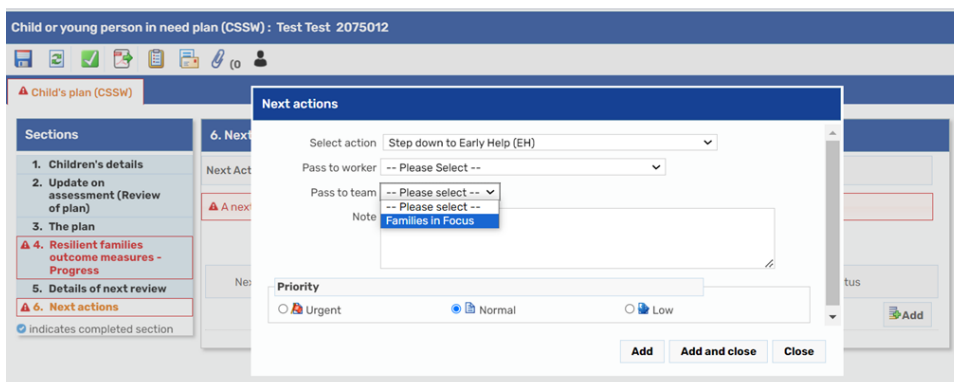
Pass to team: -- Please Select --

Note: Ieys Kch Duty Manager (King's Cross And Holborn)
IEYS Borough Wide Duty Inbox
Ieys Eu Duty Manager (Euston)
Ieys Kp Duty Manager (Kilburn Priory)
Duty Manager Early Help Youth
Duty Manager First Stop Early Help
Ieys Kte Duty Manager (Kentish Town East)
Ieys Ktw Duty Manager (Kentish Town West)
Duty Manager Transformation Team

Priority: Urgent Normal Low

Add Add and close Close

For **Families in focus** this needs to be passed to the team instead.



Child or young person in need plan (CSSW) : Test Test 2075012

Child's plan (CSSW)

Sections

1. Children's details
2. Update on assessment (Review of plan)
3. The plan
4. Resilient families outcome measures - Progress
5. Details of next review
6. Next actions

6. Next actions

Next actions

Select action: Step down to Early Help (EH)

Pass to worker: -- Please Select --

Pass to team: -- Please select --

Note: Families in Focus

Priority: Urgent Normal Low

Add Add and close Close

Early Help Process

The **Step down to Early Help** workflow step will appear in the *relevant EH Duty manager's/teams* incoming work folder.

The Step down to Early Help workflow step contains the **Early help step down referral record(EH)** form. This form has been designed to prepopulate step down information from the Child and Family assessment and Child or young person in need plan including the **Details of contact, Summary of concerns, Previous social work and other professional involvement, Outline Step down plan** and **Circumstances under which the family should be referred back to CSSW.**

Step down to Early Help (EH) : Test Test 2075012

Early Help Step Down Referral Record (EH)

Sections	2. Reason for step down
<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Family membership2. Reason for step down3. Decisions and Actions4. Next actions <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> indicates completed section</p>	<p>Date of step down* <input type="text"/></p> <p>Case stepped down from</p> <p><input type="radio"/> SW Assessment <input type="radio"/> CIN Review</p> <p>Details of contact</p> <p>Reason for undertaking this assessment / presenting issues</p> <p>Summary of concerns</p> <p>Summary of concerns and child's needs that require support from an early help service</p> <p>Previous social work and other professional involvement, including what changed / happened</p> <p>Previous social work and other professional involvement, including what changed / happened.</p> <p>Social work analysis</p> <p>Analysis and professional judgement</p> <p>Outline step down plan</p> <p>Outline step down plan</p> <p>Circumstances under which the family should be referred back to CSSW</p> <p>Circumstances under which the family should be referred back to CSSW</p>

Step down to Early Help

Next action

The Step down to Early Help (EH) can be progressed to any of three possible next actions:

Step Down to Early Help – Assessment required

Step Down to Early Help – Early Help TAF Review required

Step Down no longer required

Step down to Early Help (EH) : Test Test 2075012

Early Help Step Down Referral Record (EH)

