

Service:	Children and Young People's Services
Title:	Referral and outline process
Manual:	Children in Need
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the process to be followed when a referral is made to Safeguarding and Specialist Services regarding a child or a young person.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CIN	Children in Need Team
Durham LSCB	Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board
SCD	Social Care Direct
SSID	Social Services Information Database
SASS	Safeguarding and Specialist Services
IAT	Initial Assessment Team
YPS	Young People's Service

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of representatives of all agencies to be familiar with these Children in Need Procedures and understand their role within them.

The eligibility criteria detailed in this procedure sets out the circumstances in which SASS will carry out an assessment. It is important for members of all agencies to assist, advise and support families to access necessary additional services where these are required to safeguard and promote a child's welfare. This may include a referral to SASS for an initial or core assessment.

All referrals must be made with the full knowledge and consent of the family, unless it can be demonstrated that this would place the child at risk of significant harm. In most circumstances a CAF should have been completed prior to the decision to refer. See CAF Guidance

Significant details of the child and family should be gathered by the referring professional in order to assist in determining the appropriate response. Consent to share the information gathered and to seek information from other agencies where necessary must also be obtained except in those circumstances where the child may be placed at risk of significant harm unless urgent action is taken.

SCD staff are responsible for the completion of the referral form, SS598. All CiN referrals must be entered onto SSID. SCD staff are responsible for ensuring that referrals which require action under the Durham LSCB Child Protection Procedures are transferred promptly to the appropriate CIN Manager.

SCD staff are responsible for gathering information to inform the screening process.

SCD staff are responsible for making the decision about the level of concern and the transfer to the IAT or CIN team, or Young People's Service for 16 year olds who have left school and 17 year olds

The Team Manager for the Initial Assessment Team (IAT) is responsible for the allocation of referrals to IAT staff. The Young People's Service (YPS) Team Manager is responsible for allocation of referrals on 16 and 17 year olds to YPS staff.

The IAT Social Worker is responsible for most initial assessments. CIN Social Worker is responsible for core assessments where necessary, and care planning, monitoring and reviewing of all cases transferred to CIN Team.

The Team Manager is responsible for allocation of cases, service provision and quality assurance of the work carried out.

ACTION

Processing of Referrals

All referrals must be processed through SCD who are responsible for ensuring the completion of the referral form, SS598 and entry on to SSID.

In the event of a request from a member of the public or another agency for an assessment or service, essential referral information will be collected by a member of the SCD Team. This will be recorded on the referral form, SS598. Information from the SS598 will be entered onto SSID to link with any records of previous involvement.

The referral SS598 will then be passed to the IAT for allocation or transfer to CIN Team if a S47 inquiry is required.

Screening Process

The SCD worker will gather initial screening information to enable a recommendation to be made to the SCD Manager about the level of concern. There are a variety of 'tools' available to assist this process, please see the section on eligibility criteria and the guidance on the use of the Assessment Grid. The section on eligibility criteria which is also available on the County Council's website gives more detailed guidance about the kinds of concern that warrant an initial or core assessment by SASS. Information gathered during this process will be recorded in Case Notes, on SSID. The referral will be passed to the qualified social worker in SCD for screening about the level of concern and decision about further action.

The qualified social worker in SCD will on the basis of the referral and screening information take the decision about the response required according to the Services eligibility criteria:

- That no further action will be taken, referral to be made to another agency or basic advice and information only required.
- To pass the referral to the IAT Team or YPS for an Initial Assessment.
- To pass the referral onto the appropriate CIN Team for action under the Durham LSCB Procedures.

Some situations will require an 'immediate response'. This will be where a serious level of concern is immediately identified that requires an urgent response. The qualified social worker in SCD will decide the level of urgency. Where an 'immediate priority' response is required it must be passed to CIN Team Manager without delay.

The Youth Engagement Service is responsible for attendance at PACE interviews in the role of appropriate adult. [See CIN/YES Protocol for more details].

A County wide Joint Protocol for young homeless people aged 16–17 is in place. Under this protocol, it is the responsibility of the agency to whom the young person presents:

[a] to undertake an assessment under the protocol

[b] to arrange a Joint Protocol Panel, if appropriate

[c] to arrange short term emergency accommodation if necessary

Allocation to a Social Worker for Assessment

On the basis of the referral and screening information the IAT Team Manager will allocate the case to a Social Worker to undertake an initial assessment of need and concern and to plan any services immediately indicated (or the YPS Team Manager will allocate the case to a YPS Worker to undertake an initial assessment)

Where a CAF has taken place, social worker, IAT/YPS and Lead Professional should complete the Initial Assessment jointly. This initial assessment must be completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the referral by SASS.

All Initial Assessments should be informed by information from partner agencies.

Where a Core assessment is required, the involvement of other agencies will be essential. This Core Assessment must be completed within 35 working days from receipt of the referral for moderate concerns. Core Assessments will always be undertaken by a CIN social worker, either following transfer from the IAT or following a section 47 inquiry.

The Social Worker must consider whether specialist assessments may be required and if they are, should co-ordinate these assessments.

Social Workers must follow the process and guidance for undertaking assessments as set out in this manual. Safeguarding Procedures must also be followed. Both processes may need to run concurrently.

At this stage professionals who have made referrals should again be informed of progress and outcomes. A standard letter should be issued at the end of the assessment process.

Care Planning

On the basis of this assessment the Social Worker, or YPS worker, will make a decision as to what service provision the child and family require. As appropriate, a multi-agency planning meeting will be arranged to draw up and agree a Care Plan for the child or young person.

The Care Team should be drawn from family members, including extended family as necessary, and other professionals in order to agree, monitor and review the care plan.

The Care Plan must include details of:

- Outcomes required in relation to the child's/young person's needs.
- Services/actions required to achieve the identified outcomes.
- Who will provide the services/actions?
- How and when the services will be provided/actions taken.
- Any further assessments required.
- Arrangements for review of the Care Plan.

Where possible these decisions should be jointly agreed with the child/young person and family and others identified as needing to be involved. The Care Plan should record any disagreements.

Any outcomes/needs for which no service provision/action can be offered must be noted as unmet need.

The child's family and professionals requesting the assessment or service must be informed of the decision in writing.

The child or their family should always be made aware of:

- How they are able to challenge the decision.
- The systems and processes available to enable them to do this.
- Other sources of help and support that may be available to them.

Monitoring

The Social Worker/YPS worker is responsible for ensuring that the agreed and authorised services are being provided and the Care Plan is being implemented to facilitate the achievement of the stated objectives.

The Social Worker will monitor the implementation of the Care Plan and service provision and record this ICS. Requirements of monitoring will be determined by the type of service provided, and will be specified in the Care Plan.

Practical adjustments to the Care Plan may be made as necessary following discussions with the child and family and the Care Team.

Children in Need Review

The purpose of the review is to consider formally and on a regular basis the Care Plan and the progress made in achieving the identified outcomes for the child.

The first review should be held within 6 weeks, and then every 8 weeks, or more frequently if specified in the Care Plan.

The record of the review must be recorded and circulated to all participants.

Where children are receiving services that have statutory review requirements these will be co-ordinated in one review and all service inputs to the child and family should be considered simultaneously.

The format of the review process will take account of the type and level of service input, but should usually take the form of a meeting involving the family, the Social Worker and the Care Team.

Service provision will only end as specified in the Care Plan or as a result of formal review. All agencies should be advised of the decision to close the case and any disagreements recorded.

RELATED DOCUMENTATION

Children in Need Process Flowchart Appendix 1

Children in Need Process (Disabled Children and their Families) Flowchart Appendix 2