



Forth Valley Multi-agency Child's Plan Transfer Guidance

Transfer of Responsibility for a Child's Plan or a Child Protection Plan between Local Authorities

Version	Date	Author	Date Review Due	Changes/comments
1.0	06.11.2020	FV Policies, Procedures and Protocols Group		First Draft
1.1	04.03.2021	FV Policies, Procedures and Protocols Group		Reviewed Updated Draft
1.2	23.03.2021	FV Policies, Procedures and Protocols Group		Reviewed Updated Draft

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This guidance aims to provide a best practice model for the transfer of a child's case between local authorities. It is intended to be applied in situations where a family, who are being supported by one local authority area, become permanently resident in another area, and there needs to be a transfer of Lead Professional responsibility for the Child's Plan or Child Protection Plan. It would not apply where a child becomes permanently resident in another area through living in a substitute family or in a care setting whilst the family's home address remains in the original local authority area.

1.2 Every child in Scotland should have a standard of service that ensures they can access early support, have their wellbeing safeguarded and have protection from significant harm. The getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach underpins both preventative and child protection processes.

1.3 When a child moves from one local authority area to another in Forth Valley or beyond, there is an expectation that a transfer of GIRFEC and child protection services between partner agencies should not create a gap in service provision or result in an increase in risk or vulnerability. These geographical moves may be at a time of accentuated stress and risk for children and families, and multi-agency standards must be clear to ensure proper transfer of information and responsibilities when a Child's Plan or a Child Protection Plan is currently in place. There have been examples of practice that have led to uncertainty around roles or disagreement between local authorities over how transfers have been managed. This guidance aims to address this situation although acknowledges complexities can occur in the transfer of legal orders.

1.4 The key principle to transferring a Child's Plan or Child Protection Plan and the Lead Professional's case management responsibilities is that **the safety and welfare of the child is paramount**. To achieve this, it is essential to:

- **Avoid Delay.** Transfers and associated communications should be timely, ensuring that children and 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 must 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 collective responsibility to promote effective case transfers for children to avoid drift and delay for the child and their family.
- **Share information relating to assessment of risk and need.** It is essential that the assessment and plans are up to date and are shared to provide a clear analysis of needs and risks relating to the child and family. All agencies/services have responsibility for promoting and creating positive communication and information sharing within and across other Local Authority areas in respect of the Child's Plan or Child Protection Plan.

- **Hold a Transfer Meeting.** This meeting will be particularly important in providing an opportunity to put detail to the transfer arrangements, discuss issues such as current or previous child protection concerns and consider services and support. These meetings may take different forms depending on the situation: an initial Transfer of the Case meeting between professionals, a Team Around the Child Meeting or a Transfer Case Conference. They should assist in getting to know the child, the parents or the wider family.

1.5 It is the expectation that when a decision is made to transfer case management responsibilities to another local authority, a number of factors will be considered:

- The current level of needs and risks assessed for the child and wider family
- The geographical location of the child and the distance required by the Lead Professional and local services to assess/support
- Does the family home remain in the original local authority area?
- Is the family currently in crisis and requiring immediate intervention?

2. TRANSFER OF A CHILD'S PLAN IN FORTH VALLEY WHERE THE SOCIAL WORKER IS LEAD PROFESSIONAL

2.1 This is applicable for children who have a social worker as lead professional and a child's plan, including Looked After Children.

2.2 Before a child moves to another area within Forth Valley, the Social Worker, as Lead Professional, will discuss the intended move with the parent and the child depending on their age. The child and family's experience, views and needs should be part of these discussions.

2.3 Discussion must take place with the Team Around the Child and between the allocated Social Worker who is the Lead Professional and their Manager/ Team Leader to agree whether to request a transfer of Lead Professional responsibilities to the receiving Local Authority Social Work Service. The expectation is that the Team Around the Child will have an understanding of the child's needs and risks and will communicate their view on whether a transfer is required or not.

2.4 Where the decision is made not to request a transfer, the Social Worker as Lead Professional must still notify, in writing, the child's new Named Person to make them aware of the proposed or actual move. They will share information about any previous child protection intervention or if the child has been looked after.

2.5 Where a child requires a continuing Child's Plan and the co-ordinating role of a Lead Professional, the receiving Social Work Service will be written to by the Children & Families Social Work Team Manager/Leader requesting that a Transfer meeting takes place within 28 days to formally review the current assessment, chronology and action plan and make the necessary transfer arrangements.

