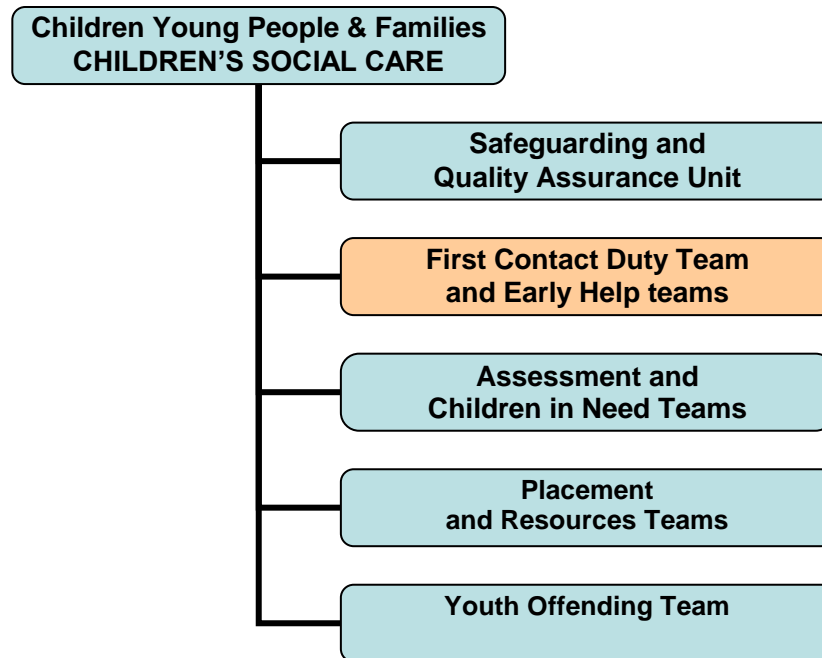


Duty Manual ~ From July 2014

MAKE UP AND PURPOSE

The Children's First Contact Duty Team is part of the Children's Social Care Service (CSC). Referrals (requests for a service) may come to any part of the Service (see below), and may come from children themselves, teachers, a GP, the police, health visitors, family members and members of the public.



Working Together 2013 is clear that within local authorities, Children's Social Care should act as the principal point of contact for welfare concerns relating to children.

In all duty screening and assessment processes, the child must come first, and the safety of the child remains paramount at all times and in all circumstances.

The First Contact service is a 'One Front Door' arrangement that aims to channel contacts and referrals to Children's Social Care teams and early Help teams.

The Duty Team is made up of the following staff:

- 1 Practice Manager
- 2 Duty Managers for Children's Social Care and Early Help
- 3 Duty Social Workers
- 2 Early Help Duty Workers
- 3 Customer Services Officers
- 1 Business Support Officer
- 12 FTE posts

SOME DEFINITIONS

A Contact

Refers both to the initial status of a new request for information or a service, and to the corresponding fields within ICS (computer system) which need to be completed.

Working Together 2013 expects Children's Social Care to decide what to do with a request for information or a service within 24 hours – the clock starts at the time of receipt of the request.

Possible decisions/outcomes:

- NFA (with or without additional duty desk tasks having been completed);
- Provision of Advice and Information;
- Early Help service provision, or
- Progress to Referral (to Children's Social Care)

A Referral

This refers to the corresponding fields within ICS, and to the status given to contacts which indicate that the case meets the threshold for a statutory assessment, and therefore require further consideration and a response from the receiving Children Social Care team.

Only possible outcome: A Needs and Risks Assessment (part 1 of a C&F Assessment).

An Assessment

Refers to both a Slough Early Help Assessment (where matrix of needs and risks threshold is not met), or the single, statutory, Children and family (C&F) assessment where the threshold is met.

The CAIU

This is the Child Abuse Investigation Unit within Thames Valley Police (TVP). All new referrals to the CAIU must be made via the New Referral Line 01865 291046.

CAIU can be reached directly at 01753 835 500

A MARF

This is our Multi Agency Referral Form (Appendix A). With the exception of the Police, the use of this form must be encouraged by other agencies requesting a service from the Duty Team, as a means of giving us information as a contact before a conversation, or following a conversation with a member of the Duty team.

ROLES OF DUTY TEAM MEMBERS

Customer Service Officers (CSO) – Three CSOs have essentially the same daily tasks allocated to each. They play an important role in screening contacts and responding to 'referrers'. CSOs take information via phone, email, fax and post and create contacts on ICS. CSOs are trained to look at contacts and know which need to be flagged immediately to the Duty Manager and/or Practice Manager.

