

# **Step Up / Step Down Policy**

## **Children's Social Care and Prevention and Early Help**

**April 2020**

**Version 3**

## Policy Information Sheet

<b>Service Area</b>	Children's Social Care and Prevention and Early Help
<b>Date effective from</b>	Nov 2019
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Stephen Pepper , Jen Atkinson CSC Service Managers and Jan Cooper Service Manager CEFS
<b>Date for Review</b>	Nov 2020
<b>Status</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mandatory (all staff name must adhere to guidance)</b></li> <li>• <b>Optional (Procedures and practice can vary between teams)</b></li> </ul>	Mandatory
<b>Target Audience</b>	All children and families staff All partner agencies
<b>Date of SCLT/Prevention Management Meeting/CESCP Approval</b>	October 2019
<b>Related Document(s)</b>	Escalation policy
<b>Superseded Documents</b>	Step Up to Children's Social Care / Step Down to Early Help March 2016
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	YES

<b>Type of Document</b>	Policy	√	Standard Operating Procedure		Guideline	
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### Document control

Version no	Type of change	Date	Description of change
Version 2	Addition as agreed at CSC Policies Steering Group	January 2020	Addition re completion of relevant screening tools
Version 3	Update to Appendices	April 2020	Updated referral form added to Appendices

If you have any comments or views on this document, please contact us at [childrensdevelopmentandpartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:childrensdevelopmentandpartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

## Equality Impact Assessment

<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:</b>	<b>Yes /No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	Race	NO	
	Ethnic origins (including gypsies and travellers)	NO	
	Nationality	NO	
	Gender	NO	
	Culture	NO	
	Religion or belief	NO	
	Sexual orientation including lesbian, gay and bisexual people	NO	
	Age	YES	Service is for children age 0-18
	Disability-learning disabilities, physical disability, sensory impairment and mental health problems	NO	
<b>2</b>	<b>Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?</b>	NO	
	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	YES	
<b>3</b>	<b>Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?</b>	NO	
<b>a</b>	If yes can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
<b>b</b>	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy / guidance without the impact?	N/A	
<b>c</b>	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action	N/A	

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## Executive Summary

This policy outlines the new process for stepping cases up to Children's Social Care and for stepping cases down to the wider Early Help services and partnerships.

### 1. Purpose, Scope, Aims and Vision

- 1.1 The interface between Early Help Services and Children's Social Care (CSC) is an essential component of a robust service for children and families ensuring they receive the right help at the right time. The pathways between these two approaches are key to ensuring all children are safe, wherever they are within Cheshire East's levels of need.
- 1.2 The pathways between the levels of need particularly the interface between levels 3 and 4 on the Cheshire East levels of need framework must be simple and seamless with roles and responsibilities, and lines of accountability explicit and clear management oversight.
- 1.3 This policy details what is required of staff within the Children's Social Care and the Early Help multi-agency workforce. It includes the whole of the Children Services and all partners who may be involved in Early Help at the Targeted / Complex level of need.
- 1.4 Decision making should always be child and family focused. The child's needs should be kept paramount and the policy should be used as guidance for our decision making.
- 1.5 Safeguarding procedures will always remain paramount. If a child was at risk or believed to be at risk then individual safeguarding procedures must be followed and ChECS (Cheshire East Consultation Service) must be contacted in the usual way:  
Contact ChECS on 0300 123 5012  
Out of office hours call our Emergency Duty Team on 0300 123 5022.
- 1.6 The relevant screening tool needs to be completed to inform decision-making, whether the case is stepping up or stepping down. Please refer to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Website:  
[https://www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/cheshire\\_east/index.html](https://www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/cheshire_east/index.html)

### 2. Policy Context

#### Children's Social Care to Early Help and Prevention Step down Pathways

- 2.1 The step down pathways from Children's Social Care to Early Help have been developed to promote both a consistency and clarity of practice across the continuum. In particular, they seek to recognise that children and families are more likely to engage and respond to intervention, working with professionals to improve outcomes, where they have a positive relationship with the professional and understand the worries held.
- 2.2 The step down pathways seek to enable practitioners across Children's Social Care and Early Help to work together to reduce families receiving statutory intervention and to promote early support in order to work with families to improve outcomes, ensuring families do not remain open to statutory intervention longer than necessary.
- 2.3 The Step Down Pathways have been split into two specific sections to reflect key differences for step down from Children's Social Care to Early Help professional where families will benefit from continued support via a Well Being Plan.