2.6 A copy of the last Child's Plan (assessment and action plan) will be sent by the

current allocated Social Worker as Lead Professional to the receiving Social Work locality. If the last Child's Plan was written more than 3 months prior to the move, an updated assessment will be completed by the originating Local Authority. This crucial assessment will be shared with the receiving Local Authority at least 1 week prior to the Transfer meeting. Best practice for the Transfer meeting is that it follows within 28 days of making the transfer request.

2.7 The receiving Local Authority Team Manager will write back to the originating Local authority within 2 weeks confirming an in-principle decision to accept transfer of responsibility for the Child's Plan and both Team Managers/Leaders should agree a date for the Transfer meeting within the 28 day timescale.

2.8 The Transfer meeting for a Child's Plan will;

- Consist of the current Social Work Team Manager/Leader and the receiving Social Work Team Manager/Leader as a minimum and may include the current Social Worker/ Lead Professional and the newly identified Social Worker/ Lead Professional. It could also be a wider Team Around the Child Meeting if that was considered timely and appropriate.
- Clearly identify the needs of the child and concerns around risk.
- Identify actions to facilitate the transfer and ensure there are no gaps in the assessment and protection of the child.
- If services have found it hard to engage with the family, this should be explored. Terms such as 'non-engagement', 'resistance' and 'disguised compliance' need to be understood. Effective co-operation can fail at any point, sometimes rapidly and anticipating predictable cycles of stress may be part of planning the transfer. Best practice is always to consider what impact a closure of a service has on a child and to recognise their rights to help when they're looking for it. It's important to have a shared sense of purpose in relation to what needs to change for the child.
- Agree the transfer of key electronic/paper documents for the child.
- Be recorded with salient points and agreed actions. This should be undertaken by the originating Social Work Team and included on the child's file in both Local Authority areas.
- If the child is subject to a compulsory supervision order, the Children's Reporter must be notified of the agreement to transfer Lead Professional responsibilities by both Local authorities and a Children's Hearing Review requested to formally transfer host arrangements for the Statutory Order.

2.9 Once transfer has been agreed, formal transfer to the new Social Work Service should take place no longer than 2 weeks from the date of the Transfer meeting unless an alternative transfer point has been agreed such as a Children's Hearing and provided this is within 28 days.

2.10 Prior to the formal transfer date, the new Social Worker/ Lead Professional and current worker should plan introductions to the family and other involved practitioners in the Team Around the Child. They should also write to them all confirming Lead Professional transfer has taken place.

2.11 The original Named Person from either Health or Education will be advised that they should arrange their respective information sharing and transfer of Named Person responsibilities to the new named person in the receiving local authority. The new

named person should attend the transfer meeting.

2.12 Where the decision is made not to request a transfer, the Social Worker as Lead Professional must still notify, in writing, the child's new Named Person to make them aware of the proposed or actual move. They will share information about any previous child protection intervention or if the child has been looked after.