Additionally, one CSO is the MARAC and MAPPA researcher, while another CSO is responsible for recording and updating the Missing Children register (Missing from Home, not Missing from Care).

Business Support Officer (BSO) – One member of staff who is responsible for the administrative support of the team, including updating and maintaining relevant service and management data, processing phone and 'walk in' calls, sending out letters to 'referrers' with Duty decisions, amongst several other duties.

Early Help Duty Worker (EHDW) – Two members of staff working under the direction of the Early Help Manager. These staff progress contacts which do not reach the threshold for Social Care intervention or where this may be unknown. The EHDW will make phone contact with parents regarding consent, gather further information, signpost to appropriate services, attend TAC meetings, assist immediately in some cases such as obtaining refuge/housing and make direct referrals to other services.

Early Help Duty Manager (EHDM) – A manager who sits permanently within the duty team and manages the Early Help Duty Workers. The EHDM and the Duty Manager will process the duty tray collaboratively, reviewing all contacts to determine next steps. The Duty Manager makes the final threshold decision on all contacts. The EHDM is the Liaison lead for Slough Domestic Abuse Services.

Duty Social Workers – Social Workers who sit permanently within the Duty Team. Each day, there will be a Duty Worker allocated to do desk work involving liaison and follow up.

The purpose of this is to process and progress contacts with the support and/or direction of the Duty Manager to enable appropriate decision making. The duty desk worker will contact referrers, parents and professionals in order to progress work. They will also attend to walk in appointments and requests for information.

Children's Social Care Duty Manager – A manager sitting permanently within the duty team, responsible for the line management of Duty Social Workers. The CSC Duty Manager's key function is to oversee/decide on cases in the duty tray i.e. contacts and referrals. The CSC Duty Manager will ensure that duty processes are being followed and duty cases are being appropriately closed or progressed in the appropriate timeframe. S/he will also oversee cases where Duty Social workers take immediate action to meet need or protect a child.

The Duty Manager will work closely with Practice Managers from other Children's Social Care Teams to ensure timely allocation of all relevant cases that are to be assessed.

Practice Manager – Manager of the First Contact Team, managing the Duty Managers, and duty social workers. They are responsible for the overall development and running of the team.

The Practice Manager will have scheduled meetings with Children's Social Care colleagues (including EDT) and other agencies to ensure effective multi-agency work to help and safeguard children.

The Practice Manager is responsible for ensuring the liaison for MARAC and MAPPA is staffed appropriately.

DUTY SYSTEMS

New contacts arrive via MARF, phone, fax, email, in-person by walk-in; through the Emergency Duty Team or via Police Notification. Some of these contacts may be requests for information.

All contact are reviewed by the duty managers as they come in. Cases are prioritized into urgent cases (likely section 47 investigations), referrals for assessment (likely section 17 cases) and Early Help cases. Urgent cases are recorded onto the system as a priority by the CSO's.

Information received on cases which are already open to a social worker will be sent directly to the Business Support Officer of the team in which the social worker is placed.

The CSOs are responsible for putting new contacts onto ICS. Essential information is:

- Full names (including aliases and spelling variations), date of birth and gender of children
- Family address/es
- School /nursery attended
- Identity of those with parental responsibility
- Names and date of birth of all household members
- Ethnicity, first language and religion of children and parents
- Any special needs of children or parents
- Concerns including details of allegations, sources, timing and location
- Alerts regarding any member of the family/animal in household, pertaining to safety of staff
- Child's current location and emotional and physical condition
- Whether the child needs immediate protection and why
- Details of alleged perpetrator, if relevant
- Referrer's relationship to and knowledge of child and parents
- Known involvement of other agencies/professionals
- Information regarding parental knowledge of and agreement or not to the referral

Once all information has been recorded, this contact is sent to the C&F Duty Tray (ICS computer record). The Duty Managers will read the contact information and has ultimate responsibility for ensuring contacts are processed as necessary. If further information is required this information will be obtained by any one of the members of the duty team as directed by the Duty Manager. Contacts can be reassigned to a worker in order to add information to the case. Once done, all contacts will be reassigned to the Duty Tray in order for a final decision to be made.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (the LADO)

When the Duty team receive information about abuse or neglect alleged to have been perpetrated by a person who works with children (a member of the children's workforce) the information should be passed to the LADO as quickly as possible, and certainly the same day. In the first instance these details will not be recorded by duty as a contact, but will be recorded within the LADO log system.

Allegations regarding a professional who works with vulnerable adults must be reported to Adults Safeguarding 01753 47 7217.

Early Help

The Early Help (EH) Duty Manager and Workers are an integral part of Children's Services Duty Service.