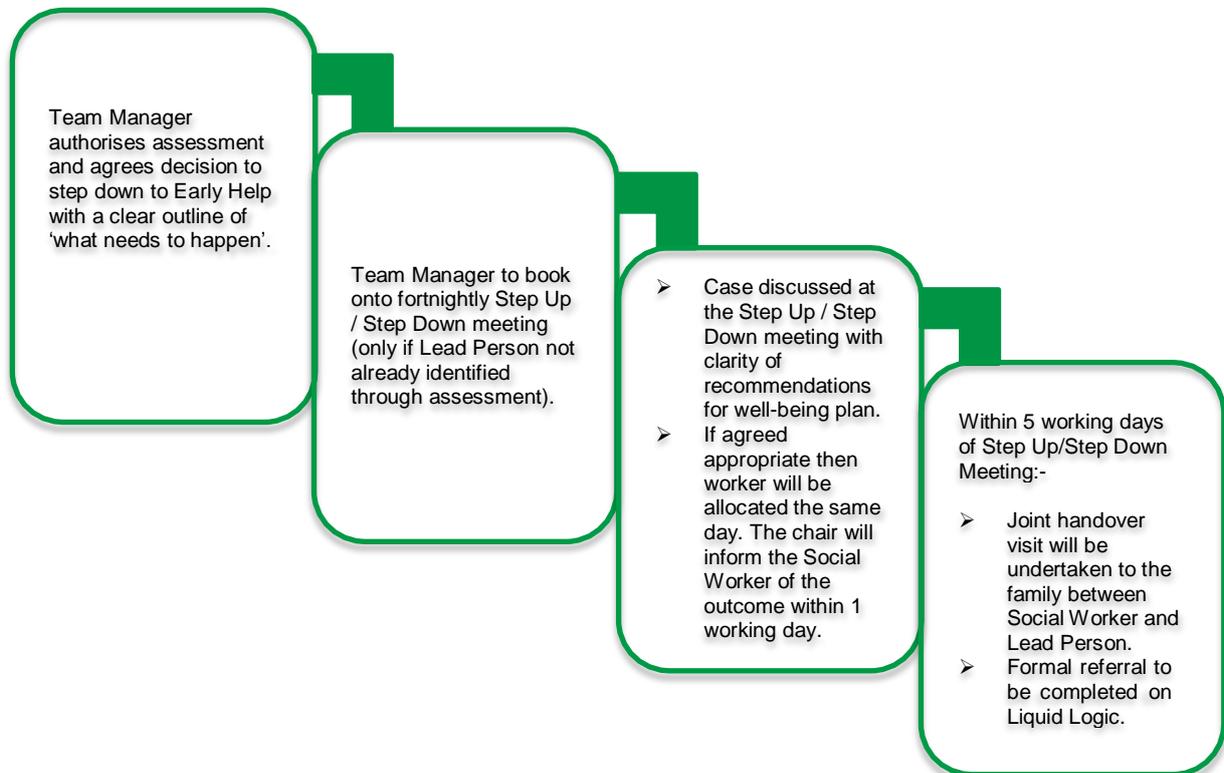
## Step down from C&F assessment

- Recognising the short term nature of social work involvement.
- Promoting a handover that meets the needs of the family.

## Step down from CiN plan

- Recognising the background of social work intervention and planning, ensuring smooth transition .
- Utilising the combined final CiN meeting as the initial Early Help meeting - shared responsibility.

