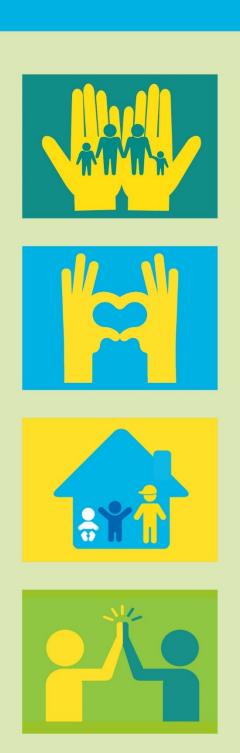# Policy / Procedure

Accommodation & Resources Panel Procedures

Version 1.3

Effective date: April 2024
Review date:

Issued by: Karl Davis
ROLE: Service Manager

West Berkshire COUNCIL

Contents

1. Introduction

West Berkshire Council's Children and Family Services will manage access to resources through an Accommodation and Resources Panel (A & R) process alongside an available funds financial approach.

The panel is a mechanism to support the delivery of seamless, timely and needs led services for children and families and to ensure effective use of resources across the whole of the service.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Service Director of Children and Family Services has overall responsibility for ensuring that budgets within the service are managed appropriately in accordance with these agreed standards.

The Service Director of Children and Family Services alongside the Children & Family Leadership Team ensure the robust implementation and compliance to these panel arrangements to secure a clear governance structure that is able to oversee resource allocation and consistent and timely decision making in care planning.

The Children and Family Leadership Team (CFLT) is responsible for:

- Directing and reviewing this procedure
- Ensuring that there is effective consultation, communication and compliance on all related matters in terms of adhering to this procedure
- Promoting the Accommodation & Resources Panel.
- Ensuring compliance with published standards, procedures, working practices expected within the service.

The Service Director of Service for Children and Family Service and Service Managers are responsible for the day-to-day management of the whole of service delivery including ensuring implementation of the standards.

All children and families services staff are responsible and accountable for ensuring that they comply with and understand this procedure.

3. West Berkshire's Children & Family Services Accommodation & Resources Panel

The Children & Family Services Accommodation and Resources Panel drives resource allocation and management and is the key forum to identify and support the management of risk, or presenting needs following a social work assessment. Any spend over £500 must be sent to panel for approval, this

include cumulative spend over £500. It is not a case management panel. It contributes to the following areas:

- Managing the threshold for children coming into care
- Agreeing funding and monitoring resource intensive, alternative intervention strategies to secure good outcomes and value for money
- Supporting exit, transition and step down points for all children and young people known to the service
- Monitoring care planning to secure risk mitigation and reducing drift and delay
- Ensuring that all Children and Family Services resources are appropriately allocated
- Supporting the development of multi agency working and its influence on care planning

The purpose of West Berkshire's Children and Family Services Accommodation & Resources Panel is to scrutinise the allocation of resources according to the needs of children being identified as requiring a statutory social work intervention with presenting complex, specialist and/or high risk needs.

4. Membership

Core Panel Members:
- Service Director of Service Children and Family Services (Chair)
- Service Manager for Children in Care (Vice Chair)
- Service Manager Family Safeguarding
- Senior Accountant/Assistant Accountant, Children and Family Services
- Commissioning Officer, Children and Family Services
- Team Manager, Family Placement Team
- Placement Officer
- Head Teacher, Virtual School
- Panel Administrator

5. Roles and Responsibilities at Accommodation & Resources Panel

Chair Person
- To Chair the meeting and direct discussions ensuring the views of all the members are brought to bear on how best to meet the assessed needs as presented by the Team Manager/ATM
- Agree the recommendations, proposals and action plans of the meeting, which promotes best practice within the resources available and the timescales that must be met
- Agree the allocation of tasks to the A&R Panel members that may facilitate the care/service plan, and ensure completion, within agreed timescales
- Constructive questioning and challenge to the plans presented in order to ascertain whether there is a better, more effective, or more cost

effective way to provide the required service, whilst achieving the desired outcome
- Offer a solutions approach to challenging circumstances
- Identify unmet need

Senior Accountant/Assistant Accountant
- To record agreements on designated panel sheets
- Advise on costs relating to agreed packages
- Confirm costs associated with any existing packages
- Constructive questioning and challenge to the plans presented in order to ascertain whether there is another, more effective, or more cost effective way to provide the required service, whilst achieving the desired outcome
- Advise as to the likely long term projections on costs and to bring to the discussion consideration of the available funding model employed
- Provide feedback on the cumulative financial impact of agreed packages