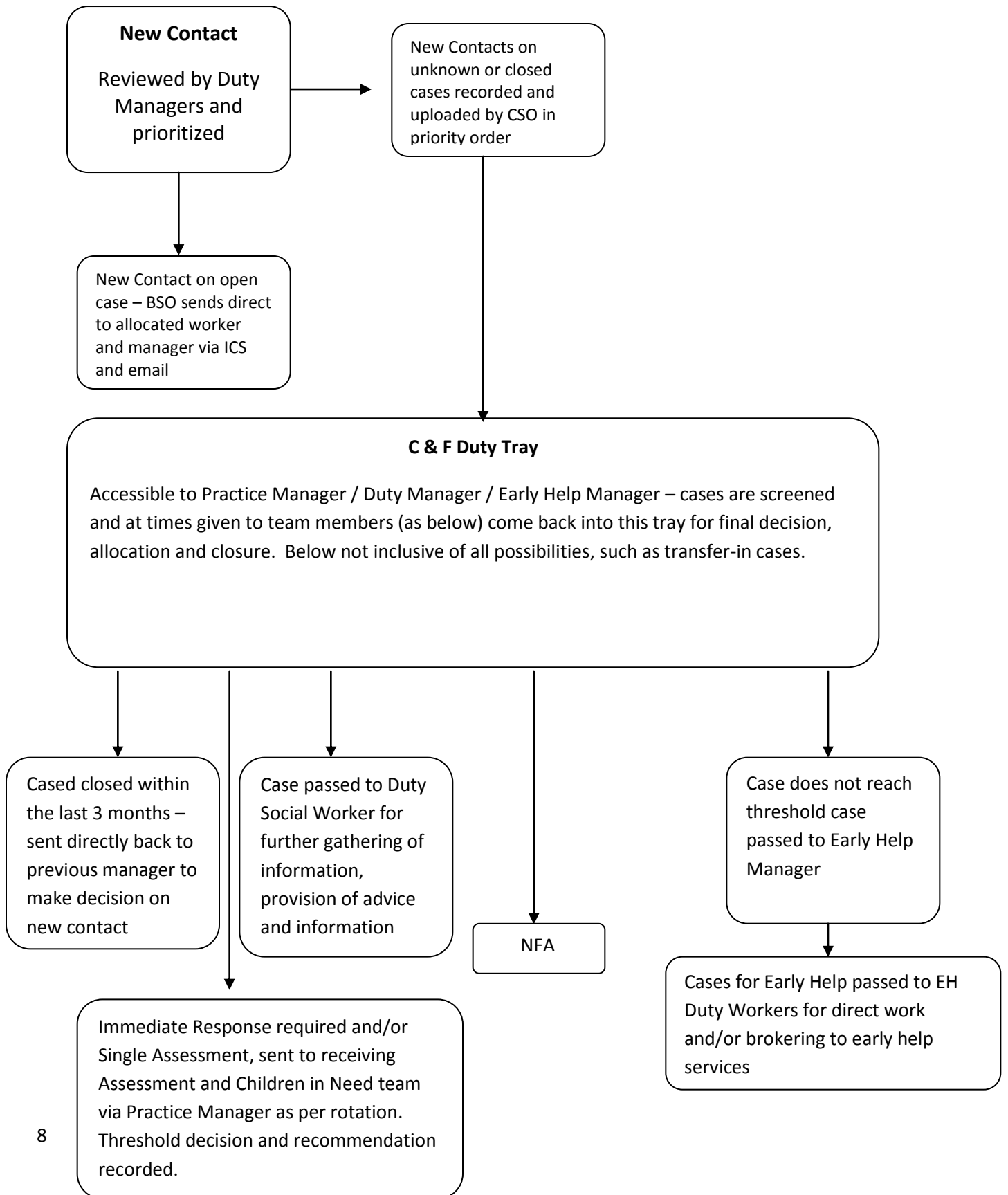
Early Help is one of the options for contacts to Children's Social Care. This option is chosen when the contact information does not meet the threshold for Social Services action, but a referral for Early Intervention is requested. The Early Help Duty Manager and Early Help workers are able to record their work within ICS, until they transfer the case to another service.

The EH Duty Workers will check whether parents have given consent to share information. If this is not clear they will ring the parent regarding consent, gather further information and signpost to appropriate services. The Early Help Duty Workers may undertake home visits and telephone calls to gather further information, assist immediately in some cases such as obtaining refuge/housing and make direct referrals to other services.

Cases from Early Help Duty are referred to services using the Multi-Agency Referral/Early Help Assessment Form.

