



south ayrshire
health & social care
partnership

CASE MANAGEMENT TRANSFER PROTOCOL IN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SOCIAL WORK FEBRUARY 2021



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Document Control:

Date Completed: 1 February 2021

Last Updated:

Date Review Due: 1 February 2023

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Approved at Child Protection Committee: 17 May 2021



INTRODUCTION

1. The aim of this protocol is to ensure that the process around the transfer of a child's case management Social Work / Lead Professional responsibilities and dissemination of records relative to the child and family, both out with and within South Ayrshire, are clear and provide good practice standards for both information sharing and transfer of services.
2. Every child in Scotland should have a standard of service that ensures that their safety and wellbeing is safeguarded. A transfer of services between Social Work Local Authority services should not create a gap in those services or result in an increase in risk or vulnerability.
3. There are four key principles to transferring a Child's Plan and case management responsibilities that require to be adhered to. Firstly there is the principle of '**no delay**'. Transfers should be timely, ensuring that children/families receive support with no gap in service provision. Delays can result in children not being effectively safeguarded, families reaching crisis point and children waiting longer than is necessary to achieve permanence. There will be no delay in any necessary immediate protective action to ensure the safety of the child pending the outcome of any disputed resolution process. All agencies have a responsibility to promote effective case transfers for children to avoid drift and delay for the child and their family.
4. Secondly, there is the principle of '**sharing of information**'. It is essential that good quality assessment and plans that are shared provide a clear analysis of a child's needs and risks. The level of information sharing and expectations of Transfer Meetings will be defined within this protocol. All agencies/services have responsibility for promoting and creating positive communication and information sharing within and between other Local Authority areas in respect of the Child's Plan.
5. Thirdly, there is the principle of '**good order**' in respect of the child's case file. This relates to the electronic and paper records held. All files shared and received must be up-to date at the point of transfer and have been checked and authorised by both the originating and receiving local authority Lead Professional/Team Leader.
6. Fourthly, '**the safety and welfare of the child is paramount**'.
7. It is the expectation that when a decision is made to transfer case management responsibilities to another local authority, a number of factors have to be considered.
 - Current level of risk assessed for the child;
 - The geographical location of the child and the distance required by the Lead Professional and local services to assess/support;

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- Does the parent/guardian of the child hold are in the process of securing permanent residence status within the local authority;
 - Is the family currently in crisis and require immediate intervention.
8. It is the expectation that when a decision is made to transfer case management responsibilities a quick resolution is concluded around any disagreement. However where there are resource implications or uncertainty with residence, reference should be made to Scottish Government Ordinary Residence Guidance detailed here.
9. In exceptional circumstances where the Team/Service Managers cannot reach an agreement or resolution for transfer, this must be referred to the Children & Families Senior Manager for Localities with South Ayrshire Social Work for consideration, review and potential action.

TRANSFER OF A CHILD'S PLAN OUTWITH SOUTH AYRSHIRE

10. This is relevant for children who are not subject to current Child Protection Registration and would be defined as either a Looked After child on Compulsory Measures of Supervision or a child in receipt of services under a GIRFEC Child's Plan, with an identified Lead Professional from Social Work.
11. Once a child and their parent/guardian move to a new area the receiving Local Authority must be notified by South Ayrshire Social Work immediately to ensure they are able to identify that a child in receipt of compulsory or voluntary supports is now residing in their area, temporarily or permanently. This will ensure the relevant Local Authority Out of Hours services are aware of any host arrangements should crisis or protection issues arise.
12. If a child is subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) the Children's Reporter must be notified immediately. The implementing authority will remain the responsible authority until transfer is agreed, following discussion with the receiving authority.
13. Discussion must take place between the allocated Social Worker/Lead Professional and Team Leader and an agreement made on whether to request a transfer of case management responsibilities to the receiving Local Authority Social Work service.
14. Once transfer has been agreed the receiving Social Work service will be written to by the Children & Families Team Leader, requesting that a Transfer meeting takes place within 28 days to formally profile the current assessment, plan and chronology. Case Management transfers should be based on the best interest of the child at that time.
15. A copy of the last Child's Assessment (no longer than 9 months from completion), Plan and Integrated Chronology will be sent by the South Ayrshire Social Worker to the receiving Social Work locality at least 2 weeks prior to the Transfer Meeting for review.
16. Both the child and their parents/carers/guardians must be notified at the earliest opportunity of the plan to transfer case management responsibilities.
17. Transfer Meeting for a Child's Plan.
 - A transfer meeting will take place at a location and time suitable to both the originating and receiving local authority;
 - The meeting will consist of the current Lead Professional and Team Leader, with the receiving Social Work/Family Support Worker/Lead Professional and Team Leader/Team Leader/Senior Social Worker;