Commissioning Manager
- To advise the proposed placement and advise on contract options
- Constructive questioning and challenge to the plans presented in order to ascertain whether there is a better, more effective, or more cost effective way of provide the required service, whilst achieving the desired outcome

Manager presenting the case
- The allocated Manager who has submitted the A&R Panel report will present the application with the allocated worker if necessary

Panel Administration

- Implementing systems to disseminate the required paperwork to Panel members within the agreed timescales

- Ensuring there is an efficient and effective information point for booking application submissions and agenda planning

- Ensuring that decision sheets are recorded and distributed to the agreed membership within agreed timescales

- Ensuring decision sheets are uploaded to the child or young person's file and the Social Worker and Team Manager are notified

Other attendees
- To contribute to discussions based on the proposed intervention, from the point of view of their specific specialist skills and experience

- To offer professional advice and guidance ensuring a solutions focused approach is applied

<u>Meeting dates and times</u>

- The A&R Panel will meet fortnightly on a Thursday. Should there be any deviation from this all panel members will be advised at least 24 hours in advance

- Applications will be submitted by the Monday afternoon before panel

- In exceptional circumstances out of panel applications may be required. Requests for these should be discussed as soon as possible with a Service Manager and appropriate advice taken

- All panel applications should be sent for service manager sign off and submitted to: csmanageradmin@westberks.gov.uk

- Business Support will construct the agenda. They will not be in a position to chase applications, but will highlight to the Chair those expected that have not been received and the Chair, through the relevant Service Manager, will require feedback at that point

- Any submissions being withdrawn must be in agreement with the relevant Service Manager

<u>Documentation submitted to Panel</u>

- Applications must be submitted in a complete fashion – with all information, including the cost requested filled out in full on the appropriate request form.

- Additional information is required if there is the potential for funding from other sources including education, health, CAMHS, YOT and Adoption Support Fund

- Inaccurate or incomplete applications to panel can result in the form being returned to its originator and the application being deferred

<u>Decisions outside of panel</u>

- Any urgently needed resources committed outside of panel can be agreed as an emergency but then presented at the following panel for review
- It is at the discretion of the Service Director of Service and Service Manager to accept any late applications, emergency slots will be built into the agenda

<u>Placement Options</u>

- It is important that placements are being made with a good understanding of the provider market. It is incumbent upon the panel to ensure robust procedures are in place when seeking good placement options for children in care that provide value for money

6. Accommodation and Resources Panel Decisions

Decisions will be made on the day in most cases, but where this is not possible, clear time-scales for a decision will be made and a clear timeframe given by the Chair of the panel.

Decisions will be recorded on the decision part of the Request Form, typed and then scanned into the child's electronic record and social workers alerted. This will normally occur no later than the Wednesday following panel.

Normally all service provisions agreed will be subject to review and review dates will be set on the day of the decision being made if required and at the discretion of the Chair.

It is the responsibility of the allocated social worker to inform the parents/carers and young person of the decision. Any feedback about the decision, including disagreement should be discussed with the social worker's Team Manager and resolved in most cases prior to leaving panel.

Appendix 1   Flow Chart for Application to A&R Panel

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Worker completes resource request form,  │
│ (found under C&FS policies and           │
│ procedures/local resources)              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Panel form is checked by Service Manager │ ◄──────────┐
│ and returned with comments if required   │            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘            │
                    │                                   │
                    ▼                          ┌──────────────────────┐
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐   │ Review of comments to │
│ Resource request form should be emailed  │   │ be completed and      │
│ to the Service Manager for agreement and │   │ additional            │
│ panel administrator by Monday pm before  │   │ information requested │
│ panel                                    │   │ sought                │
│ csmanageradmin@westberks.gov.uk          │   │                       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘   │                       │
                    │                          │                       │
                    ▼                          │                       │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐   │                       │
│ Papers will be distributed to panel      │   │                       │
│ members and time slots will be allocated │   │                       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘
                    │                                   ▲
                    ▼                                   │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Team Manager/ATM will present the        │──►│ If cases are deferred,│
│ application to the panel                 │   │ reasons will be       │
│ Outcome will be agreed, deferred or not  │   │ recorded and passed   │
│ agreed                                   │   │ back to the team for  │
│ Review date agreed if applicable         │   │ further work          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Minutes with decision and actions are    │
│ completed and signed off by Chair        │
│ CSmanageradmin scans outcome onto        │
│ child's file under attachments and makes │
│ case note then e-mails link to SW, TM    │
│ and team Business Support.               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Negotiations on external placements are  │
│ to be carried out by the commissioning   │
│ team                                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Case to be reviewed at panel as agreed   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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