



South Eastern Health
and Social Care Trust

Guidance Document

Children's Resource Panel

Revised and updated in April 2022

Guidance Document

Children's Resource Panel

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The South Eastern Trust has an obligation to care for young people who are experiencing significant difficulties or who cannot live with their birth families. These are young people who present with multiple complex needs and who require support from a number of disciplines and services. They are often 'children at risk' and/or children who place themselves in situations which pose risk of significant harm. They are also children who may present with specific placement needs. In order to meet their needs, the Trust through the Children's Resource Panel coordinates services and residential care placements to meet their needs.
- 1.2 This policy on the Children's Resource Panel sits in the context of the wider fostering / residential duty system and sets out how the South Eastern Trust will address the complex needs of young people who:
- need an intensive community based support programme;
 - require a care placement after friends and family options have been exhausted and a foster placement cannot be accessed;
 - are on the edge of care / in care and require specific targeted interventions to reduce the chance of disruption;
 - have experienced a planned admission to foster care;
 - are in foster care but whose presentation warrants consideration of the requirement for an alternative placement;
 - require an Intensive Support Foster placement;
 - require a residential placement;
 - have experienced emergency admission to care outside of care planning processes, who require additional supports;
 - require an ECR or high-cost placement due to specific profile of need.
- 1.3 Through this process, the Trust will focus available and commissioned resources so that young people's life chances are maximised by addressing their social, emotional, psychological, educational and health needs.
- 1.4 This policy document outlines the following:
- Guiding Principles;
 - Role of the Resource Panel;
 - Membership;

- Role of Chair;
- Role of Panel members;
- Available Resources;
- Management, Organisation and Administration of the Panel;
- Referral Process;
- Review and Evaluation of the Panel;
- Expected Outcomes

2. Guiding Principles

- 2.1 The Panel will ensure that the voice of the child and family is represented and considered at each stage of the process.
- 2.2 The process and decisions of the Panel will be transparent, clearly recorded and open to the scrutiny of all independent advocates.
- 2.3 All young people will have equitable access to services in line with their identified needs and relevant assessments matched to available resource.
- 2.4 The Panel will act at all times in the best interests of each young person.
- 2.5 The responsibility for care planning and any arising child protection issues will remain with the Principal Social Worker who has senior management responsibility for the child's Social Worker.

3. Role of the Children's Resource Panel

- 3.1 The Children's Resource Panel sits as part of the overall system of response to children who require access to foster care and residential care on an ongoing and emergency basis.
- 3.2 The Children's Resource Panel will act as the central multi-disciplinary body that will coordinate and allocate available Trust resources to meet the assessed needs of young people who require services.
- 3.3 Where Trust resources are not available the Panel will seek to commission services from suitable providers. Where the required resources are not identified the Children's Resource Panel Chair will inform the Assistant Director for Children and Young Peoples Care Services and will outline those areas of unmet need. Consideration for access to these services can only be through the Children's Resource Panel.
- 3.4 The Panel will seek to ensure that:

- intensive community based support services are available to young people and their families in order to prevent an admission to care;
- at the Panel meeting the most recent UNOCINI Assessment and other relevant assessment documentation will be considered to ensure the most appropriate service for the child and their families is considered;
- young people have a care placement that will seek to meet their assessed needs;
- when a young person in residential/fostering is finding their placement difficult, resources will be made available to address the issues that are causing disruption;
- where a young person cannot continue to live in their placement, alternative placement options will be explored.

3.5 The Resource Panel will manage access to services that will support the young person:

- at home with their family or carer;
- in their residential placement;
- prepare for either a return to their family / carer or change of placement.

3.6 If an emergency placement in residential care is required then an emergency multi-disciplinary panel will be arranged for that day, involving residential care and fieldwork teams to share key information informing how residential care will meet the needs of the child and determine the most appropriate placement in line with the child's needs.

3.7 The Children's Resource Panel will review, as appropriate, the list of high cost cases as agreed between the Heads of Service and Resource Utilisation Accountant (Financial Performance). The panel chair will ensure the Service Improvement Manager and Contracts department are briefed as required.

3.8 The Children's resource panel will consider referrals for children for high cost or ECR placements. In these circumstances a full options appraisal must be provided to panel for consideration with panel papers. The resource panel will determine whether a high cost placement should be progressed and/or criteria for application for ECR has been met. If criteria has been met the panel Chair will escalate this to the relevant Assistant Director. The panel chair will also brief the Resource Utilisation Accountant (Financial Performance) and Planning and Service Improvement Manager as required. This guidance document acknowledges the draft process outlined in HSCB 'Multi-Disciplinary Trust Panel to make an application for ECR: Terms of Reference & Function and Operational Procedures' (2022) which will be followed once this receives regional approval.

4 Membership of the Panel

4.1 The Panel will be a multidisciplinary group. It will be always be Chaired by a Senior Manager from Childrens Social Services.