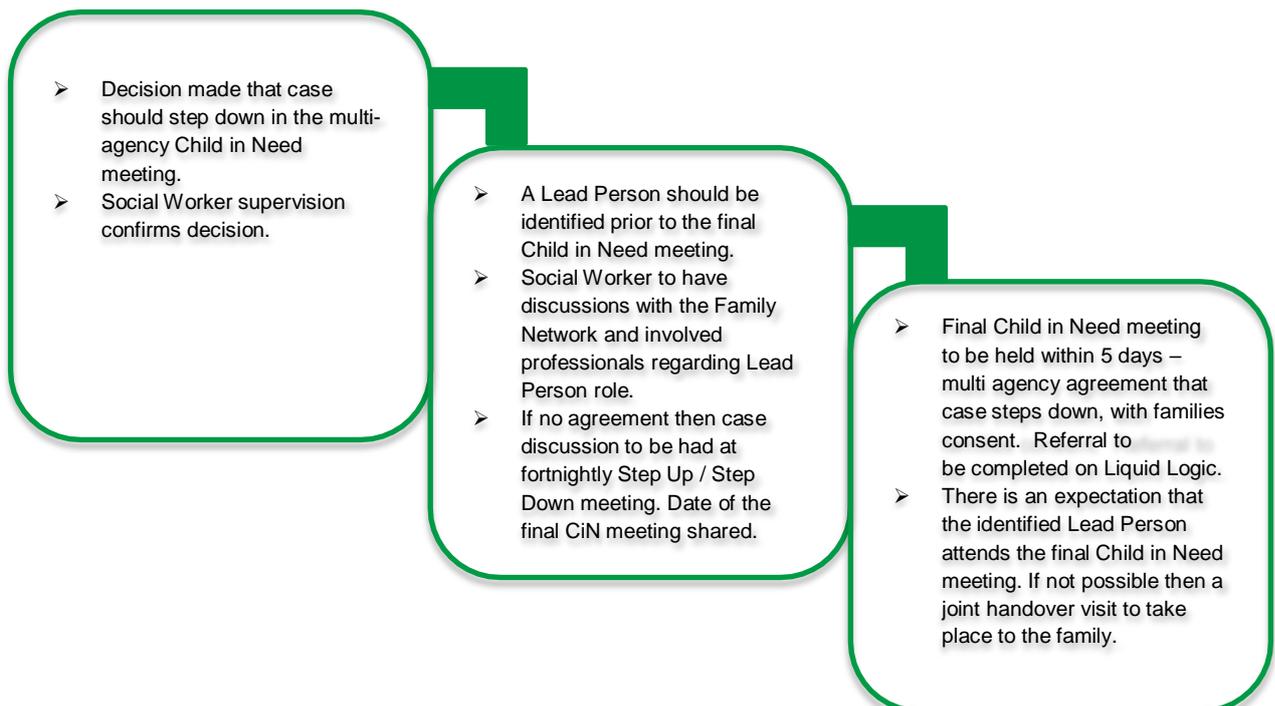
### 3 Step down from C&F assessment.



### 3.1 Principles and practice expectations.

1. C&F assessment completed, decision in supervision to step down, with families consent:
  - Allocated Social Worker completes C&F assessment and final supervision records decision to step down to Early Help.
  - Assessment analysis should make clear recommendations regarding 'wellbeing' plan for Early Help lead.
2. If no Lead Person is identified through assessment then the case to be booked onto Step Up/Step Down meeting, allocated social worker remains case manager.
3. Case discussed at the Step Up/Step Down meeting where there will be clarity of recommendations for wellbeing plan, if agreed appropriate then worker will be allocated the same day. The Chair will inform the social Worker of the outcome within one working day.
4. Handover from CSC to Early Help and formal transfer of case responsibility:
  - Within 5 working days of the Step Up/Step Down meeting a joint visit between Social Worker and newly allocated Early Help Worker should take place to the family. This visit should also ensure the sharing of the C&F assessment, recommendations for Wellbeing plan and family feedback.
  - Formal referral to then be completed on Liquid Logic.