- The meeting will profile the needs of the child, current assessment and plan and areas of risk/concern. There should be a particular emphasis of profiling disguised compliance where it can be evidenced;
 - The meeting will identify remedial actions, contingency plans required to facilitate the transfer and ensure there are limited gaps in the assessment and safeguarding of the child;
 - A note of the meeting must take place, with salient points and agreed actions. This should be undertaken by South Ayrshire Children & Families and recorded on the child's file;
 - Once transfer has been agreed, formal transfer to the new team should take place no longer than **2 weeks** from the date of the transfer meeting unless an alternative transfer point has been agreed e.g Children's Hearing;
 - Prior to the formal transfer date, the new worker and current worker should plan introductions to family and professionals and should also write to them all confirming case transfer has taken place;
 - If the child is subject to a CSO the Children's Reporter must be notified of the agreement to transfer case management responsibilities by both authorities and for a Children's Hearing Review to be requested to formally transfer host arrangements for the statutory Order;
 - The Named Person from either Health or Education will be informed by the South Ayrshire Lead Professional of transfer and advised that they should arrange their respective information sharing and transfer of Named Person responsibilities.
18. The South Ayrshire social worker will complete a checklist to ensure that all key documents, assessments, legal orders are available within the transfer of the electronic/paper file for the child.
19. The South Ayrshire Team Leader will audit the file and its contents, as will the receiving Team Leader prior to transfer and they will agree any other actions.
20. There may be circumstances where transfer should not be undertaken as prescribed above. This **may** include situations where:
- A Child Protection Investigation or Initial Referral Discussion has just commenced;
 - A delay would take place in concluding a pre-birth assessment;
 - The child has a significant relationship with their current social worker and has additional short term needs;
 - The child and the family's relationship with their worker is creating positive outcomes for the child;
 - If there are any specific reasons beyond this then the Service manager for the receiving team should be consulted.

21. In situations where a child is in receipt of Self Directed Service, and/or has identified additional needs, reference must be made to the South Ayrshire Transition Pathway Flow Chart for Young People with Additional Needs and a discussion must take place with the Team Leader for the Children with Disabilities Team and respected service manager.

22. Where a child and their family move to a new Local Authority and it is the recommendation of the Lead Professional/Social Worker that there is no further requirement for Social Work intervention, a discussion must take place with the new Local Authority Social Work team if there has been previous child protection intervention or if the child has been subject to a CSO. This should take place at the point of closure.