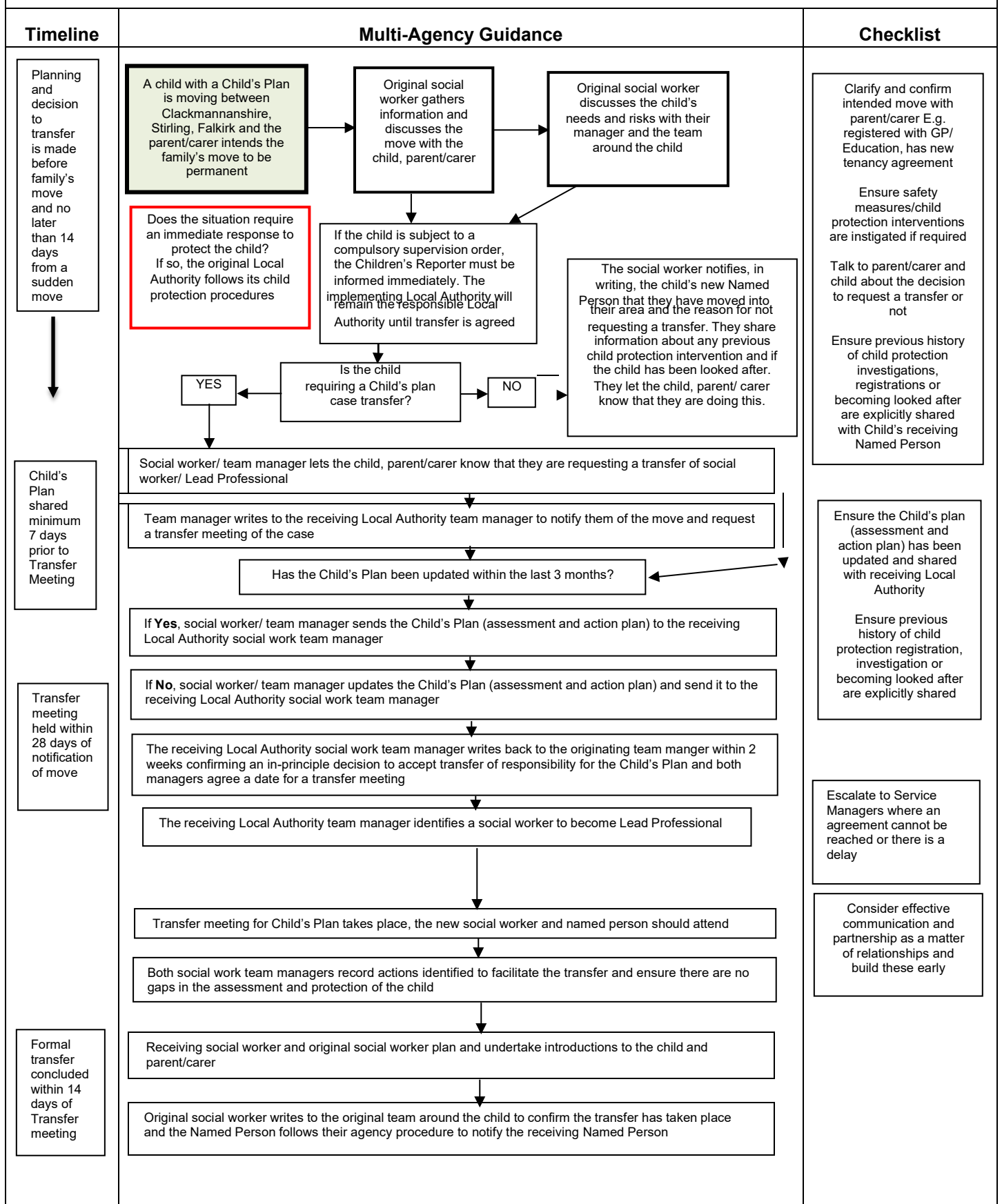
2.13 If a child is subject to a compulsory supervision order (CSO) the Children's Reporter must be notified immediately. The implementing authority will remain the responsible authority until transfer is agreed.

2.14 There may be circumstances where a transfer should not be undertaken as outlined above, or circumstances where there is a need for both Local Authorities to work closely together and share information effectively to reach a timely and informed transfer decision. This may include situations where:

- A Child Protection Investigation or Inter-agency Referral Discussion has just commenced.
- The original Local Authority are supporting the child/ren who live at home and the parent is pregnant. The original Social Worker/ Lead Professional should undertake the pre-birth assessment due to their knowledge and current contact with the family. This allows a trauma informed approach, prevents multiple change-over of workers and minimises potential legal complexities for older children subject to permanence planning. Once the Forth Valley pre-birth assessment has been written, this will determine whether to proceed to a transfer or not and it will contain a clear recommendation.
- The original Local Authority are supporting child/ren who are looked after away from home and the parent is pregnant. If the child/ren are subject to permanency planning, a Transfer should not proceed until a permanence decision has been agreed at a review.

Figure 1: Transfer Pathway

Transfer of a Child's Plan within Forth Valley where a Social Worker is Lead Professional



3. TRANSFER OF A CHILD'S PLAN OUT OF FORTH VALLEY WHERE THE SOCIAL WORKER IS LEAD PROFESSIONAL

3.1 The Transfer process above (see Figure 1) should also be initiated for a child moving permanently into or out of Forth Valley, where they have an existing Child's Plan co-ordinated by Social Work.

4. TRANSFER OF A CHILD'S PLAN IN OR OUT OF FORTH VALLEY WHERE THE LEAD PROFESSIONAL IS FROM UNIVERSAL SERVICES OR ANOTHER SERVICE AND IS NOT FROM SOCIAL WORK

4.1 This is applicable for children who have a plan and the lead professional is not a social worker. The lead professional may be from any of the services providing support to meet the child's wellbeing needs and reduce risks i.e. health visitor, teacher, early years officer, family support service. For a child with complex physical or mental health needs, a specific medical specialist may take the co-ordinating role. Regardless of their organisation, it is the Lead Professional's role is to make sure the child is supported through their transition to another area.

