

## Seven-minute briefing:

### North West inter-authority procedures for children and young people moving across local authority boundaries.

#### Procedures

There are **four regional inter-authority procedures**, which focus specifically on safeguarding responsibilities in relation to children who move across NW local authority boundaries, at different stages of child protection.

North West social care professionals should seek to apply this guidance in all situations where responsibilities need to be transferred across boundaries, and where deciding if case transfer is the best course of action for each child(ren) and their family.

**All procedures and supporting documents are available on [Tri-X](#) and the [NWADCS](#) websites.**

#### Purpose

The effective co-ordination and robust transfer of information to local agencies is critical to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who move across boundaries. These procedures are in place to support effective information transfer and to avoid the negative impacts of delays in addressing child safeguarding.

#### Cases where there is dispute or delay in case transfer

**Failure by the referring locality to provide all the relevant information and documentation in a timely manner will result in a delay of transfer, leading to increased risk or vulnerability for the child.**

Regional feedback has highlighted delays in receiving information remains a key cause in cases where transfer is impeded. Each of the procedures contains guidance on dispute resolution.

#### Rationale

Information sharing has been identified as a key area for learning in Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's annual reports. Key learning identified in [2022/23's report](#) was around "where children move from one area to another... so that there are no gaps in safeguarding practice when families move."

In 2021/22, [the report](#) stated "Out of the total 225 cases from the sample characterised by lack of coordination...80 of them it was recorded that this was either due to or further sharpened by cross-borough communication and information sharing issues".

#### Parties to the Procedure

The 24 North West local authorities are party to this procedure by virtue of their membership of the North West Association of Directors of Children's Services.

#### Training

It is the responsibility of local authority safeguarding leaders to ensure that frontline social care staff are aware of these procedures, e.g. as part of their training or induction processes. This is crucial in consistently embedding the procedures across all authorities, reducing delays in case transfer which will likely impact the child.

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**Annual review of procedures**

The annual review process for these procedures can be found [here](#) with the approach taken being flexible for each procedure, based on feedback from NW local authority social care and commissioning colleagues.

Please find the 2024/25 updates below. NWADCS extends our thanks to those colleagues who have supported to improve and shape these regional documents as part of the annual review process.

**The following updates were made to all procedures:**

- Updates to guidance and templates to reflect [Children's Social Care National Framework's](#) Outcome 2: Children and young people are supported by their family network.
- Templates have been amended to record more information about the child's cultural identity.
- Amendments have been made to the order and content of some points within procedures, where feedback stated it would better support practice.

In addition, specific updates are included in the table below.

<u>Children in need</u>	<u>Children subject of child protection plans</u>	<u>Pre-care and care proceedings</u>	<u>Safeguarding looked after children and young people</u>
Addition of Annex B. to include local partners' contact details.	Addition of Annex B. to include local partners' contact details.	Significant amendments have been made based on feedback from the NW PLO Hub members. Colleagues noted an increased need for joint working, given the time-limited nature of these types of cases, and ensuring that children and families are not impacted by delay or disruption to their support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvements to its structure have been made to make the document more easily navigable.</li> <li>- Updates to the review process for this procedure, to bring in line with other NW inter-authority procedures.</li> <li>- Guidance and template names amended to 'Consultation for placements at a distance', from 'Out of borough consultation'.</li> </ul>