**SANDWELL CHILDREN’S TRUST**

**DIRECTORS RESOURCE & PROFESSIONAL DECISIONS PANEL**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE & GUIDANCE for PRACTITIONERS**

**Title: Directors Resource & Professional Decisions Panel**

**The Role of the Panel**

The Directors Resource and Professional Decisions Panel has been established to support good social work practice, agree the most appropriate use of resource and placements and determine the need for pre-proceedings work and care proceedings. The Panel will ensure that all appropriate options to maintain children and families safely have been identified and tested prior to bringing a child into care, as well as to identify creative packages of support to children and their families.

The Panel will consider the following;

* Admissions to Care S.20/S.31/EPO
* Support Packages with a value of over £500 in a one month period
* Specialist commissioned assessments e.g. Cognitive/PAMS/Parenting Assessments
* Permission for LPM – (pre-proceeding)
* Permission to issue Care Proceedings
* Family Care allowances e.g. SGO allowances
* Adoption Allowances
* Placement Moves
* Complex Tri-Partite funded cases – where multi-agency decisions are required.
* Care Leavers accommodation and support costs

**Process**

* Panel applications should be booked with the administrator a week in advance. Urgent cases will be heard by agreement with the Chair.
* The Panel report must be prepared at least 2 working days in advance of the meeting. All requests must be fully costed and a budget code provided.
* Case Slots will normally 15 mins.
* Social Workers/TM’s are responsible for attending panel to present cases
* Actions/Decisions from panel will be added to LCS within 48 hours of panel
* The Administrator will record a Decision Log which will note the decision/action agreed.
* The previous meetings’ Decision Log will be reviewed at the start of every meeting for sign off.
* Review dates will be set by the Panel for cases where there is a long-term resource commitment.

**Membership**

* Director of Operations (Chair)
* GH for LAC/Leaving Care
* GHs Care Management
* GH MASH & SAT
* GH Placements Provision
* Fostering Team Manager
* Adoption Team Manager
* Resource and Commissioning Team Manager
* Principal Lawyer
* Head of Virtual School
* LAC Nurse
* Panel Administrator

Operational Managers can deputise for Group Heads by agreement of the Chair. The Group Head QA & Safeguarding and relevant IRO/CPP Chair will have an open invitation to attend. The Chair and/or decisions outside Panel may be delegated to a Group Head.

**Frequency** Weekly normally Wednesday 9.00 – 1.00.

**Location:**  the Panel will normally be held in the Board Room at the Wellman Building.

**Other Panels**

The Complex Case Panel/Tri-partite funded cases will be incorporated into the process and take place as required during panel. Where possible Secure Panels will also be aligned with this process and the membership revised accordingly.

**Panel Applications: Preparation and Sign Off**

* Presenting Social workers are required to obtain the agreement of their Team Manager and Group Head/Operational Manager to present cases to Panel. There must be a recorded decision by OM/GH in all applications to the Directors Resource Panel. This must be written on the Resource Panel Form and a recorded Management Decision case recording placed on LCS.
* In complex cases and where there is a request to initiate Care Proceedings it is advisable that the Team Manager and/or the Operational Manager attends the Panel to support the Social Worker.
* The views of the IRO/CPP Chair should be obtained by the presenting Social Worker.
* Social Workers should advise the Panel Administrator of complex cases which require a longer time allocation.

**Practice Advice for Presenting Social Workers and Team Managers**

* Prepare well for the panel presentation so that you have a good grasp of the case and can explain how your request will meet the needs of the child/young person concerned.
* Ensure your Panel application is fully completed, accurate and up to date.
* Advise the Panel of contingency plans for other options or choices but state the reasons for your preference clearly and show how this relates to your assessment of the child/young person’s needs.
* Know the cost of resource request you are making. The Resource and Commissioning Team can help you with this.

**Emergencies/Urgent Circumstances**

* If your request becomes urgent you can contact the Director of Operations or a Group Head directly for agreement. When this occurs please ensure you have considered the range of options and whether the case can wait for the weekly Panel.
* Out of Hours placements will be agreed through Group Heads providing Out of Hours cover to the EDS service.
* All emergency/urgent placement agreements need to be presented to the next available Panel for retrospective agreement.

**Guests**

From time to time guests will be invited to observe the Panel process. They will attend by agreement of the Chair.

**Confidentiality**

Panel Members, guests and attendees will be reminded of the importance of confidentiality and that information shared is done so properly and is secured.

**Review**

These Terms of Reference and the role of the panel will be reviewed annually to ensure it is working effectively.

**July 2018**