

## Nottingham City Council Specialist Services

<b>Title:</b>	Unallocated cases guidance.
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<b>Service Area:</b>	Children's Social Care
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<b>Scope:</b>	<p>This document provides guidance on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Definition of unallocated cases</li><li>2. Service priorities for the allocation of work</li><li>3. How to manage unallocated cases</li><li>4. Reviewing unallocated cases</li><li>5. How to Identify the unallocated cases</li></ol>
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<b>Approved:</b> Helen Blackman Director of Specialist Services	<b>Date:</b> <b>November 2008</b> <b>Reviewed Nov 2013</b>	<b>Review:</b> <b>May 2014</b>
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1.	<b>Definition of unallocated cases</b>
	<p><b>Only applies to Children in Need cases. Child protection and Children in Care cases cannot be unallocated.</b></p> <p>Children in Need cases are unallocated if they do not have an allocated social worker or family support worker.</p>
2.	<b>Service priorities for the allocation of work</b>
	<p>When there are difficulties allocating cases promptly, child protection case allocation should be prioritised.</p> <p>Whilst children subject to a child protection plan have a network of professionals and significant people monitoring the welfare and safety of a child, in line with their child protection plan, these children remain very vulnerable and must not be unallocated.</p> <p>As corporate parents of children in care, we are committed to providing consistent case holding. For this reason the allocation of looked after children will also be prioritised.</p> <p>We wish to maintain 100% allocation of statutory cases and certainly, this must be achieved for children subject to child protection plans. However, each Team Manager and Service Managers must balance their allocation decisions to prioritise the children most in need of safeguarding, support and monitoring to preserve their safety and meet their needs.</p>
3.	<b>How to manage unallocated cases</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All Team Managers will complete the Monitoring Form attached at Appendix 1 for any CIN case, which will be unallocated for a period of more than 5 working days. This form outlines what management plan is in place to ensure the child /young person remains safeguarded during this time. This includes the visiting frequency and date on which the child was last seen. It is very important that Team Managers regularly scrutinise all the unallocated cases in their teams, at a maximum of weekly intervals and ensure that all new information on the case is reviewed and visits take place by duty social workers up until case allocation.</li> <li>2. If a child's case cannot be allocated, the Team Managers must send a letter to the family and other involved agencies within five working days of the case arriving. This letter should include details regarding how to contact the team in the event of any issues and details of the visiting frequency by the team duty worker etc.</li> <li>3. An agreement should be reached with partner agencies, such as schools or health that they will monitor the situation, report periodically on the child's progress, and notify any concerns to Children's Social Care</li> </ol>
4.	<b>Reviewing unallocated work</b>
	<p>If a case remains unallocated after a 4-week period, then the Review of Unallocated Cases Form ( appendix 2 ) must be completed. This form is aligned to the Monitoring Form detailed above. This reviewing form <b>MUST</b> be completed on all unallocated cases every 2 weeks. This will ensure all unallocated cases are closely monitored and reviewed to avoid them being unallocated for long periods. The Team Manager must alert the Service Manager if the case cannot be allocated, transferred or closed after a 4-week period. The Service Manager will raise</p>

	<p>with their Head of Service any cases, which cannot be allocated within a 6 week period so joint decision-making and clear management oversight can be provided. Consideration will be made as to whether cases can be stepped down, closed or moved to another social care team within the city.</p> <p><b>Closing cases</b></p> <p>Cases that cannot be allocated should not be closed without clear evidence that their needs have been addressed. Premature closures are likely to lead to an increase in re-referrals and make partnership working with families and agencies, less effective. Whenever a case is closed consideration should be given to any need for continuing support through other services (single or team around the child).</p>
5.	<b>How to Identify the unallocated cases</b>
	<p>The case allocation report, which is produced and circulated every week, outlines the number and status of all open cases to fieldwork teams and the Duty Service. This report provides information on a team by team basis , including the number of unallocated cases per team. Each Service Manager can therefore regularly monitor the numbers of unallocated cases in their respective areas.</p>

Appendix One – Monitoring Template for Unallocated Cases

[Click here to view the Monitoring Template.](#)