

The Legal, Assessments and Placement Panel (LAPP)

Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose

The Legal, Assessments and Placement Panel (LAPP) is an internal scrutiny and decision making body established to:-

- Scrutinise and challenge planned and unplanned admissions to care to ensure the use of accommodation is used appropriately and only to safeguard children at risk of harm.
- Ensure the best use of available social care, education and health resources to support the care of children within their families and communities (where this is still a viable and safe option) and prevent them from entering the care system wherever possible.
- To scrutinise changes of placement to ensure the appropriate use of expensive provision such as residential care.
- To scrutinise and monitor prior to the commissioning of external assessments to ensure that resources are achieving the correct outcomes for children.
- To ensure Family Group Conferences (FGCs) are used effectively in relation to children on the edges of care.
- Ensure where accommodation is needed and agreed an active plan is in place to return children to their family wherever this can be achieved safely, including through ensuring FGCs.
- Monitor recommendations and actions relating to children and young people on the edge of care.
- Identify multi-agency issues requiring joint or tri-partite funding for consideration by the Children's Integrated Resource Panel.
- Contribute to analysis of patterns and trends in admissions to care to inform future commissioning intentions.
- To trigger notifications to relevant service areas regarding practice concerns.

2.0 Membership of Legal, Assessments and Placement Panel (LAPP)

Chair; Head of Service/Deputy Director, Children's Social Care

Membership:

Service Manager- Placement and Monitoring Service (PAMS)

Service Manager - Commissioning and Brokerage

Manager Family Group Conference Service

Virtual Head Teacher or CLASP Representative

LAC Nurse?

3.0 Referral to the Legal, Assessments and Placement Panel (LAPP)

3.1 Criteria:

Planned admissions to care; All children in need of or likely to need to be accommodated by the local authority (full time or regular short breaks care) will be presented to the Threshold of Care Panel **prior to** the placement being made.

Emergency admissions to care; authorisation to proceed with accommodation in emergency circumstances (including Emergency Protection Order/Police Protection) should be sought from a Head of Service. Case/s must then be presented to the next Panel (convened each Thursday morning from 10 am).

3.2 Process:

The allocated Social Worker is to complete the **Legal, Assessments and Placement Panel Referral Form**.

A Service Manager must endorse the decision for a child or young person to be considered for accommodation at the Panel on this form.

The completed paperwork should be sent to the Panel Administrator by midday on the Wednesday before the required panel.

The Panel Business Support will ensure all appropriate cases on the weekly 'LAC starters' have been scheduled for review . The case will then be booked into the Panel and will notify the SW and Line Manager of their appointment time and location.

The Business Support Officer will prepare an agenda and circulate available paperwork for each Panel meeting by close of business on the Wednesday prior to the next meeting.

3.3 Agenda for meetings:

A standard agenda will cover;

- A review of the starters and leavers list
- Tracking and re-scheduling all time limited agreements for accommodation.
- Cases listed for agreement or change of placement in to a higher cost placement than is currently being provided.
- Requests for externally commissioned assessments for children in the Public Law Outline or Legal Proceedings. (Decisions which need to be made outside of the panel process should be referred directly to a Head of Service or the Deputy Director)

4.0 Attendance at the Panel

The child's Social Worker and manager **must** attend the panel. Social Workers should only attend the panel without their line manager in exceptional circumstances and the chair of the panel must be informed prior to the meeting.

The social worker and Team Manager will be asked to outline the reasons for the request for a new or change of placement or an externally commissioned assessment being requested. Panel will scrutinise the efforts that have been made to avoid accommodation and ensure that all resources have been deployed to maintain the child safely within their own extended family network.

Accommodation will only be agreed where this is the only route available to safeguard a child. The SW will be expected to set out what their care plan would be for the child, what outcomes accommodation would be expected to achieve including how all efforts to rehabilitate a child to their family will be pursued.

Decisions will be recorded by the Business Support Officer and circulated following the meeting.

5.0 Case Reviews

Legal, Assessments and Placement Panel (LAPP) is not a case management body. Case management where accommodation is or is not agreed should continue through the set plan/review frameworks with oversight from operational managers. Managers should ensure close oversight of cases identified to be on the borders of care to ensure agreed outcomes are progressed for the child.

Cases may be booked for the TOC Panel so that panel can review previous decisions. A case will need to be re-presented to ? Panel in order to extend any time limited placement. The Social Worker and their manager must attend these review Panel meetings also.

6.0 Panel Administration & Information Governance

The Panels Business Support Technical Officer will keep a spreadsheet (tracker) of all core panel actions which will be recorded on a decision summary sheet and uploaded to Care First.

The Business Support Technical Officer will collect all hard copy papers and ensure that that these are disposed of in a matter that maintains confidentiality.

7.0 The Children's Integrated Resource Panel (ChIRP):

The Children's Integrated Resources Panel is responsible for all Special Educational Needs (SEN) Statutory decisions, complex placements, multi-agency support and joint or tri-partite placement funding for children and young people who have a combination of special educational, health and social care needs.

Legal, Assessments and Placement Panel members will consider whether cases presented to panel should be referred to ChIRP. The social work team requesting a placement by the ChIRP will be required to submit a referral form as per the existing practice arrangements.

8.0 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Deputy Director and relevant chairs or more frequently to address changes in legislation.