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**Children’s Family Support & Safeguarding Care and Resource Panel**

**Terms of Reference**

**December 2021**

**Review – June 2022**

To make North Somerset a truly great place for children and young people to thrive; where all have the best possible life and opportunities, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged and/or have special educational or additional need

**Children’s Services Care and Resource Panel Guidance**

**1. Introduction**

The principles of North Somerset’s Vision for our children and young people are:

* We will work to give families the Right Help at the Right Time
* We will work with families only for as long as is necessary
* We will work openly, honestly and respectfully
* We will work to build strong relationships with all those we work with
* We will work in a trauma informed, strength-based way with the whole family and their network to enable them to make sustainable, positive change

Our North Somerset approach supports the view that:

*‘There are unique advantages for children experiencing life in their own birth family and, in most circumstances; children’s needs are best met by being cared for within their families’.*

Working within these principles, the purpose of this panel is to support purposeful and proportionate interventions with our children and families and to simplify and streamline the decision-making arrangements in the wider context of permanence planning. The panel will provide scrutiny and oversight when making significant decisions about, and for, the children we are working with and, will be focused on achieving the best outcomes for them and their families.

**2. Aims**

The primary aims of the panel are as follows:

a) To ensure that our approach to working with children and their families is purposeful and proportionate and that we are working in partnership with families, building on their strengths and support networks whilst supporting them to care safely for their children.

b) To ensure that, where possible, every consideration is given to supporting a child or young person safely within their home environment or extended family/friends network.

c) To ensure that if a child does need to be cared for outside their family/friends network, that this decision is made at the right time and is only for as long as necessary and that alternative options within the family/friends network are explored quickly.

d) To move into pre-proceedings or care proceedings only when the range of interventions and support under child in need/child protection have been exhausted and progress has not been made, or the risk of harm has substantially increased. The fact that the legal threshold has been met does not always mean it is right, or proportionate, to arrange a legal planning meeting, proceed to pre-proceedings or instigate care proceedings.

e) To oversee the use of internal and external resources, ensuring that where required these are allocated appropriately and meet the needs of our children.

**3. When to use Care and Resource Panel**

It is the responsibility of Care and Resource Panel to:

* Ensure that Family Group Conferences, Edge of Care interventions, CAMHS and other resources are fully utilised to prevent the need for care or to help the child/young person return to their family/ wider family as soon as possible.
* Authorise plans to bring a child or young person into care under Section 20 of the Children Act (planned and unplanned).
* Ratify recommendations for pre-proceedings and to review all children in pre-proceedings at 8-10 weeks to ensure timely assessment and planning is in place.
* Authorise all plans to apply for an order under Section 31 of the 1989 Children Act (Care Orders and Supervision Orders).
* Authorise plans for an order under Section 25 of the 1989 Children Act (Secure Accommodation Orders).
* Authorise plans (retrospectively) to apply for an Emergency Protection Order, although agreement for such plans may be sought from a Head of Service or Assistant Director outside Panel if required.
* Agree the type of placement required to meet the needs of the child or young person, taking into account their wishes.
* Agree a change of a previously stable placement as the placement is now unable to meet the child or young person’s needs (as outlined in the child’s care plan) or where external resource is required.
* Authorise and review all external fostering and residential placements including parent and child assessment placements.
* Authorise any independent assessments.
* Seek funding for accommodation and subsistence for families with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)
* To authorise new and ongoing expenditure on children and their families that exceeds £1000 (£2000 for children with disability) per annum.

The Children’s Care and Resource Panel does not consider:

* Respite or family support requests for families with disabled children, unless the request is about or part of care proceedings. These decisions will be via a separate panel for Children with Disabilities.
* Special Guardianship and Adoption support packages.

**4. How to refer to Care and Resource Panel**

* The decision to refer to Care and Resource Panel should made in consultation with your Team Manager and authorised by your Head of Service.
* Prior to panel consider if a young person has Special Educational Needs and ensure that you have liaised with their SEN worker in education inclusion.
* Notify the Panel Administrator by **12.00 midday on Friday before panel on Wednesday afternoon** at the latest and submit the fully completed Care and Resource Panel request form (see below) and associated documents required by that time. You will then be advised of a time to attend panel.
* The panel request form must be signed your Team Manager or sent to the panel administrator from the Team Manager’s email address.
* It is expected that you will have completed an assessment of need prior to presentation at panel and that your Team Manager will attend with you.

**5. Paperwork**

* Care and Resource Panel request form to be completed for all requests and copies of the latest assessment and care plan for the child and, where relevant, outcomes from the last Child in Care review, Child in Need or Child Protection review should be attached.
* Genogram to be provided.
* Panel Coordinator to distribute to panel members electronically along with any other papers to **by midday Monday.**
* Any emergency decisions outside panel should be agreed with the relevant Head of Service and Assistant Director and a panel slot should then be booked retrospectively.

