Terms of Reference

# Matching Panel

## Purpose:

To confirm the match between foster carers and children where the child’s care plan has been confirmed at their CLA Review to be long-term foster care with their current foster carers,

The Matching Panel will consider, as above:

* + All children who have long-term placements with in-house mainstream foster carers
  + All children who have long-term placements with IFA foster carers

For children who are living with connected person foster carers where a legal permanence order is not achievable, these will be considered within the Foster Panel dealing with approval of their carers.

## Aim:

To ensure that children’s long-term foster homes are well matched to meet their needs and that resources are in place and supported so that the children have a sustainable, stable home through till their progression to independence and adulthood.

* + to support stable, long-term placements so that children have security and stability through to adulthood
  + to ensure foster carers are supported effectively to achieve the above
  + to confirm long-term funding when children are to remain in IFA placements long-term
  + to mark and celebrate the transition to long-term status of a placement, with appropriate consideration of frequency of visiting arrangements, foster carer supervision levels, delegation of authority for the child and CLA review arrangements

As such the panel will have the following functions;

The panel will;

* + consider the voice of the child, their wishes and feelings, their attachment to their carer/s and their lived experience;
  + consider the foster carer’s views, wishes and attachment to the child;
  + consider the needs of the child and the carers’ ability to meet these on a long-term basis;
  + ensure that support is in place to promote the stability of placement;
  + ensure that children and carers have full information about the child’s journey into care to support the child’s understanding and their identity, including life story work/books;
  + ensure that all relevant support agencies are aware of the child’s living arrangements and needs to support to enable the placement to be sustained;
  + make recommendations to the relevant level of management e.g. Head of Service or Assistant Director to secure commitment to any funding of resources required (e.g. IFA placement or therapy) to secure and sustain the placement, and address any barriers or delays preventing this;
  + recommend an individualised celebratory event for the family (funding to be made available via the relevant TM or GM depending on amount required);
  + provide consistency in decision making.

## Frequency:

The panel will meet monthly to consider children. If additional panels are required, the frequency will be reviewed.

## Outcome:

Children feel secure and loved, in homes that they know will be through until they are ready for independence, with the option to Stay Put post -18, with well-matched foster carers. Foster carers are clear about the child’s history, feel supported and are able to meet the child’s needs to an excellent standard through to the child’s adulthood.

## Panel Membership and Attendance:

The Panel membership will be as below and quoracy for decision making will be met if there are 3 members present :

* + Chair - Jo Davis, Independent Chair
  + Vice Chair – TBC - independent
  + Panel clerk - Beth Dixon
  + IRS Group Manager - Karen Robinson
  + CAMHS CLA Psychologist - Emma Griffiths
  + Fostering Group Manager - Judith Dent
  + Virtual School – Sue White
  + Social Worker (CWD) – Amy McStravick
  + Care leaver (independent) – Sheridan Fox
  + Foster carer (independent) – Mick Williams
  + Health rep – Lorna Morris
  + ILAC Group Manager – Jane Kitchen

Children and foster carer’s matches will be presented by the child’s social worker and the foster carer’s social worker (in-house or IFA).

Foster carers should be given the opportunity to attend or submit views in writing. Older young people should also be given the opportunity to attend if they wish, although we need to bear in mind feedback from Voice & Influence and Room 42 is that this may reinforce children who are looked after as feeling “different”, so should be the young person’s choice.

**5. Administration**

1. On recommending that a child’s foster placement should now be their long-term home, IROs will recommend that the match is presented to the Matching Panel and the IRO concerned will notify the Panel Clerk for this to be booked on the Panel.

2. The Panel Clerk will book the date and time and notify the child’s social worker and fostering social worker, of the deadline for the Matching Report to be submitted (min 7 working days before Panel) and that their attendance is required and time/ date.

3. The child’s Social Worker/ Fostering Social Worker to complete and submit the Matching Report and to confirm with the foster carer if they wish to attend and inform the Panel Clerk so she can invite them.

4. Panel Clerk to arrange Panel invitations (e-calendar) and to circulate the agenda to all Panel members, and the matching reports to Panel members 5 days before Panel.

5. The role of the Panel Clerk is to:

* + Compile and distribute agendas and papers;
  + Book room or virtual meeting;
  + Take minutes in meetings;
  + To distribute minutes within 1 week of panel meeting for checking by Chair then by other Panel members;
  + To load outcomes on Liquid Logic (at the moment these will need to be on the Matching Report – Chair’s section loaded into documents and referenced on case records but longer-term a Matching Panel record will be created), notifying CSW, FSW (inhouse) and IRO.
  + To draft the letter of acknowledgement of the matching decision to the foster carers for the Chair to finalise, then to post this out.

## Recommendations for Funding decisions

Chair to send Panel outcome to relevant manager (usually HoS) with request for funding decision (e.g. long-term funding for IFA placement to be progressed to Assistant Director) and record response on LL.

Fostering Social Worker/Social worker to establish with the foster carers and child how they wish to celebrate/ mark the occasion. Fostering Social Worker will arrange relevant payment to the carers if these are from Hull Fostering or if IFA carers, social worker for the child to arrange. It would also be good practice to mark this event with photos to add to the child’s lifestory book.