### 4. Step down from CiN Plan.



#### **4.1 Principles and practice expectations.**

1. CiN meeting confirms plan for step down, with families consent at the next meeting:
  - Team Manager confirms decision to step down in supervision.
2. Prior to the final CiN meeting a lead person should be identified from professionals already involved in the current CiN plan:
  - The Social Worker is expected to have discussions with the family network and involved professionals regarding lead person role.
  - If no agreement regarding a Lead Person from within the current membership of the CiN plan then the case needs to be discussed at the Step Up/Step Down meeting.
3. Case discussed at the Step Up/Step Down meeting. Date of the final CiN meeting Shared.
  - If agreed appropriate then a worker will be assigned the same day. The Chair will inform the Social Worker within one working day of the outcome.
4. Final CiN meeting to be held within 5 working days.
  - Multi agency agreement that the case steps down, with the families consent and clear tasks identified.
  - There is an expectation that the identified Lead Person attends the final CiN meeting. If not possible then a final handover visit to take place to the family between the Social Worker and the lead person.
  - Referral to be completed on Liquid Logic.

#### **5. Step Up Pathways**

The set up pathways from Early Help to Children's Social Care have been developed to promote both a consistency and clarity of practice across the continuum. In particular, they seek to recognise that children and families are more likely to engage and respond to intervention, working with professionals to improve outcomes, where they have a positive relationship with the professional and understand the concerns held. The step up pathways seek to enable practitioners across Children's Social Care and Early Help providers to work closely together to reduce families receiving statutory intervention and to promote early support in order to work with families to improve outcomes.

The Step Up Pathways have been split into two sections to reflect key triggers for step up from Early Help case management to Children's Social Care:

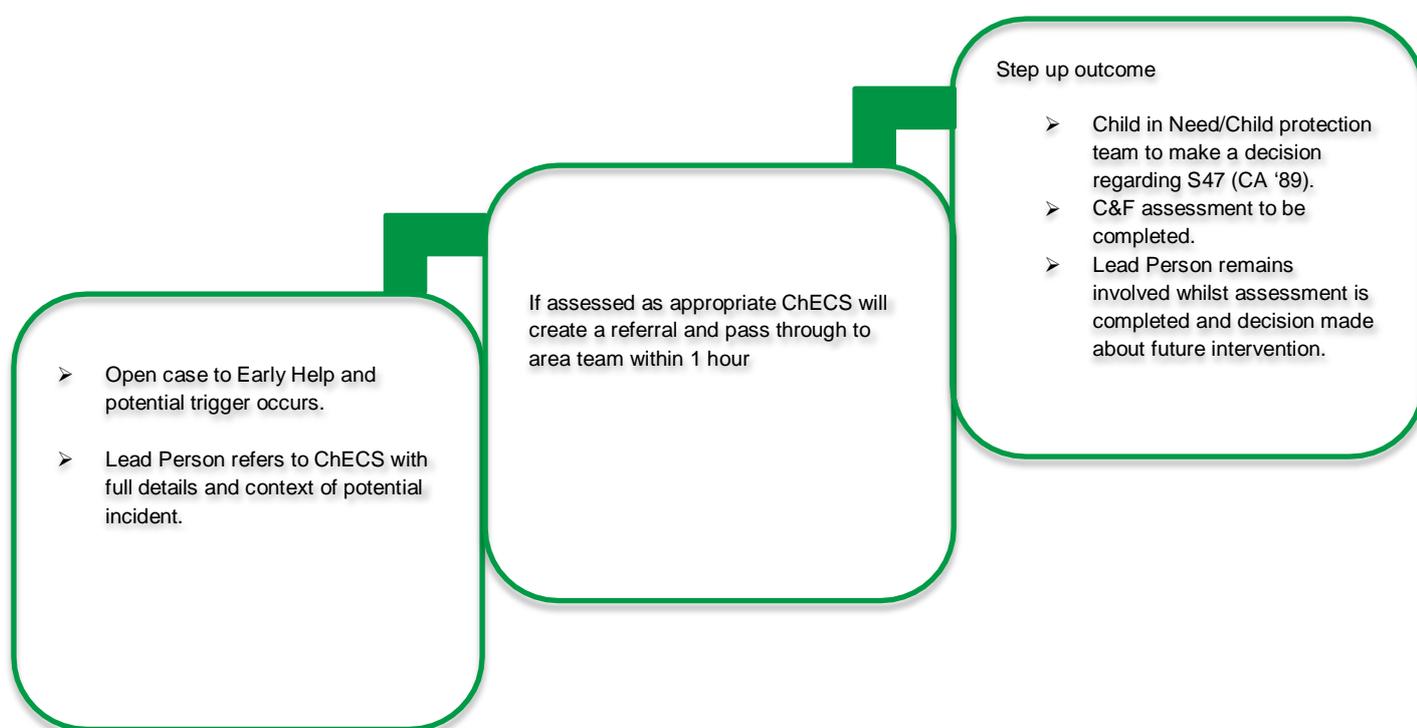
### Step up - immediate safeguarding-led pathway.