4.2 Before a child moves to another area in or outwith Forth Valley, the Lead Professional will discuss the intended move with the parent/carer and the child depending on their age. The child and families experience, views and needs should be part of these discussions.

4.3 Discussion must take place between the Lead Professional, the Named Person (if a different person), other members of the Team Around the Child and relevant Managers to agree whether to request a transfer of Lead Professional responsibilities to the receiving Local Authority. At this stage it may not be clear who the new Lead Professional should be and the transfer request should be made to the receiving Named Person as soon as they are identified or the request should be escalated to an appropriate Service Lead if there is a delay.

4.4 Who is the Named Person?

Age of Child	Named Person
Pre-birth, usually until 10-14 days old	Midwife
Birth until child starts school	Health Visitor or Family Nurse Practitioner
Primary school pupils	Primary Head Teacher or nominated promoted member of staff
Secondary school pupils	Guidance Teacher
Gypsy Traveller and home educated children	Interrupted Learners Service within Falkirk Council Children's Services
School leaver until 18 years old	Interrupted Learners Service within Falkirk Council Children's Services
Children Looked After and accommodated/educated out with the Falkirk area OR Children placed within Falkirk from a different local authority	The lead professional will have the coordinating role, but the child will also have a named person who will be a key contact person from the local authority area where they live/go to school. There will also be close liaison with the original local authority named person/ lead professional.
Young person serving a custodial sentence	Representative from Scottish Prison Service

4.5 Where a child does not require the continuation of a Child's Plan and where the decision is made not to request a Child's Plan transfer, the Lead Professional must still notify, in writing, the child's new Named Person to make them aware of the proposed or actual move. They will share information about any previous child protection intervention or if the child has been looked after.

4.6 Where a child requires a continuing Child's plan and the co-ordinating role of a Lead Professional, the receiving Named Person will be written to by the Lead Professional requesting that a Transfer meeting takes place between them within 28 days to formally share the current assessment, chronology and action plan and make the necessary transfer arrangements.

4.7 A copy of the last Child's Plan (assessment and action plan) will be sent by the current Lead Professional to the receiving Named Person. If the last Child's Plan was written more than 3 months prior to the move, an updated assessment will be completed by the originating Local Authority. This crucial assessment will be shared with the receiving Local Authority at least 1 week prior to the Transfer meeting. Best practice for the Transfer meeting is that it follows within 28 days of making the transfer request.

4.8 The receiving Local Authority Named Person will write back to the originating Local authority Lead Professional within 2 weeks confirming they accept transfer of responsibility for the Child's Plan and both individuals should agree a date for the Transfer meeting.

4.9 The Transfer meeting for a Child's Plan will:

- Consist of the current Lead Professional and the receiving Named Person. It could also be a wider Team Around the Child Meeting if that was considered timely and appropriate.
- Clearly identify the needs of the child and concerns around risk
- Identify actions to facilitate the transfer and ensure there are no gaps in the assessment and protection of the child
- If services have found it hard to engage with the family, this should be explored. Terms such as 'non-engagement', 'resistance' and 'disguised compliance' need to be understood. Effective co-operation can fail at any point, sometimes rapidly and anticipating predictable cycles of stress may be part of planning the transfer. Best practice is always to consider what impact a closure of a service has on a child and to recognise their rights to help when they're looking for it. It's important to have a shared sense of purpose in relation to what needs to change for the child.
- Agree the transfer of key electronic/paper documents for the child.
- Be recorded. A note of the meeting must take place, with salient points and agreed actions. This should be undertaken by the originating Lead Professional and be recorded in both Local Authority areas files.