Sections

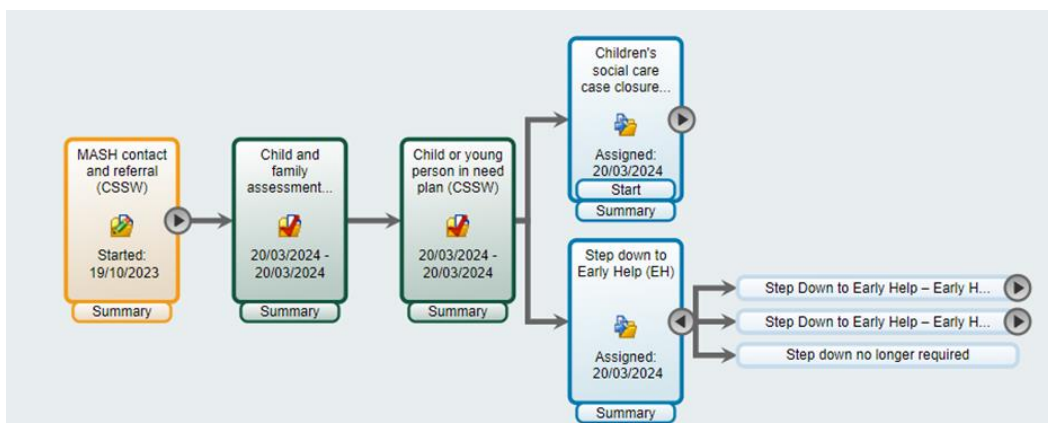
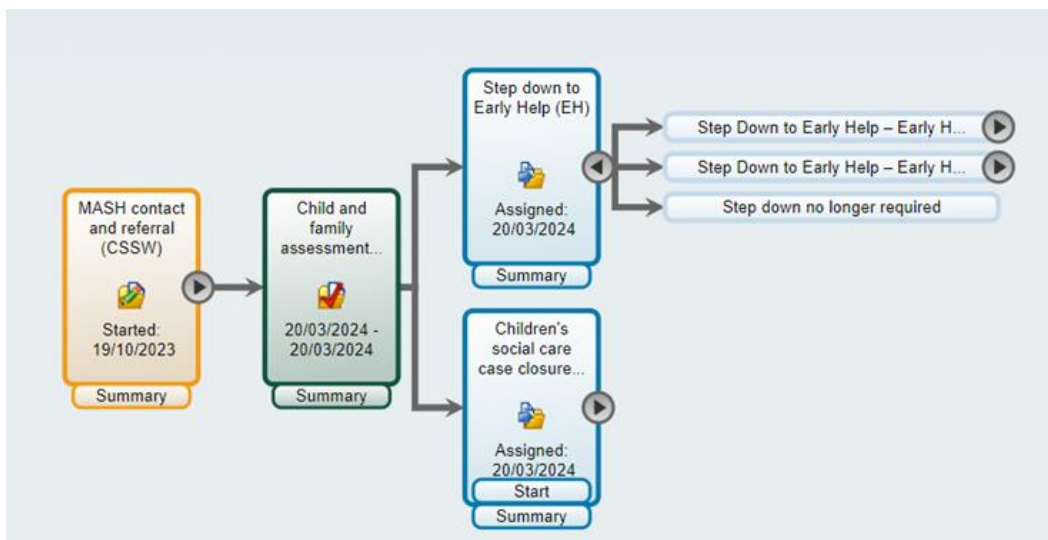
1. Family membership
2. Reason for step down
3. Decisions and Actions
4. Next actions

4. Next actions

Select action: -- Please select --

Note: Step Down to Early Help - Early Help Assessment required
Step Down to Early Help - Early Help TAF Review required
Step down no longer required

Priority: Urgent Normal Low



Step down to Early Help

The next action of either **Step Down to Early Help – Early Help TAF Review required** or **Step Down to Early Help – Assessment required** should be passed to the relevant family worker/case manager.

Step down no longer required does not need to be passed to any worker.

The screenshot shows a web application interface for 'Step down to Early Help (EH) : Test Test 2075012'. A 'Next actions' dialog box is open, displaying the following fields and options:

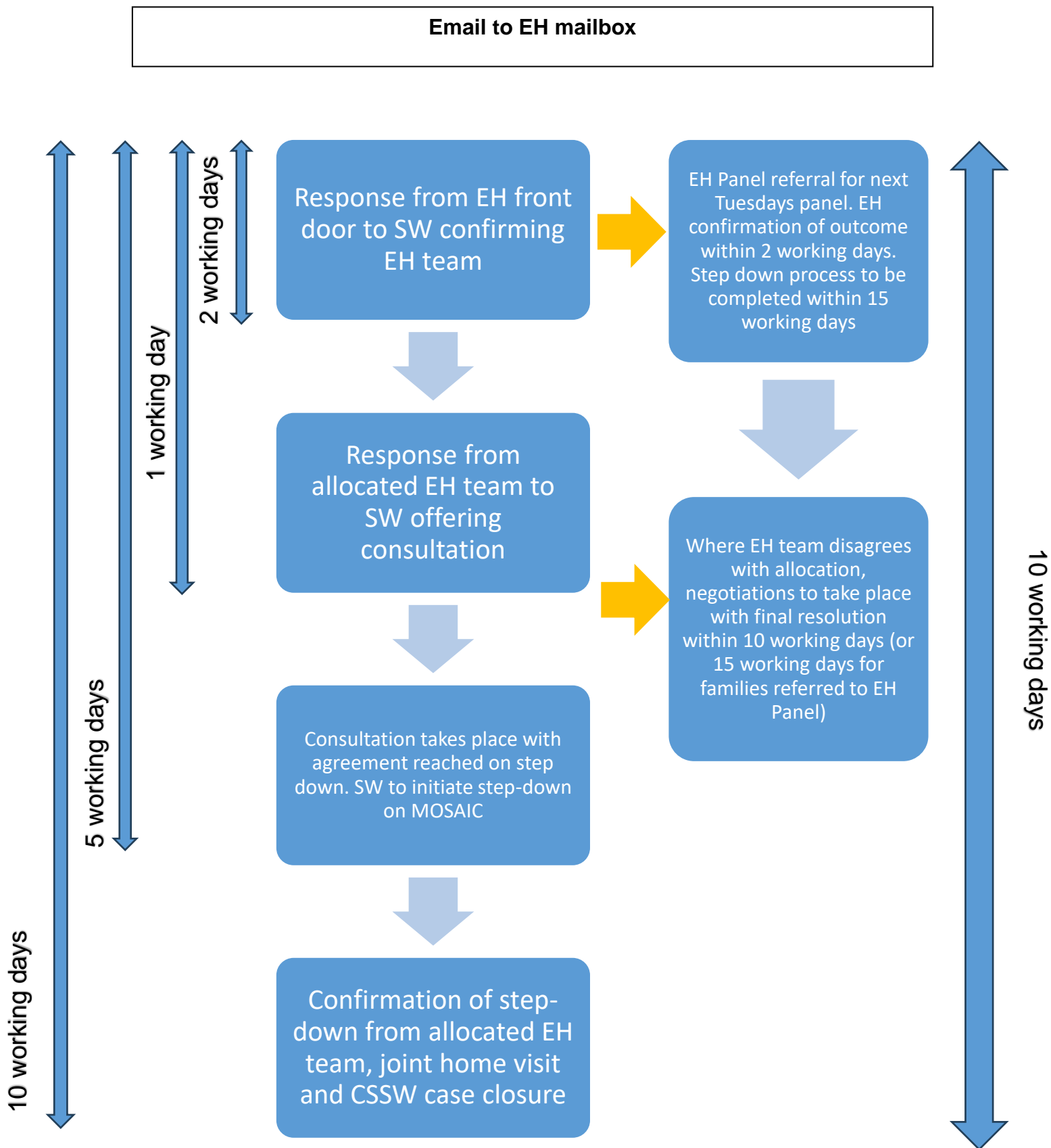
- Select action:** Step Down to Early Help - Early Help Assessment required (dropdown menu)
- Pass to worker:** Yetunde Bright (text input field)
- Buttons:** Find, Clear, Assign To Me
- Note:** (empty text area)
- Priority:** Radio buttons for Urgent, Normal (selected), and Low
- Buttons:** Add, Add and close, Close

OR

The screenshot shows the same web application interface, but the 'Next actions' dialog box is configured for a different action:

- Select action:** Step Down to Early Help - Early Help TAF Review required (dropdown menu)
- Scheduled Date:** 30/03/2024 (calendar icon)
- Pass to worker:** Yetunde Bright (text input field)
- Buttons:** Find, Clear, Assign To Me
- Note:** (empty text area)
- Priority:** Radio buttons for Urgent, Normal (selected), and Low
- Buttons:** Add, Add and close, Close

Appendix 1: Step down process and timescales from assessment



Appendix 1: Step down process and timescales from CIN Review

E-mail to Step down to EH mailbox

