

NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES MOVING ACROSS LOCAL AUTHORITY BOUNDARIES

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1. MOVEMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

At any stage in the process of working with children and their families, the parents and/or the child/children may move from one household to another, with a change of address possibly to another local authority area.

The move may be planned and relevant information shared in advance with the professionals and workers involved with the family and child/children.

In some circumstances, however, the move may take place in haste and as an attempt to avoid the involvement of professionals and agencies. In such circumstances, the agencies involved must assess the impact on the child/children of the change in circumstances.

Additionally, the following circumstances associated with children and families moving across boundaries may be a cause for concern:

- A child and family, or pregnant woman, not being registered with a GP;
- A child not having a school place or whose attendance is irregular;
- A child or family having no fixed abode e.g. living temporarily with friends, relatives or in a refuge.

Several agencies holding information about the child and family, which is not co-ordinated and / or which has not followed the child or family i.e. information which is missing or has gaps and needs to be collated.

Where children move to a new address either into or out of North East Lincolnshire and there are concerns about the welfare of the children such that it is considered that a Section 47 Enquiry may be required, the local authority for the last known address must notify the receiving authority.

Professionals in all agencies should be alert to the possibility that a child or family who has moved into North East Lincolnshire may not be in receipt of universal services. Professionals should engage with the family in order to link them into local universal services, e.g.:

- Seeking information about the child / family (full names, dates of birth, previous address, GP's name, if attending any school, name of the Health Visitor etc.);

For this purpose, professionals should:

- Ensure that all forenames and surnames used by the family are provided, and clarification is obtained about the correct spelling;
- Ensure that accurate dates and places of birth are obtained for all household members, wherever possible;
- Ensure that if the children are not accessing education that a referral is made to North East Lincolnshire's Schools Admissions Team;
- Obtain the previous full addresses, and earlier addresses within the last two years;

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- Clarify relationships between the child and other household members, if possible with documentary evidence;
- Ask the child / family with which statutory or voluntary organisations they are in contact.
- Providing information about relevant services;
- Following up to ensure that the family has managed to make contact and register with a local GP, Health Visitor, school and other relevant services to which the child is entitled;
- Engaging appropriately with relevant agencies regarding any concerns that emerge.

The child's move may be temporary or permanent. If the parent is not prepared to give information or take advice, the receiving authority should assume the move is permanent and act accordingly.

2. WHERE THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT SIGNIFICANT HARM

Work with children and their families may be taking place in the context of a Section 47 Enquiry which may be in progress when the child/children and family moves to another local authority area.

Each agency has internal procedures which set out how information about children and families is provided to another local authority/health trust/education service/police force area when such movements take place.

A decision must be made by the responsible professionals (in partnership with parents and children whenever possible and particularly where the move is known and planned) as to how the information is best shared with the new area.

However, in all cases, information should be shared immediately as all information about a child should be held where the child is residing.

Where a child moves across local authority boundaries, and a Section 47 Enquiry is being considered or is in progress and/or a Child Protection Conference (see **Child Protection Conferences Procedure**) is proposed but has not yet taken place, it is the responsibility of the local authority where the concerns originated to make decisions as to how to proceed.

It is normally advisable that Assessments or particular pieces of work are concluded before transfer of case responsibility takes place.

In these circumstances, therefore, the originating authority must continue with the Section 47 Enquiry and should convene a Strategy Discussion/Meeting - this will usually take place within 72 hours of notification of the child's move. However, the timescales may be different depending on the individual circumstances e.g. the geographical proximity of the two areas and/or the gravity of the situation. In all circumstances, however, the Strategy Discussion/Meeting will always involve representatives of both the originating and the receiving authority and their respective roles and responsibilities will be agreed. The Strategy Discussion/Meeting should consider how the timescales for the completion of the Section 47 Enquiry and holding of the Child Protection Conference (if appropriate) will be met. In any case, the social worker from the originating authority will attend and provide a report for the Child Protection Conference.

Where there are any professional disagreements about any of the planned actions, these should be referred to the relevant senior managers in the two authorities for their agreement. Any such agreement must be in writing and circulated to all the professionals involved. If the professional differences remain unresolved, please refer to the **Concern and Conflict Resolution Escalation Procedure**.

Where a Section 47 Enquiry is in progress, as soon as the originating authority becomes aware of the child's move to a new area, the following action should be taken:

The child's social worker will:

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- Notify Children's social care in the receiving authority of the change in the child's circumstances within one working day of discovering the move;
- Send the child's relevant personal details to Children's social care in the receiving authority;
- Inform his or her line manager of the change;
- Inform any other agencies working with the family of the change in circumstances and ask them to inform their colleagues in the new area;
- Attend any handover meetings in the receiving authority.

The social worker's line manager will:

- Ensure that all information is updated and the correct address is displayed on the child's electronic record;
- Inform the relevant team manager in the receiving authority of the current details and forward any relevant documentation such as copies of the most recent Child in Need Plan and/or a summary of the assessment so far;
- Agree any need for urgent action and, if urgent action is required, agree which local authority will take such action;
- Agree the convening of a Strategy Discussion/Meeting within 72 hours;
- Discuss with the relevant team manager in the receiving authority at what stage responsibility for the child should be transferred.

Particular care and attention must be paid where the family has a history of moving between areas and the timing of their moves appears to suggest that they are seeking to avoid the child protection process.

If children and families about whom there are concerns move and cannot be contacted, this in itself will heighten such concerns and lead professionals to consider that the children may have suffered, or are likely to suffer, Significant Harm.