4.10 Once transfer has been agreed, formal transfer to the new Named Person

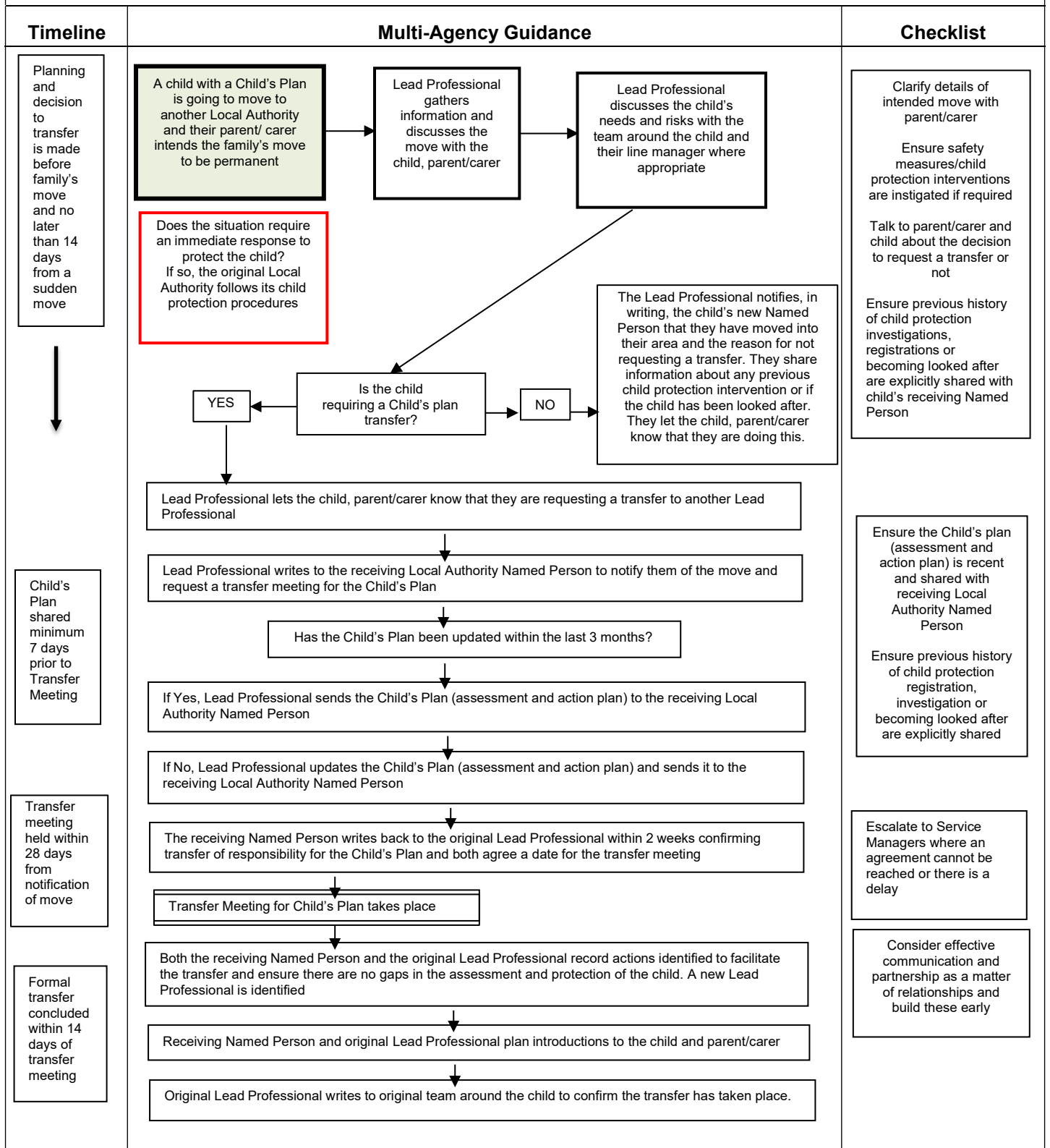
should take place no longer than 2 weeks from the date of the Transfer meeting.

4.11 Prior to the formal transfer date, the new Named Person and original Lead Professional should plan introductions to the family. They should also write to original Team around the Child members confirming a Child's Plan transfer has taken place.

4.12 The new Named Person will take responsibility for arranging a Team Around the Child Meeting, if this was not part of the Transfer meeting.

Figure 2: Transfer Pathway

Transfer of a Child's Plan where the Lead Professional is from Universal Services or another Service and is not a Social Worker