**9. Post Panel Process**

* Assistant Director will finalise the decisions and these will be uploaded by the Panel Coordinator with ‘notification into the social worker and team manager’ on the child’s electronic file (EHM/LCS) in the forms section with a corresponding note in Case Notes.

**10. Core Panel Membership**

* Assistant Director Children’s Services (Chair)
* Head of Service – Family Support & Safeguarding (also link for Adoption West) (Deputy)
* Head of Service – Corporate Parenting Service (Deputy)
* Head of Front Door & Family Wellbeing (Deputy)
* Head of Commissioning
* Fostering Team Manager
* Team Manager – Family Wellbeing (HOS to determine which TM)
* Team Manager – Childcare Legal Team (may provide legal advice prior to panel via legal planning meeting)
* Head of Virtual School
* CAMHS representative
* Designated Nurse for Children in Care
* Finance representative to receive outcome decisions and attend periodically

There is no quorum and Chair will determine if sufficient representation to proceed.

**11. Time and Venue**

* The Care and Resource Panel will **normally sit weekly on Wednesday from 1:30 – 4:30pm.**
* The Care and Resource Panel will meet virtually initially.

**12. Guidance for Social Workers**

As the social worker involved with the child and family you will be expected to present a brief written report of your assessment (including assessment of risk) of the child and family (template for completion below)

In talking about the child and their family be prepared to discuss:

* Brief history of children’s services involvement with the child and family including any significant events, court orders, child protection plans, and current services provided
* Presenting reason/issue regarding resource requested
* What has already been attempted to resolve the problem/issue?
* Have all known relatives or friends been contacted and asked to care for the child/ren? What has been their response? Is there anyone else not contacted and why not?
* Has a family network meeting or family group conference been held?
* What are the views, wishes and feelings of the child/young person concerned?
* What are the views of the parents?
* What needs to change in the home situation to prevent the need for care/resource requested? – what resources/action would accomplish this?
* Health care needs
* Education needs including school placement issues
* Plans for siblings
* What is the long-term plan?

**13. Guidance for Panel Chair and Panel Coordinator**

* There are occasions when the discussions at Care and Resource Panel, and the decisions made, are discussed within the court arena.
* There are also occasions when details of the discussions and the decisions made are requested by court.
* It is important that all of the discussions in Panel are carefully and accurately recorded by the Panel Coordinator and reflect the discussions held within Panel.
* All decision sheets are agreed and signed by the panel chair, after checking that the decision sheet contains all the relevant information, is an accurate record of the discussions and an accurate reflection of the decisions made
* It should be borne in mind when recording that North Somerset Council has an open access to information policy, and discussions and decisions should be recorded in such a way that they are conducive to the requirements of a range of audiences.

**Appendix 1**

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| **Care and Resource Panel Request Form** | North Somerset Council buys Weston's Sovereign Shopping Centre - Sam FM  Bristol | **Children’s Services** |

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| **Your request should be discussed with and agreed by your Manager and Head of Service before it is presented to Panel. Paperwork should be e-mailed to the Care and Resource Panel Coordinator by midday Friday before Panel.**  **The e-mail should show your Manager’s agreement. Late forms may not be considered.** | |
| **Date presented to Panel** |  |
| **If this case has previously been presented to Panel, please give date and outcome** |  |

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| **Details of all Child(ren) / Young Person(s) and their parents** | | | | | | | |
| **Name** | **DOB** | **Age** | **Gender** | **Child ID** | **Legal Status** | **Ethnicity** | **FWB/CIN/**  **CP/CIC Plan which and Y/N** |
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| **Home address and placement address if different** |  |
| **Type of placement and name of carer if applicable** |  |

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| **EHC plan?** | **Yes/No** | **If so, when issued and date of last review** |  |

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| **What is being requested of the Panel? e.g. agreement to S20, agreement to initiate proceedings** |
| **What work has already been undertaken to support the family:** (e.g. family wellbeing/social work intervention, FGC, Child & Family Centre, health and education involvement, case discussion etc.) |
| **Brief summary: reason for referral to Panel** |
| **Current situation:**  ***What is going well?***  ***What are we worried about?***  ***What needs to change?***  **Any other relevant information:**  **What do you expect to achieve for the child/ family from this request?** |

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| **How long will this resource be needed for and what will happen then?** |
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| **Social Worker** | |  | **Team Manager** | |
| Name |  |  | Name |  |
| Team |  |  |  |  |
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| **Chair** |  |
| Date |  |
| Details of approved request |  |
| Date of next Panel Review |  |

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| **Discussion points and actions required** |
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| **Panel Members** |
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