REQUEST TO TRANSFER A CHILD'S PLAN TO SOUTH AYRSHIRE SOCIAL WORK

23. This is relevant for children who are not subject to current Child Protection Registration and would be defined as either a Looked After child on Compulsory Measures of Supervision or a child in receipt of services under a GIRFEC Child's Plan, with an identified Lead Professional from Social Work.
24. It is the position of South Ayrshire Social Work that we identify children, subject to Kinship arrangements, as a Looked After Child, and as such we place the responsibilities for the children's permanence planning on the host Local Authority Social Work service who completed the assessment. Consideration for Case Management Transfer will not be given unless the child is subject to a s.11 Residence/Kinship Order, evidence that permanence has been achieved, and that there is a clear role/need for Social Work support. Any agreement to transfer will be subject to the host Local Authority Social Work service agreeing to the relevant costs and responsibilities associated with Kinship allowance.
25. Once a formal transfer request has been made to South Ayrshire Social Work the appropriate Service Manager for the Children & Families Locality will review the request and formally acknowledge receipt of the correspondence. Clarification will be required that the child, parent or guardian is permanently resident within South Ayrshire and there is no recent evidence to suggest that there has been a significant increase in risk to an assessed level of child protection.
26. The Service Manager will pass the transfer request to the appropriate Team Leader where a social worker will be identified to make further contact with the transferring Social Work service and schedule a Case Transfer meeting that should take place within 28 days of South Ayrshire noting the request.
27. If it is identified that the child is subject to a CSO, the Team Leader from South Ayrshire Social Work will contact the Children's Reporter to advise of this protocol and that it is our recommendation that formal transfer of the CSO does not take place until both Local Authorities have reached a satisfactory conclusion on transfer.
28. If it is identified that a Children's Hearing Review has been scheduled, formal representation will be made by the South Ayrshire Social Work Locality team at the Hearing to present the current position.
29. The Team Leader should arrange for South Ayrshire Social Work records to be updated accordingly to ensure both the Initial Response Team and Ayrshire Urgent Care Service (AUCS) are aware of the current status of the child and who hold case management information and responsibilities.

30. A request will be made to the transferring Social Work team that a copy of the last Child's Assessment (no older than 9 months), Plan and Chronology will be sent to South Ayrshire Social Work by the transferring Social Work locality at least 2 weeks prior to the Transfer Meeting for review.
31. The Team Leader, and, where appropriate, Service Manager, will review the assessment and formulate an analysis on the appropriateness of case transfer and if more information is required.
32. Should there be a definitive view/conclusion that the transfer of the case is not in the best interest of the child, this decision should be shared with the transferring Social Work team and for further discussions to take place at Service/Senior Manager where appropriate.
33. Interim arrangements to support the current Child's Plan will be made to the transferring Social Work team until a decision is concluded on Case Transfer.
34. The Team Leader will identify a Social Worker who will be identified as the newly allocated Lead Professional prior to the Transfer Meeting taking place.
35. Transfer Meeting for a Child's Plan:
 - A transfer meeting will take place at a location and time suitable to both the originating and receiving local authority;
 - The meeting will consist of the identified South Ayrshire Lead Professional and Team Leader, with the transferring Social Work/Family Support Worker/Lead Professional and Team Leader/Team Leader/Senior Social Worker present;
 - The meeting will profile the needs of the child, current assessment and plan and areas of risk/concern. There should be a particular emphasis on profiling disguised compliance where it can be evidenced;
 - The meeting will identify remedial actions required to facilitate the transfer and ensure there are limited gaps in the assessment and safeguarding of the child;
 - A note of the meeting must take place, with salient points and agreed actions. This should be undertaken by the host Local Authority but the South Ayrshire Team Leader/Social Worker must ensure that there is clear accountability of agreed actions;
 - Once transfer has been agreed, formal transfer to the new team should take place no longer than **2 weeks** from the date of the transfer meeting unless an alternative transfer point has been agreed e.g. Children's Hearing;
 - Prior to the formal transfer date, the new worker from South Ayrshire Social Work and current worker from the transferring Social Work team should plan introductions to family and professionals and should also write to them all confirming case transfer has taken place;

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- If the child is subject to a CSO the Children's Reporter must be notified of the agreement to transfer case management responsibilities and for a Children's Hearing Review to be requested to formally transfer host arrangements for the statutory Order;
36. The Named Person from either Health or Education will be informed and advised that they should arrange their respective information sharing and transfer of Named Person responsibilities.
37. A Team around the Child Review should take place within **3 weeks** of the Case Transfer Meeting to ensure the Child's Plan is profiled and reviewed by the relevant services, the child and their family.