- This is a case scenario where an incident occurs that is potentially significant that either an immediate safeguarding need identified that strategy discussion response or potentially statutory work threshold is met.

### Step up - Early Help not progressing outcomes pathway.

- Concerns that after a period of running the Early Help plan that outcomes are not leading to improved outcomes and lack of progress indicating consideration for step up.

## 5.1 Step up – immediate safeguarding-led pathway.

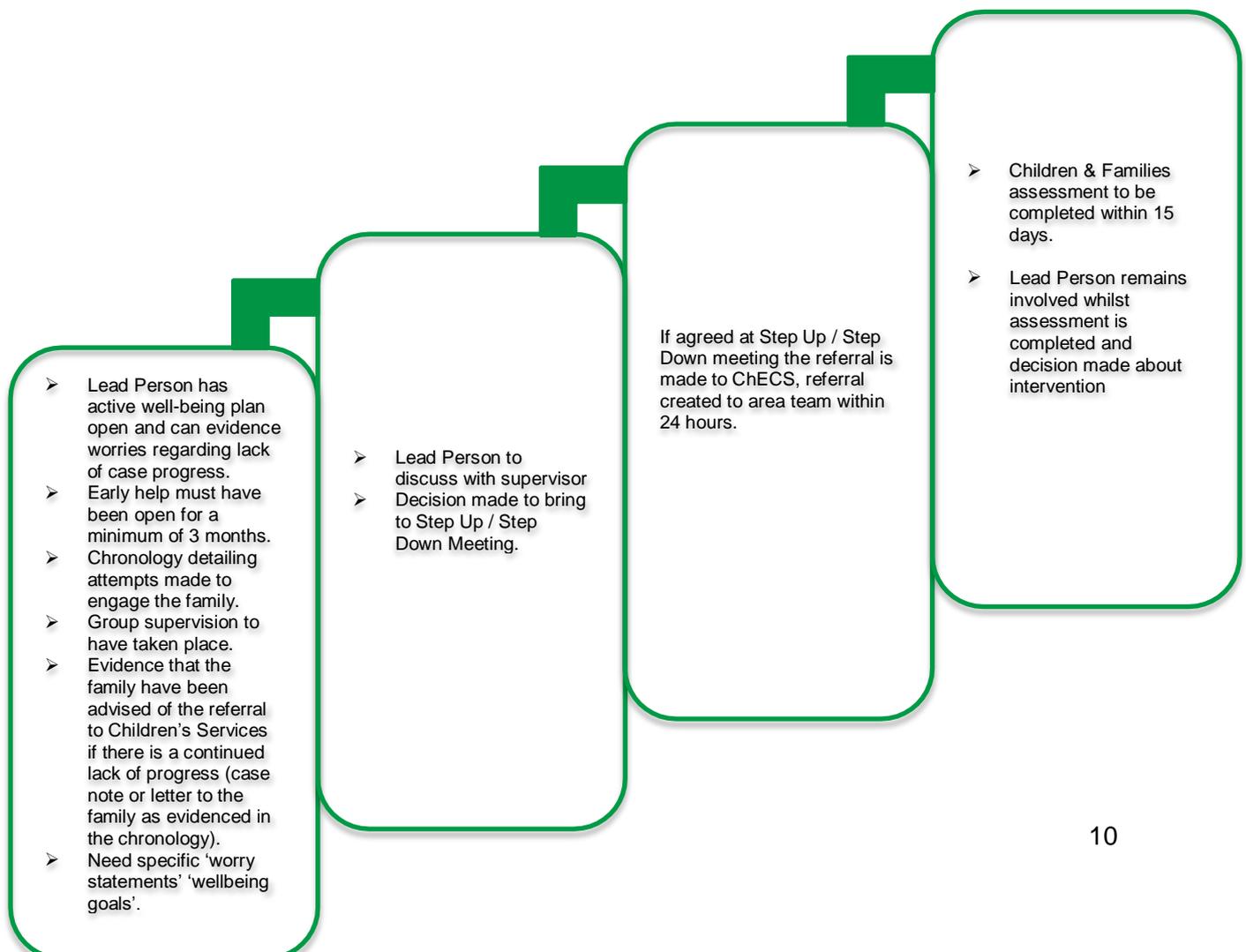


## 5.2 Principles and practice expectations.

1. Open case to Early Help and potential trigger incident occurs.
  - The trigger incident could relate to a child or a parent, for example a child presenting with a potential unexplained injury or a significant incident of domestic abuse.
  - Allocated Lead Person clarifies details and context of potential incident; considering the significance of the incident, the impact upon the child, and the impact upon the capacity of the parent.

- Any allegation of injury to a child should have clarification as to whether this accompanied by a disclosure.
2. Lead Person refers to ChECS with full details and context of potential incident.
    - If assessed as appropriate ChECS will create a referral and pass through to the area team within 1 hour.
  3. The Child in Need/Child Protection team will make a decision regarding S17 or S47 response.
    - CSC duty Team Manager to decide whether urgent strategy discussion required or if initial joint CSE/EH visit is immediate next step; this should take place the same day.
    - CSC duty Team Manager to allocate duty Social Worker to complete joint response.
    - C&F assessment to be completed.
    - Expectation that the Lead Person remains involved for a maximum of 4 weeks whilst the assessment is completed and decision made about future intervention.

