**Care and Access to Resources Meeting Terms of Reference**

* 1. **Purpose**

The purpose of the CARM is to approve requests for the accommodation of a child or young person s20 CA1989, any requests to move a young person to review children already looked after to ensure that the placement is meeting their needs and providing value for money and agreeing resources for children where proceedings have been agreed following presentation at LPM. In doing so the panel will:

* Ensure full consideration of all safe alternatives to bringing a child into care;
* Safeguard the welfare of Looked After Children and those on the threshold of the LAC system;
* Ensure the best use of available resources to keep the child in the community and out of the care system;
* Keep under review all high cost placements;
* Monitor recommendations and actions;
* Consider all requests for external assessments;
* Scrutinise and challenge unplanned admissions to care;
* Contribute to analysis of patterns and trends in admissions to care to inform future commissioning intentions;
* Trigger notifications to relevant service areas regarding practice concerns and request an update in line of the above.

All children in need of or likely to need a LAC placement (full time or regular shared care) will have to be presented to CARM for approval before any discussion can take place over placement. All children who are placed in an emergency will be presented to the next scheduled Panel meeting. The Panel will want to look at whether or not this emergency situation could have been avoided and lessons that can be learnt.

CARM will also review the Permanency Tracker on a monthly basis is to ensure that [Looked After Children](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/looked_after_child.html), have appropriate [Permanency Plans](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/permanence_plan.html) that are implemented in a timely manner to avoid drift and delay, and also ensure that those young people looked after under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 remain so only where this plan is deemed appropriate to their needs.

In doing so CARM will also approve any support plans, including financial commitments for children with plans for permanence via [Special Guardianship](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/special_guardianship_order.html) or [Child Arrangement Orders](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/chi_arrange_orders.html) and attend to the following functions:

* To scrutinise and approve Special Guardianship Order (SGO) placements and support plans;
* To track plans for children with a primary or contingency plan for adoption;
* To review children where the primary or contingency plan is not adoption if under the age of 11 years;
* To review all placements that have not been approved as long term to ensure children and young people have the right placement to meet their needs and that the permanency plan for the child is being implemented;
* To ensure that children and young people’s needs are considered in a holistic manner, in order for implications of permanent placements and placement moves, including impact on health and education are fully considered;
* To scrutinise placements to ensure they are providing agreed outcomes according to Independent Placements Agreements (IPAs) ensuring this is value for money.

**2.****Criteria to Help Deciding Which Cases are Presented to Panel**

**2.1 The following should be presented to Panel:**

* Cases where the team consider that a child or young person should be accommodated;
* For children is identified to have a disability/open to CWD, where agreement/ratification is required for care packages of shared funding to ensure that all possible options of support have been considered to meet the Child's and Young Person's needs, reducing the requirement for the child to become LAC.
* All leaving care cases looking for a new placement;
* All Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children;
* All children where a change of placement is being considered. No child should be moved without coming to Panel first. If a child moves in an emergency this needs to be brought to the next Panel. Panel will need to look at whether or not this urgent placement move could have been avoided;
* Cases that are identified by the chair for review;
* All external assessment requests.

On a monthly basis:

* CARM will consider those children aged 14 and under who have been subject to Section 20 for 6 months up to 2 years.
* CARM will consider the plans for those children and young people who are 15 years and above who are subject to Section 20 for 6 months plus and are currently still allocated in non-LAC Teams.
* CARM will consider whether those young people in foster care need to be long term matched with their foster carers.
* Review the Permanency Tracker

**3.****Benefits**

**3.1 The benefits of CARM are:**

* The right outcome is achieved for the child & family;
* Decision making is consistent and evidenced;
* Timely planning for permanence:
* Ensuring everything is being done to support the family;
* Cases are 'front loaded’, if needing to move to initiating Care Proceedings;
* Input from other services towards the support plan for the family.
* That the right type of resource is identified and delivered for the young person
* That existing placements are carrying the Care Plan for the child/young person
* To ensure that the Council is obtaining value for money from the placements.

**4.****Composition of Panel**

**4.1 The Panel will be made up of the following members:**

* Chairperson – Head of Safeguarding / Head of Corporate Parenting
* Manager of Family Group Conferencing (or delegate)
* Youth Offending Service representative (where case appropriate);
* Representative from Finance
* Representative from Commissioning
* Fostering Manager
* IRO Manager
* Representative from SEND/CWD (where case appropriate)
* Representative from the Virtual School
* Lead Nurse for LAC
* Representative from CCG
* Administrator;

If anyone is unable to attend they should send a representative.

**5.****Application**

**Date and Time**: CARM will meet on a Thursday 9am – 1pm and once a month 9am -12 pm, followed by 12 noon – 1pm to review the Permanency Tracker.

All Service managers are required to attend monthly to review the Permanency Tracker

**Application:**

* The request for CARM is completed on AzeusCare by completing a CYPS CARM Booking Request Form.
* A CYPS CARM Booking Request Form must be completed and submitted for each child in the family for whom a CARM decision is required. This can be done by copying the CARM Booking Request Form to each relevant sibling.
* The request for CARM should outline the background and the request that is being made and submitted via AzeusCare by noon on the Friday, prior to CARM where the request is being discussed.
* On receipt of the CYPS CARM Booking Request, the CARM Administrator will add the child’s name to the next CARM Agenda using the Panel Meeting Screen on AzeusCare and notify the allocated social worker via email.

On a monthly basis the following will be required for CARM and the above process completed to ensure the right children are on the CARM Agenda. This will be co-ordinated by Service Managers for each area.

**For all requests for SGO/ CAO:** Social Workers will be required to submit the most recent assessment, support plan, and financial assessment.