TRANSFER OF CHILD'S PLAN WITHIN THE SERVICE

38. It is the principle of South Ayrshire Social Work that a child requiring Social Work support/intervention, is allocated to a consistent Lead Professional from Children & Families, minimising changes and disruptions in the key relationships that could impact on their overall assessment of risk and care planning.
39. It is acknowledged that there will be circumstances when a Child's Plan requires to be re-allocated/transferred within the South Ayrshire Children & Families Social Work service. Reasons for transfer/re-allocation:
- Lead Professional leaving current duties within South Ayrshire Social Work;
 - Long-Term sickness;
 - An upheld Complaint/Grievance made by the child/family for new a new Social Worker/Family Support practitioner;
 - Team Leader/Service Manager recommendation for transfer given specific needs of the child.
40. It is good practice standards that the Child's Plan and Lead Professional responsibilities are transferred at the earliest opportunity. It is the responsibility of the Children & Families Team Leader to ensure that a child subject to voluntary measures of support is either re-allocated to a Lead Professional or recommended for closure within a timeous manner. Any issues of significant delay to a transfer of a child receiving voluntary supports must be escalated to the Service Manager, with updates given to the child, parent/guardian/carer and Named Person.
41. The Social Worker/Family Support practitioner being allocated to the child must familiarise themselves with the current Child's Assessment & Plan and Integrated Chronology at the point of transfer. The Team Leader must provide the newly allocated worker with a briefing, either within supervision or at an identified transfer discussion.
42. If a child is Looked After by the local authority (as defined within the Looked After children (Scotland) Regulations 2009) the avoidance of delay is an essential principle that must be adhered to. Transfers will take no longer than **2 weeks** from the initial identification to full case management responsibilities being established with the newly identified Social Worker. In the event of an unplanned necessity to re-allocate, the Team Leader will take temporary responsibility of the Child's Plan and support.
43. Where appropriate the child, parent/guardian/carer, Named Person and Children's Reporter must be notified of the transfer at the earliest opportunity.

44. In the event of a transfer the previously allocated Social Worker or Team Leader will arrange a transfer meeting with the newly identified/allocated Social Worker prior to their responsibilities being concluded. The meeting will:

- Profile the needs of the child, current assessment and plan and areas of risk/concern. There should be a particular emphasis of profiling disguised compliance where it can be evidenced;
- The meeting will identify remedial actions required to facilitate the transfer and ensure there are limited gaps in the assessment and safeguarding of the child;
- The plan and timescale to achieve permanency must be detailed;
- Consider if a Team around the Child review requires to be scheduled;
- Plan introductions to the child/family and professionals.

CHILD ON THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER REQUIRING TO TRANSFER

45. The guidelines of a transfer of a Child's Plan currently on the South Ayrshire Child Protection Register are detailed within the South Ayrshire Child Protection Procedures ([Click here](#))
46. Where a child has moved to another area of South Ayrshire, it will be the responsibility of the Locality Team Leader and Social Worker to link with the receiving Social Worker and Team Leader and agree the process of transfer. Any disagreements about the transfer of the case and the existing child's plan must be resolved prior to the next scheduled transfer core group/case conference.
47. Before a child, whose name is on the South Ayrshire Child Protection Register, is transferred from one worker to another within the locality team, a full written transfer summary must be completed. A joint Transfer Meeting involving the respective workers and their Team Leaders must be held and a joint transfer visit to the family by the relevant Social Workers must have taken place.
48. The Social Worker being allocated to Lead Professional responsibilities must familiarise themselves with the initial Child Protection Report, Case Conference decisions & minutes, Child's Assessment & Plan and Integrated Chronology at the point of transfer.
49. Transfer of the case will be acknowledged at the next core group or review case conference.