## 6. Step up – Early Help not progressing outcomes pathway.



## 6.1 Principles and practice expectations.

1. Open case to Early Help and evidence worries regard 'well being' plan not progressing.
  - The Lead Person should discuss worries regarding outcomes not progressing, where there has been Early Help intervention for a minimum of 3 months, during supervision and there will be clear management oversight.
  - There should be a chronology detailing attempts made to engage the family, evidence based assessment tool utilised and what impact this failure to progress has upon the child.
  - There is an expectation that group supervision should have taken place.
  - Evidence that the family have been advised of the referral to Children's Services if there is a continued lack of progress (case note or letter to the family as evidence in the chronology)
  - Need specific 'worry statements' 'wellbeing goals' and 'scaling'.
2. Lead Person to discuss with their supervisor. The supervision casenote should details the rationale for worries about future progress.
  - Decision made to discuss case at the Step Up/Step Down meeting.
3. If agreed at Step Up/Step Down meeting the referral will be accepted by ChECS, referral created for the area team within 24 hours by the ChECS representative in attendance at the meeting.
4. Children and Families assessment to be completed.
  - The C&F should be completed within 15 days unless agreed further time necessary in supervision and recorded on the child's records.
  - The Lead Person remains involved (for up to a maximum of 4 weeks) whilst the assessment is completed and decision made about future intervention.

## Appendices



Step Up-Step Down



Step up step down  
referral form.docx

flow chart TOR.pptx