Early Help cases must be dealt with and referred to the appropriate service, or closed, within five working days. The EH Duty Manager approves decisions on Early Help work.

Front Door Pathway



OUTCOMES

From the Contacts record

No Further Action – When this option is chosen a No Further Action Record is automatically kicked off. A copy of the outcome of contact is copied into this record with the start date being the date it is entered. No end date is required.

Early Help – This option is chosen when the contact does not meet the threshold for Social Services action, but a referral for Early Intervention is required. This option allows for the Early Help Duty Manager and Early Help workers to record their work within ICS.

Provision of Advice and Information – This option does not require progressing to referral and is usually chosen for cases such as requests for information. Some cases may be sent to Family Information Service if appropriate. These cases are allocated to the Duty Social Worker and when complete are sent back to the Duty Manager or Practice Manager for authorisation to ensure that it is thorough and documented properly.

Progress to Referral – once the contact is authorised a new referral will be kicked off on ICS.

From the Referrals record

Needs & Risk Assessment – This option allows for the Duty Team to start the process of risk assessment (source is 'Referral') to ensure that it is completed. The outcome of referral and reason for assessment will be entered, as well as any need or risk issues known at that time. The only possible outcome is a Child and Family Assessment, and this is used to transfer the case to the receiving Assessment and Children in Need team, in the name of the Practice Manager.

No Further Action – As above

Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment – This option is chosen when a notification of a private fostering arrangement is received in order to ensure an initial private fostering assessment is completed. It will be processed and allocated to the appropriate CYPFS Team as would an Assessment.

CP Transfer In – In this case the Duty Manager would have ensured that all documents were received prior to progressing to referral. These documents include: most recent CP report, assessment, chronology, plan and invite list. These documents pass directly to the Quality Assurance Safeguarding Unit once a worker is allocated to the case by a CP/LAC team.

* All Allocations and closures are completed electronically.

* All referrals should automatically trigger a request for back files. All documents received must be scanned into ICS under all the children in the family at the time of contact.

FLOW OF WORK FROM DUTY TO ALLOCATION IN RECEIVING TEAMS

The Duty Manager is responsible for authorising and progressing referrals and ensuring transfer of these to the receiving team as new cases for allocation.

All new contacts on cases previously allocated to a team but closed within the previous three months will be sent to the Practice Manager of that team for decision following a discussion with the Duty Manager. The contact will be reassigned to the Practice Manager at the contact stage by the Duty Manager.

For new cases, the Duty Manager will complete the contact, referral and Needs and Risks Assessment forms fully. Once these forms are complete, a new Child and Family Assessment is started and assigned to the new Practice Manager.

Basic information will be copied from the last section of each referral and sent via email to the Practice Manager of the receiving team to alert them to a new case being sent to their tray.

The Duty Manager assigns the Practice Manager as the Social Work Manager of the case at the time of completion of the Needs and Risks Assessment and start of a new Child and Family Assessment. Threshold decisions and recommendations are recorded for the receiving manager. Allocation to the worker is completed by the receiving Practice Manager choosing a member of their team.

The Duty Manager will ensure all new allocations are also recorded next to the correct Practice Manager on the duty management white board.

All duty recording on the above cases will be completed within the contact, referral and case notes sections of ICS. Case notes must tell the story and begin the recording of this new contact/referral.

A chronology will be started and a genogram included on every new contact that becomes a referral and a new Child and Family Assessment.

TRANSFER IN ~ CHILD IN NEED & CHILD PROTECTION CASES

In these cases, prior to putting a new contact on the system a check will be done that the family has a permanent address in Slough. Ideally, the sending borough will have confirmed that the family is physically living in the address they have provided.

For Child In Need cases, the Duty Manager will ensure that at least the most recent Assessment, Child In Need Plan and Chronology are received from the sending borough. Any request for these must be confirmed in writing and where necessary, advising a case will not be accepted.

Transfer in Child Protection Conferences

- Once a request is received, Customer Service Officers will work with the Safeguarding Unit to ensure that the child(ren)'s details are recorded as a child in the Slough area on a Child Protection Plan and that a transfer in conference date is scheduled within 15 days once the contact is received.
- It is expected that the originating authority will send all required paperwork within 24 hours (chronology, recent assessment, recent minutes from either Initial or Review Conference, plan, invite list). Once this is received, the referral will progress directly to the Safeguarding Unit, via ICS for scheduling. The Duty Manager will alert the Safeguarding Unit of this via email.
- The Duty Manager will alert the Designated Manager in the Protection and Care service of the transfer in. The Designated Manager will put this case on the transfer list. A worker from the PAC service will attend the transfer in conference.
- The Referring Local Authority remains the responsible authority until the transfer in conference has taken place and Slough has accepted responsibility. This does not exclude Slough from ensuring that the child is safe when necessary, however all work should be led by the originating Local Authority.