- 4.2 The Panel will consist of core members. Those who are part of the core team will attend every meeting of the Panel.
- 4.3 Panel members will be of sufficient seniority within their service to secure access to appropriate interventions that will meet the needs of the young people.
- 4.4 The core membership of the Panel will include :
- Head of Service (Chair) - Residential & Leaving Care Services
 - Principal Social Worker - Residential Care Services
 - 2x Principal Social Worker / Senior Social Worker - ISF/Fostering Schemes & General Fostering
 - Principal Social Worker - Therapeutic Services LAAC
 - Sector Manager / Principal Social Worker - Safeguarding
 - Team Leader - LINX / JANUS (EXTERN)
 - Team Leader - ISF Wraparound (EXTERN)
 - Panel Admin

5. Role of the Chair

- 5.1 The Chair of the Panel will ensure that:
- meetings are scheduled on a bi-weekly basis;
 - Field Social Workers provide the most recent UNOCINI / LAC review report to Panel Admin who will ensure documents are made available at the meeting;
 - Social Workers receive minutes of the discussion and Panel decisions in relation to the case they presented;
 - meetings are properly recorded and minutes circulated and safely stored;
 - emphasis and focus is placed on positive outcomes for the child;
 - safeguarding issues are addressed and where deficiencies are identified the appropriate Principal Social Worker is informed;
 - the Assistant Director for Children & Young People's Care Services is informed if there is an absence of a placement or unmet need in service provision
 - ensure that regular reports are submitted to the Assistant Director for Children & Young People's Care Services.

6. Role of Panel Members

- 6.1 The role of Panel members is:
- To come to panel prepared, having read panel paperwork;
 - To bring issues of placement need, disruption, interfaces etc for discussion;

- To contribute to decision making regarding the allocation of resources;
- To ensure that the emphasis and focus is placed on positive outcomes for young people and their families;
- To provide feedback to those presenting to the Panel;
- To secure access to resources.

7. Resources

7.1 The Resource Panel will have a number of immediate resources available to meet the challenges presented by this group of young people, including:

Intensive Support Fostering

Intensive Community Based Support

- The LINX Project, JANUS Project & Time Out (EXTERN)
- Step Up Step Down
- Fostering Positive Family Relationships

Residential Service

- 6 x Children's Homes
- Peripatetic Team

Consideration of ECR or high-cost placement

8. Management, Organisation and Administration of the Panel

8.1 The Panel will have a set order for the meeting. This will be:

- Review of actions from the previous Panel
- Hear any emergency requests
- Review children on the edge of care
- Hear requests from Social Workers (15 min slots)

8.2 The Chair will agree the detail of the running order.

8.3 The Panel administrator will send the agenda and related documents to Panel Members via Trust Share Point system.

8.4 The Panel Administrator will notify referring Social Workers regarding their presentation slot.

- 8.5 The Resource Panel will meet on a Wednesday morning at a frequency of once every two weeks. The Panel Administrator will circulate a schedule of dates to all referring teams each December for the following year.
- 8.6 The Panel Administrator will inform the associated members of the meetings they are scheduled to attend.
- 8.7 The Panel members will convene at 9:30 am in the Modular Building, Ards Hospital to go through the outline agenda.
- 8.8 If an emergency residential placement is required this will be requested by the relevant fieldwork team Senior Social Worker to the Children's Residential Care Gatekeeper who will in turn advise the Head of Service. A multi-disciplinary panel will be convened on the same day to share key information informing how residential care will meet the needs of the child.
- 8.9 The record of the meeting will note the decision-making process and recommendations made to the Social Worker.
- 8.10 The record will also note if there are any safeguarding issues.
- 8.11 The minute will be circulated to all attendees of the Panel and the Assistant Director for Children and Young Peoples Care Services.

9. Referral Process

- 9.1 The Social Worker will complete a UNOCINI Initial Assessment and Children's Resource Panel referral form. The documentation will be signed by the Senior Social Worker and the Principal Social Worker. Additional relevant documentation may also be submitted e.g. risk assessment, court report.
- 9.2 If a high cost resource is being requested an options appraisal / balanced analysis of resources already attempted and a clear rationale as to why the high cost resource being requested must be submitted with the above documentation.
- 9.3 The documentation must be forwarded to the Panel Administrator at least 1 week before the Panel is due to be convened. In the event of an emergency placement / need, the Social Worker may report verbally at the discretion of the Chair.

10. Outcomes

- 10.1 The Resource Panel will strive to achieve the following outcomes:

- Direct appropriate resources in a timely fashion to meet the needs of children and young people;
- Improve the life chances of young people at the edge of care or who are in care;
- Reduce the number of young people requiring admission to residential care;
- Increase placement stability;
- Improve the assessment and care planning process;
- Improve the interface between residential, fostering and fieldwork services
- Identify areas of unmet need.

10.2 The Panel Administrator will ensure that the Children's Resource Panel outcomes tracker is maintained as required.

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