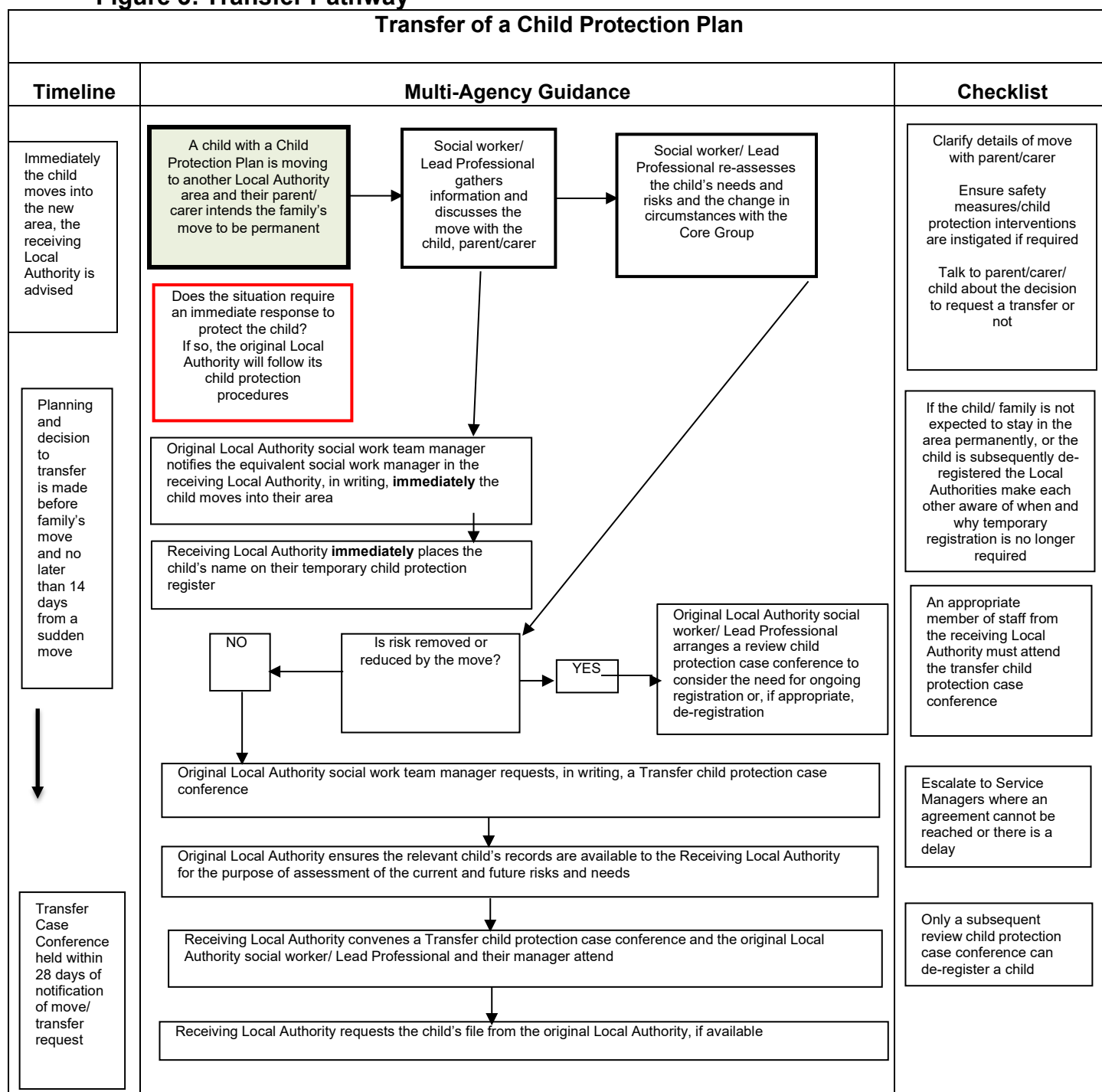
5. TRANSFER OF A CHILD ON THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER

5.1 When it's known that a child with a Child Protection Plan and their family are

moving permanently to another Local Authority area, the original Local Authority will notify the receiving Local Authority immediately, in writing. The original Local Authority must assess the change in circumstances. If there is felt to be a reduction in risk, the original Local Authority should arrange a review child protection case conference to consider the need for ongoing registration or, if appropriate de-registration. In such circumstances it would be best practice for an appropriate member of staff from the receiving authority to attend the review. Where the original authority considers that the risk is ongoing or even increased by the move, the receiving Local Authority is responsible for convening the transfer child protection case conference.

The process for these types of transfer is outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Transfer Pathway



6. RESOLVING DISAGREEMENT

6.1 It is the expectation that when a decision is made to transfer Lead Professional responsibilities, a quick resolution is concluded around any disagreement. Under these circumstances the Lead Professional and their manager should follow Forth Valley Guidance for Escalation.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/public/GirfecFalkirk/uploads/sites/2017/2021/02/16113824/FV-Multi-agency-Guidance-for-Escalation-09.11.2020.docx>