**For all requests for long term fostering matches:** To monitor and ensure that fostering matches are being considered.

**For placement scrutiny:** Social workers should submit the Independent Placement Agreement, most recent review minutes and Care Plan, in addition to the most recent Single Assessment.

Additional reports may be required by the social workers and will be determined on a case by case basis by the chair.

Again, all reports should be submitted one week in advance of panel on AzeusCare by completing a CYPS CARM Booking Request Form. Practice Leads are responsible for ensuring that reports are provided on time. Service Managers, Practice Leads and Social workers will be aware of the agenda as it is agreed at the previous meeting

The Permanency Tracker will also be reviewed to proactively identify children to be heard at the next monthly CARM to ensure that children and their plans do not drift.

**6.****Process**

* The request for CARM should be completed and must include:
  + What is being requested;
  + Reason for the request;
  + Proposed plan.
* The request **MUST BE**:
  + Approved by a Service Manager;
* The request for CARM is completed on AzeusCare by completing a CYPS CARM Booking Request Form by noon on the Friday, prior to CARM where the request is being discussed.
* Any supporting reports or documents must be uploaded to the CYPS CARM Booking Request Form in the related documents section.
* The Social Worker (or Practice Lead if social worker is unable to attend) will be expected to attend CARM;
* Information to be presented by other Children's Services Representatives involved with the family, for example, Fostering, Family Group Conference, SEND, Youth Offending Service and Health; will be provided by the Social Worker (as appropriate).
* The outcome will be recorded on the Child/Young Person's AzeusCare record. The minutes (related to that Child/Young Person) will also be attached to their AzeusCare record by the CARM Administrator.
* What Needs to happen, will include the panel's recommendations and timescales including:
  + What other work tasks/actions/investigations are required;
  + If accommodation is agreed, length of time this agreement is for, prior to return to Support Panel;
  + Type of Placement to be considered including Foster 2 Adopt placement;
  + Does the case need to be returned to CARM for further decision making, if so when?
* During CARM, the Administrator will update the CARM Panel Screen and record the CARM decision on the child’s record using the CYPS CARM Panel Decision Form in AzeusCare. This record will also explain any outstanding actions, which have not been completed and reasons why and will be reviewed by the Practice Lead and raised in supervision.
* If it was recommended that a case return to panel, after initial attendance, this should be returned within the identified timescale, unless there is positive progress made, resulting in the case not being required to return to panel, however a case note needs to be added to the child's file detailing this.

**7.**  **CARM Decisions**

* All Panel decisions are to be carried out;
* Panel decisions need to be discussed and reviewed in supervision;
* Evidence of completed actions needs to be recorded on the child's file;
* All legal actions are to be evidenced on the child’s record in AzeusCare.

**8.** **Agreements Outside of Support Panel**

* If changes in circumstances occur, agreement is to be sought and approval is required from the respective Head of Service and chair of CARM for alternative action. Any agreement or decisions need to be recorded in AzeusCare under Management Direction Case Note for the respective child/ren by the Head of Service.
* If agreement for accommodation is obtained outside of the CARM process, due to the urgency of the situation, this agreement should be obtained from a Head of Service. The Head of Service **MUST**:
  + Record the management decision in AzeusCare under Management Direction Case Note explaining:
    - Why the agreement was made outside of panel;
    - What the specific agreement is and the timescales;
    - Expectations of additional actions and timescales for completion of these.
* If agreement for s. 20 accommodation is made outside of the CARM Process the responsible INW will need to ensure that they focus on the trajectory for the child and that this is maintained for the duration of intervention. The following actions **MUST** be completed to support this process:
  + A case supervision to be held between Practice Lead and Social Worker, to be recorded on Case Notes in AzeusCare within 48 hours of the placement being agreed/made. Content of the discussion to detail:
    - Reason for accommodation;
    - Who agreed this & for how long;
    - What is required to be completed in this time period for the child/ren to return home;
    - Consideration of the trajectory for the child/ren and options available.
  + A letter needs to be sent to the parents within 48 hours of the placement being made, setting out that this is not the final position, the parents maintain parental responsibly for the child/ren and they need to work with us, to support the child/ren's return to their care;
  + The request for CARM should be completed and must include:
  + What is being requested;
  + Reason for the request;
  + Proposed plan.
* The request **MUST BE**:
* Approved by a Service Manager;
* The request for CARM is completed on AzeusCare by completing a CYPS CARM Booking Request Form by noon on the Friday, prior to CARM where the request is being discussed.
* Any supporting reports or documents must be uploaded to the CYPS CARM Booking Request Form in the related documents section.

**9.****Regulation 24 Placements**

* Social Care Teams need to be robust in identifying and understanding when children are residing with family members and/or connected persons and when this becomes a Regulation 24 Placement.

*The basic test is – What would you do if the parent/carer wanted to have the child/ren back in their care? If the answer is you would not support this and would seek legal advice to initiate Care Proceedings or where the local authority have made arrangements for a child to live with someone else, then this is a Regulation 24 Placement and the child/ren will acquire Looked After status (consent of the Director of Operations will be required for this).*

* Carers with Parental Responsibility will need to be asked to provide consent for accommodation s20 CA 1989;
* If a Regulation 24 Placement is identified it needs to be actioned immediately, specifically where the child/ren are subject to Powers of Police Protection;
* If a Regulation 24 Placement is identified the Viability Assessment needs to be completed (written up) prior to or within 24 hours of the placement being made;
* The carers need to be added to AzeusCare as connected persons.

**10.****CARM Disagreements**

Where members of the Panel are unable to agree the recommendations of CARM, the areas of disagreement should be noted, and the Head of Service and chair of the Panel is authorised to decide on the outcome.

**11.****Review**

CARM activity will be reviewed quarterly by the chair and the analysis of the activity will be used to contribute to learning and improvement across Children and Young People’s Services with the Head of Service QA.