- Once the contact has been progressed to referral the following will be undertaken within the Duty Team:
 - Visit to the family home to establish permanency of address, details of people at address and ensure written information received matches the family's real life situation.
 - Undertake any reasonable checks as requested by the referring Local Authority when undertaking the welfare visit (seeing the child alone, with carer, the bedroom, etc).
 - The Duty Social Worker needs to establish if there are any immediate Child Protection concerns which would require legal input. If so, the Practice Manager will alert the Referring Manager and Slough's Head of Service that there appear to be additional steps required by the referring Local Authority prior to holding the conference. Pan Berkshire procedure requires the chair of the conference to make the decision to cancel a conference.
 - The Duty Social Worker will document their visit and other work within the Needs and Risk Table and as a Case Note. The Duty Social will consider the information received by the originating Local Authority and form an opinion, in conjunction with the Duty/Practice Manager, whether Slough will undertake further assessment. This is the only time that a Needs & Risk Table may be used as a stand alone document.
- Following the above, the Duty Practice Manager will advise the Designated Managers of the Protection and Care and CIN Assessment services if it appears that due to the move into the Slough area a Child Protection plan will no longer be necessary. This is in order that the case may be allocated, in rare cases, directly into the CIN Assessment service. In this situation it is expected that the CIN worker will attend the transfer in conference.
- Should conference decide the CP plan remains in place, the case should be allocated within the PAC service and is not then required to transfer.

- The case should be allocated at the earliest possible date, as to not have the case held on duty until the date of conference.

MISSING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PROCESS ('MISPER')

The following process does not apply to children who are already open cases to CYPFS teams.

All MISPER contacts are contained within an ICS tray marked MISPER, which is accessible by the MISPER CSO, Practice Manager and Duty Managers. However the Practice Manager holds overall responsibility for the daily management of the MISPER tray.

The purpose of the separate tray is to ensure that these cases do not get lost within the other daily contacts and the Practice Manager can track the number of days a child has been missing.

The Practice Manager is the Liaison for the MISPER panel held monthly.

The Process

When a child or YP is reported missing to the police a notification is sent by them to Social Services via secure email. These contacts remain open until a second notification is sent once the child has returned, or, a strategy meeting is held on the basis of information in the first notification. In any event, if a child is not found within 5 days a strategy meeting is convened to discuss what actions to take to find the child, who to notify and if legal action is required. Whenever a child has been subject to a strategy meeting due to having been missing a follow-up strategy meeting should be held when they return.

When a child returns and police update Social Care, the contact is updated by the MISPER CSO and then moved into the duty tray. The Duty Manager will make a decision informed by the outcome of a safe and well visit by the police and any other relevant information available. The Duty Manager's decision could range from progress for statutory assessment, to signpost for Early Help or NFA.

Walk In Procedure

Reception will notify the Duty Team upon arrival of an unknown, unannounced person requesting assistance. Reception will provide the person with a 'walk in form' for completion which will be retrieved by the BSO. It will then be decided which member of the Duty team will meet with the person. This can include Early Help staff.

The walk in form will be given to a CSO who will enter the information onto ICS as a new contact. Regardless of who sees the person ICS must accurately reflect the contact and response within 24 hours. The contact will then be progressed as would any other contact.

Remand to Local Authority Care

As of December 1, 2012 all children and young people who are remanded into care automatically become Looked After Children. Notification of these C/YP who have been remanded come through the Duty Team as a new contact. These contacts are progressed to referral and transferred immediately to a CIN/Assessment team.

MARAC & MAPPA- research, liaising and alerts

If a family is referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference due to domestic violence a MARAC alert will be created by the Duty Practice Manager or the MARAC researcher, whoever deals with it first. This alert will be created under the subject of the MARAC, which is the mother in the majority of the cases. The children will then have an alert on their ICS front page, which would state they are related to someone who is subject to MARAC.

The MARAC researcher will look up each person who is scheduled to be discussed at MARAC and make briefing notes for the Practice Manager attending.

Following the MARAC, if the family is open to Social Services, the Practice Manager will email the allocated worker for each family to inform them of the discussion and advise if there are outstanding actions. All outstanding actions will be recorded in case notes for each case.

The Practice Manager and MARAC researcher have access to Modus to ensure that completion of tasks is recorded within the MARAC system.