

Swindon Guidance for Children, Families and Community Health Managers for Managing Caseloads without a worker or the worker is currently absent from work.

1. Scope

This guidance covers the following scenarios for both statutory and non-statutory work

- Caseloads which need reallocating when a worker is leaving/ leaves.
- Workers who are absent for work due to holiday, sickness, care commitments, maternity leave, and any other form of authorized or unauthorized absence.

2. Managing Caseloads

2.1 On receiving the worker's resignation/termination the relevant Manager will complete the following before the staff member leaves service:

- Inform Management and HR so due process can take place in relation to resignation/termination.
- Work with Manager and overall service Budget Holder to agree best arrangements in terms of replacement – reviewing hours and any consideration to skill mix etc.
- Work with Manager to instigate and follow through recruitment processes.
- Work with resigning worker to bring all records up to date.
- **Ensure that all children and their families have been notified that the worker is leaving the team/service. This is primarily the responsibility of the allocated worker who should in all but exceptional circumstances inform the family**
- Identify with the resigning worker families requiring an ongoing service from the relevant team /service then arrange allocation and handover to another member of the team before the current worker leaves service.
- Identify outstanding tasks on the worker's caseload and work with staff member to get as many completed as possible. This includes identifying future planned meetings and appointments following the worker leaving to ensure that these are covered or re arranged as appropriate.
- Ensure staff member hands back any Swindon property and equipment including lap top, phones, scales, ID Badges etc. and that due process is followed in relation to corporate policies.

2.2 Prior to the staff member leaving Swindon's employment the relevant Manager will:

- Review the worker's caseload, to ensure that all families who have been identified as requiring an ongoing service have been allocated to another member of the team.
- Review the overall caseloads of the team, identify any spare capacity and allocate to those team members.

When the worker leaves the service the relevant manager will:-

- Ensure that the previous staff member is removed from the list of workers within Swindon.

2.3 Ongoing responsibilities of the relevant Manager in relation to the caseload:

Non-Statutory Work

- If the caseload is non-statutory then allocate any family to another member of the team for whom concerns indicate a need to review or step up the service they receive.

- Deal with any correspondence or notifications in relation to the caseload, paying particular attention to any information that would indicate a need to change the status of the support to the child or family.
- Consider if the child and or family's needs can be met by attendance at Clinics, Groups or other support provision.
- Consider how the team will manage the increased pressure because of the vacancy

Statutory Work(Social Care Teams)

- If the team undertakes statutory intervention with children and families then there is a legal requirement for an allocated worker to be assigned to all cases.
- It is the responsibility of the relevant manager to discuss the situation with their Senior Manager with a view to considering if a Business Case is made in order to approve temporary cover ie agency workers until permanent staff can be recruited.

3. Caseloads where the allocated worker is in Swindon employment but not currently at work.

3.1 Caseloads that are not covered for less than 2 weeks:

- If the leave is planned the staff member should inform the relevant Manager of any outstanding or essential activities including those that relate to the support of individual children or families while they are away and agree with the Manager a plan to cover these activities.
- If the leave is planned or unplanned the Manager to ensure that appropriate, "out of office", notifications are in place. This should be done by the worker prior to planned leave and for unplanned leave the Manager will need to contact IT on 4900 or via the IT Portal to ask for this to be done as a matter of urgency.
- Manager to review any urgent information or requests that are redirected whilst the worker is absent particularly those that relate to safeguarding concerns or on a vulnerable child and ensure appropriate action is taken. The caseload will remain allocated to the absent worker but the casework tasks will be undertaken by duty workers or the team manager will arrange temporary allocation as appropriate.

3.2 Caseloads that are not covered for 2-8 weeks:

- Manager to ensure that appropriate, "out of office", notifications are in place – see above point 3.1 second bullet point.
- Manager to review any urgent information or requests that are redirected and actively review all information or requests that come in about children on the worker's caseload whilst they are absent This will include looking at CAPITA1 Workflow Messages. Manager to ensure that suitable action is taken and this may include re-allocating the family to another member of the team.

3.3 Caseloads that are not covered for more than 8 weeks:

- If the leave of absence is planned and known in advance e.g. maternity leave or planned surgery, then the Team Manager should follow the same process outlined in section 2.
- The caseload will be transferred back once the staff member returns or to a temporary staff member employed to cover the leave (note the service is allowed to recruit temporary cover up to 50% of the hours of anyone on maternity leave).
- If the leave of absence is unplanned as soon as it is apparent the leave will extend beyond 8 weeks the Team Manager should discuss the situation with the Service Manager.