

**Terms of Reference: Independent Placement/Provision and Overview Panel:**

**iPOP**

**Updated: 10th July 2023**

**Purpose / role of the group**

**The role of the group is to holistically scrutinise all existing external placements and SEND provision to ensure that the placement or provision is meeting the needs of the children and young people in their care and will promote positive outcomes; this includes cared for and care experienced children and young people and those children and young people with SEND. It is also to ensure that the Council is getting best value for money, and is robustly monitoring all budgets, including the Higher Needs Block, and funding is proportionately shared between partner agencies where applicable. Any vulnerable placement or provision will be reviewed. The Panel may ask other panels to keep the children under review, such as the Permanence Panel, if children do not have a plan for permanence.**

**The Panel will be undertaken in three parts. Part One will review all unregulated, unregistered and secure placements for cared for children, in addition to any other child’s placements as specified by the Chair; Part Two will review as appropriate cared for children in residential or IFA placements, cared for children in unregulated or unregistered placements where further information is required in addition to care experienced young people with costs attached to their post-eighteen provision.**

**Part Three will aim to provide management oversight, support and challenge in respect of funding within the Higher Needs Block inclusive of but not limited to: alternative provision; Independent Schools (ISEP requests); agreement in Principle for specialist/independent to be considered EOTAS; transport (which doesn’t sit within Transport budget); oversight of and ratification of Element 3 spend (any increase/decrease); oversight of moving in/out and cost implications; oversight of ceases; phase transfer processes.**

**Aims and responsibilities**

* To review all existing external placements to ensure that young people and children’s needs are being met by the current or proposed placement.
* To ensure that the council is using their own provision purposefully.
* To ensure that a holistic approach is taken and all partner agencies are taking full responsibility within the role of corporate parenting.
* To link in with other external provision panels from health and education.
* To ensure that actions from previous panel attendance have been completed.
* To ensure progress is measured and the placement is delivering services as agreed.
* Gather appropriate information to inform sufficiency planning.
* To ensure outcomes are as positive as they can be for the young person
* To review Court ordered placements. Where a placement has been ordered, this child must be booked on to the next panel date.
* To ensure the Council’s finances and resources are being sufficiently impactful.
* To ratify applications made by SEND Officers for AP requests, ISEP, transport, agreement in principles and EOTAS.

**Membership**

* DCS– Chair (or nominated Officer)
* Either Divisional Director of Safeguarding or Divisional Director Education and Skills (deputy Chair)
* Head of Service, Safeguarding Quality and Review (IRO service)
* Service Manager, Specialist Services
* Head of Service, Regulated Services
* Service Manager, Operational
* Finance Officer
* Principal Educational Psychologist,
* Head of Service SEND,
  + and/or Head of Virtual School
* Senior SEND Caseworker
* Commissioning Manager, Children’s (or nominated Officer)

**Attendees**

* Presenting Team Manager
* Post 16 SEND Lead
* Presenting SEND Officers [in absence of SEND Caseworker]
* SEND Monitoring Officer

**Review**

A review of the relevance and value of the terms of reference is to be undertaken annually.

**Working Methods**

Typically, the meeting will be held fortnightly, normally on a Wednesday afternoon between the hours of 1pm and 5pm. However, there may be times due to demand whereby the meetings will be held at an enhanced frequency of weekly for a period of time, and this will be at the discretion of the Chair. The meeting has three parts to it.

* + Part 1 is for a brief update of cases where actions are outstanding and require clarity or where there is a request for a placement move. The Team Managers do not need to attend to present cases in Part 1. The relevant Head of Service should ensure they are fully briefed to update panel on the case
  + Part 2 is to review cases in more detail and for Team Managers to update Panel as follows:
    - Current placement / expected length of time in placement / weekly cost
    - Discuss any potential placement changes and concerns regarding stability – internal and external providers to be included.
    - Placement Plan date last completed/date next one due and any expressions of interest (EOI) received.
    - Brief background.
    - Actions agreed at the last panel, and the progress made against these.
    - Brief overview of the current care plan in the short and medium term and what actions need to be taken to deliver this plan.
    - Any barriers to achieving the care plan and how the panel can support the service.
    - Assurances and evidence that educational requirements are being met.
    - IRO view and impact.
    - Any request being presented to Panel in respect of changes to placements, or new placement or support requests, need to be supported by and include the views of both the Service Manager and the Head of Service.
  + Part 3 is to provide management oversight, support and challenge in respect of funding within the Higher Needs Block inclusive of but not limited to:
    - Alternative Provision
    - Independent Schools (ISEP requests)
    - Agreement in Principle for specialist/independent to be considered
    - EOTAS
    - Transport (of which doesn’t sit within Transport budget)
    - Oversight of and ratification of Element 3 spend (any increase/decrease)
    - Oversight of moving in/out and cost implications
    - Oversight of ceases
    - Phase transfer processes

Minutes will be recorded via the IPOP tracker, the actions and decisions will be added to child/young person’s case file by the Business Support Officer Team. The tracker will be circulated to the Team Manager, Social Worker or SEND Officer to complete their actions and ensure the case file is kept updated.

Team Managers / Head of Service /Senior SEND Caseworker are responsible for providing information to ensure the tracker is updated with the outcome of actions to the relevant nominated officer who owns the tracker.

Agendas for future meetings will be sent out a minimum of one week before the Panel; invites allocating a time slot will be sent to all attendees.

Attendance at panel is by invitation: if a case requires urgent discussion at this Panel, social workers, SEND Officers and Team Managers should discuss this with the relevant Head of Service who can discuss the child in AOB.

Reports are to be submitted by 4pm on the Monday prior to the panel meeting; reports are only required if there is a change in costs or placement.

The relevant Team Manager must prioritise attendance at the meeting to give a verbal update or arrange for a colleague to attend on their behalf

The Head of Virtual School should provide details of:

* Latest PEP
* Pupil Premium spend
* Education Health and Care Plan, including statutory support provided in school

Fostering Team Manager or Service Manager, Specialist Services to provide details of:

* Internal fostering vacancies
* Plans for placement moves

Commissioning Manager to provide:

* Details of supported lodgings availability and circulate prior to meeting

Head Of Service, Safeguarding Quality and Review (IRO service) to provide:

* IRO updates on key development for the child / young person to include the date of the next LAC Review.
* Recommendations made at the most recent Cared for Review to include the IRO and Child / Young Person’s views on the placement.
* Decisions on permanency made at the 2nd Cared For Review and any delay to the permanence decision.

Heads of Service for Regulated Services to provide:

* Details of internal residential vacancy planning

Service Manager for Specialist Services to provide:

* Details of current placements and costs
* Cared For placement movement list since last Panel
* Overall forecast of placement budget

Head of Service, SEND and/or Senior SEND caseworker to provide:

* Details relating to the child’s primary need, previous educational provisions and the rationale for the proposed school placement or package of alternative provision
* Details of current educational provision and cost
* Start date of current educational provision
* Any additional costs such as school transport
* Details relating to the child’s Annual Review and any other provision outlined within the EHCP
* Details relating to plans of transition for children and young people discussed
* Details regarding any Tribunal activity or direction

**All information and reports are confidential and only for the purpose of the panel, unless individuals are tasked with actions.**