

## **Practice Guidance**

### **Step down from CSC to CAF Early Help**

The interface between Early Help services and Children Social Care is an essential component of a robust service for children and families ensuring they receive the right help and support at the right time.

The pathways between these two approaches are key to ensuring all children are safe, wherever they are within the levels of need.

Effective sharing of information between professionals is essential for effective identification, assessment and service provision to support a quality step down from CSC to a CAF Early Help offer.

#### **Decision made to step down from CSC to CAF**

To ensure that the decision to step down to CAF from CSC is the right decision at the right time for the child and family, the SW will share their proposal prior to the final CIN meeting with child and parents, partners and seek their views and ensure this is documented. The SW will also need to gain informed consent from parent/carer for the CAF and be specific about how their information will be shared and why.

The SW should identify an appropriate Lead Professional to support the step down to CAF prior to the final CIN meeting and seek agreement from them to take on this role.

If either the parents or child disagrees with the proposed plan to step down to CAF and close to CSC, the SW will discuss with their Team Manager and further discuss with parent/child to aim to explore barriers/worries and aim to resolve within 5 working days to prevent drift and delay.

If any partner agency does not agree with the decision for social work involvement with a child to end, this should also be documented with reason why and raised with the social workers Team Manager for resolution with 5 working days.

#### **Final CIN/Step down to CAF meeting**

The final CIN meeting will then take place with SW, family and all partners. The views from child, parent and partners will be gathered and recorded.

The step-down CAF assessment is then completed in the CIN meeting with all partners contributing to this; providing updated and current information evidencing impact and progress made for the child and areas that still require support. The child's voice and experience to be evident to inform decision making and family plan.

A SMART Family Plan will then be agreed by all partners and family to be upheld through the step down to CAF. A date for the initial Family Planning meeting will be arranged in the final CIN meeting to take place within 4 weeks.

#### **Case closure and referral to EHM**

The Social Worker will then complete the case closure summary and complete the referral to EHM with the multi-agency step down CAF assessment. The Social work Team Manager will quality assure the case closure and the step-down assessment before this is submitted to EHM for Quality assurance from the CAF Link Worker.

#### **Challenge and support to identify a Lead Professional**

If no Lead Professional is identified and no agency agrees to take on this role, the social worker will raise with the CAF Link Worker for support. The CAF Link worker will support challenge of those partners already involved in the case to take Lead Professional responsibility. If still no Lead Professional identified, the Early Help & Specialist Support Manager will take to Transforming Lives Panel to see if any agency could offer support as Lead Professional.

If at this point there is still no Lead Professional identified, then EH&SS Manager will add a case note informing that no agency will agree to take LP role. Social Worker, family and all agencies will be informed, and the case will step down to universal services.

### **Initial Family Planning Meeting**

The initial Family Planning meeting is held within 4 weeks of the step down and the progress against the family plan is evidenced. The child's voice and experience are captured to inform how the plan is improving outcomes for them. The Lead Professional will then document the Family planning meeting which is recorded on EHM and copies shared with the family.

### **Step down standards/Role and Responsibilities**

When a child is closing to Children Social Care and stepping down to either universal services or CAF with a Team around the Family approach, the professionals and family members that remain involved with the child need to be clear on their roles and responsibilities to ensure change and progress is sustained and when a referral back into social care maybe necessary.

### **Role of the Social Worker**

The Social worker will initially discuss and agree with Team Manager within supervision decision making for why threshold is no longer met and case ready to step down.

The last CIN meeting should document child, parents and partners views on case closing to CSC and plan to step down to CAF or universal services. The social worker should ensure that a copy of the CIN minutes and the step-down CAF assessment including the family plan is sent to ALL relevant family and partners involved with supporting the family.

Informed consent sought from parents/carers and documented.

The SW will complete the referral to EHM.

All step-down Family plans should be SMART.

The SW will record a comprehensive case closure document which details why the child has had statutory children social care involvement, what has been done to support and what was the outcome. This will evidence the impact of social care involvement upon the outcomes for the child and how the threshold for social care involvement is no longer met and the plan to step down to universal services or CAF including step down plan. This will be sent to the Team Manager for comment and authorisation.

### **Role of the Social Work Team Manager**

The Social Work Team Manager should review the child's file prior to agreeing case closure, this will include ensuring that the file is up to date and that the following are recorded:

- Supervisions

- Chronology
- Child's plans
- Child's reviews
- All assessments uploaded
- The views of the child and parents about case closure are evidenced and understood.

The Team Manager will quality assure the last CIN meeting and closure summary before it is signed off on the system.

The Team Manager will quality assure the CAF Step down assessment before submitted being submitted EHM.

### **Role of the CAF Link Worker**

The CLW will support the SW with the step down to CAF by supporting them with the process and support with identifying a LP if required.

The CLW will quality assure and authorise the CAF assessment once the referral to EHM has been completed by the SW and will contact the social worker if further information is required.

Once the child's file has transferred to EHM, the CLW will contact the identified LP to offer support and guidance and ensure that the first Family Plan meeting has taken place within the first 4 weeks.

### **Role of the Lead Professional**

The Lead Professional will attend the final CIN meeting and contribute to the CAF assessment if they have currently been involved with the family.

The Lead Professional will ensure the first Family Planning meeting take place within 4 weeks of closing to CSC and that meetings are held within timescale every 6-8 weeks and documented on the child's file on EHM.

Once all actions on the Family Plan have been met the Lead Professional will submit a final Family planning meeting and CAF closure to evidence the progress and impact of the multi-agency support for the child and family.

If all actions on the Family Plan have not been met within 12 months and the CAF is still required to provide support to the family, then the LP will complete a reassessment with contribution from all team around the family members.

*Reviewed August 2024*