In such circumstances the agencies involved must share information with one another so that every effort is made to locate the child/children. The responsibility for the family will remain with the local authority for the area of the child's last known address.

3. CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

3.1 ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN IN THE CHILD'S ORIGINATING AREA

Where a Child subject to a Child Protection Plan moves out of the home area, anyone who becomes aware of the plan to move or the move taking place, must inform the child's Lead Social Worker or, if not available, the Lead Social Worker's line manager.

The Lead Social Worker will:

- Immediately inform Children's Social Care and Safeguarding and reviewing service in the new area of the change in the child's circumstances;
- Send the child's relevant personal details to the new area including a copy of the most recent Child Protection Plan;
- Inform the 'home' Designated Manager (Children subject to a Child Protection Plan) of the changes;
- Inform the Core Group members of the change in circumstances;
- Attend any Initial Child Protection Conference in the new area.

The Designated Manager (Children subject to a Child Protection Plan) will:

- Ensure that all information is updated and the correct address is displayed on the List of Children subject to a Child Protection Plan;

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- Inform the new area's Designated Manager (Children subject to a Child Protection Plan) of the current details and forward any relevant documentation such as copies of minutes of the Initial Child Protection Conference and the most recent Review Conference;
- Inform the local Designated Nurse of the relevant information in order for the health agencies in the new area to be informed;
- Inform the GP, and Health Visitor (for pre-school children);
- For school aged children inform the school admissions team.

The receiving authority will:

- Make the child subject to a temporary child protection plan.

Only when the new area has made a decision whether the child is to become subject to a Child Protection Plan or not should the child's details be removed from the List of Children who have a Child Protection Plan in the original area.

The date that the child's name is removed from the List in the original area will therefore be the date of the Initial Child Protection Conference in the new area when the decision is made.

3.2 ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN IN THE CHILD'S NEW AREA

At the point of notification, the Designated Manager (Children subject to a Child Protection Plan) or their nominated representative in the child's new area will be expected to:

- Place the child's name, address and relevant known personal details on the List of Children with a Child Protection Plan;
- Request information from the originating Local Authority, including copies of the Initial Child Protection Conference and the last Review Conference minutes from the originating area;
- Inform the relevant North East Lincolnshire Council Children's Social Care Team of the details of the incoming child;
- Inform the Designated Nurse/ Safeguarding Children's Health Team;
- Inform school admissions team, where appropriate;
- Make arrangements to hold an Initial Child Protection Conference within 15 working days of the notification of the child moving in;
- Request representation from the originating local authority's Children's social care to attend the conference to ensure that up to date and accurate information is shared and discussed;
- Confirm the outcome of the Initial Child Protection Conference with the originating local authority's Designated Manager (Children subject to a Child Protection Plan) and forward a copy of the Conference Minutes for their records.

The relevant Children's social care team will:

- Undertake enquiries to ensure that protective action is taken in order to safeguard the child in the new area until the Initial Child Protection Conference has taken place;
- Undertake an assessment to determine whether the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer Significant Harm in the new area and work with the child and family to prepare for the Initial Child Protection Conference.

4. TEMPORARY MOVES

A temporary move could cover a range of situations from holiday stays to short stay placement moves to relatives or residential units; the circumstances should always be checked with the child's Lead Social Worker.

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Where it is known that the child has moved out of the area for a temporary period, however long or short, the area where the child is temporarily residing must be provided with the relevant information and contact numbers as follows:

- The Lead Social Worker must contact the Designated Manager (Children subject to a Child Protection Plan) and the Children's social care team where the child is temporarily resident, providing them with the relevant personal details and the last Child Protection Plan;
- The lead social worker must contact the "home" Designated Manager to advise of the change in circumstances;
- The 'home' Designated Manager (Children subject to a Child Protection Plan) must write to the Designated Manager (Children subject to a Child Protection Plan) in the area of the temporary residence and include any relevant information.

The child's name and details will remain on the List of Children subject to Child Protection Plans in the permanent home area until the criteria for discontinuing the Child Protection Plan are met.

5. MOVING ABROAD

Local agencies and professionals should bear in mind when working with children and families where there are outstanding concerns about the children's safety and welfare (including where the concerns are about an unborn child who may be likely to suffer Significant Harm), that a series of missed appointments (Health staff should be aware of the procedure for The Management of Non Attendance (DNA) in Children and Young People's Outpatient Clinics) may indicate that the family has moved out of the area or overseas. Children's social care and the police should be informed immediately when such concerns arise.

Where a child subject of a Child Protection Plan moves abroad whether planned or unplanned the Lead Social Worker and Safeguarding Reviewing Service should consider whether to reconvene a Review Conference or Core Group to determine what action to take. Appropriate steps should be taken to inform the relevant local and overseas authorities in the country to which the child has moved of any concerns.

Consideration needs to be given to appropriate legal interventions, where it appears that a child, who has outstanding child protection concerns about their safety and welfare, may be removed from the UK by his/her family in order to avoid the involvement of agencies with safeguarding responsibilities. This also applies when a child, who is subject to a Care Order, has been removed from the UK. Children's social care, the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team and the International Child Abduction and Contact Unit at the Ministry of Justice should be informed immediately.

In the case of children taken overseas it may be appropriate to contact the Consular Directorate at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office which offers assistance to British nationals in distress overseas (020 7008 0878/1500). They may be able to follow up a case through their consular post(s) in the country concerned.