1. **Document Information**

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| **Terms of Reference:** | Practice and Resource Panel |
| **Date:** | 21/11/2023 |
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| **Author:** | Debbie Raymond  |
| **Owner:** | Senior Management Team |

1. **Document Control**

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| **Version** | **Date** | **Author** | **Change Ref** | **Pages/Section affected** |
| V0.1 | 20th July 2023 | Maria Jewell | Initial Draft | All |
| V0.2 | 25th October  | Debbie Raymond  | Revised  | All  |
| V1.0 | 21st November 2023 | Becky Hopkins & Jassi Broadmeadow | Final | All |
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1. **Sign Off**

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| Position | **Date** |
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| Date review required  | November 2024  |

### Terms of Reference: Practice & Resource Panel

**This panel will consider children and young people who are receiving intervention and support from the Assessment service, Children and Families service and Disabled Children’s Service, where there is a request for accommodation.**

The core purpose of the panel is to provide senior management oversight and accountability for key decisions and allocation of resources. The panel will ensure that practice and planning uphold restorative practice values and support good outcomes for young people on the edge of care, or in interim care arrangements.

**There are five key areas that will be considered by the panel:**

1. Prevention of entry to care via packages of community support and intervention.
2. Requests to accommodate children and young people under S.20 of the Children Act 1989, including 16/17 years olds who may otherwise become homeless.
3. Requests for independent, therapeutic, or children’s homes from external care providers (excluding Independent Fostering Agencies) for children who are not yet in long-term care arrangements.
4. Requests for interventions or therapeutic provision in the context of interim care proceeding, or for parents at the conclusion of care proceedings to support future parenting.
5. Requests to fund accommodation and subsistence for a family with no recourse to public funds.

**Key principles**

* Children and young people do best when supported to live within their own families and communities. Presenters to panel will be asked to evidence the steps taken to prevent entry to care that must include a clear support plan, mobilisation of natural networks, and the offer of a Family Group conference.
* Children between the age of 11-16 will not be brought into care under S.20 of the Children Act 1989 unless there is an existing or planned intervention from Bridges Adolescent Service, other than in exceptional circumstances to ensure their safety, and with the approval of a Deputy Director.
* Requests for S.20 care must be accompanied by a clear timeline, outline of work that will be undertaken to support a return to family, or secure permanence through alternative long-term care.
* In reaching decisions about entry to care, panel members will give consideration to the key principles set out in the welfare checklist of the Children Act 1989: the wishes and feelings of the child; their physical, emotional and educational needs; the likely effect of change; social characteristics including race and ethnicity; any harm which s/he has suffered or is at risk of suffering; the capacity of parents and other connected people; the range of powers available to this panel, including packages of community based support that can enable them to remain within their network.
* Where funding is being requested for private therapy, the panel will consider why partner services are unable to offer the support required, and challenge relevant partner agencies to meet this need.
* In emergency situations involving the safety of a child, an approach should be made to the Panel Chair (Head of Service) for temporary agreement to accommodation. Full presentation to the Panel, and a full Panel decision is required at the next available Practice and Resource Panel to quality assure and review the plan for the child.
* Where the complexity of need requires a joint commissioning approach the situation may be more appropriately referred to Devon’s Joint Agency Commissioning Panel Review to ensure best use of resources.

**Membership**

The Practice and Resource Panel is a countywide panel, held weekly, and is chaired by the Head of Service (HoS) or Deputy Director on a rota basis. The Panel membership comprises:

* Head of Service or Deputy Director (Chair)
* A representative from Bridges
* A representative from Family Group Conference
* A representative from Commissioning & Resources
* A representative from the Virtual School
* A representative from Education Inclusion
* A representative from CAMHS
* A representative from Finance
* A representative from Legal

**Ways of Working and Paperwork**

The panel process can be found in the [Panel Process](https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/Legalplanningmeetingandresources/Shared%20Documents/General/Guidance%20and%20process%20documents/Devon%20Practice%20and%20Resources%20Panel%20Process.docx?d=we36490ca899d430b958dfc25969f368f&csf=1&web=1&e=hhnRj9) document. It outlines; process, preparation, question subjects, links to key documents and contacts as well as decisions/ outcomes.

A ‘Panel Application Form’ must be completed in advance of the panel. Panel Members will review the most recent assessment and plan, or child protection report on Eclipse, as well as the last Supervision record. Where there are gaps in good quality assessments, reports or supervision, panel members will highlight the need for improvement as part of the required decision and action plan.

Panel members from partner agencies will review their relevant agency database, so they are aware of relevant history and able to share information at the meeting.

**It is expected that the Social Worker and their Team Manager or Service Manager attend the panel.**

**Frequency of Meetings**

Weekly on a Tuesday morning. Requests for a slot should be submitted to Business support by 5pm on the Thursday before the panel.

# Outcomes and Decision Making

* The outcome will be clearly recorded on the child’s file within 3 working days of the panel.
* Presenters may be required to return to panel where approval has been given for a time-limited period, or where further work is required before a decision can be made.
* Presenters will always be required to return to panel where S.20 care has been agreed at a timescale directed by the Chair.
* Where there are differences of opinion between panel members, the Chair will be responsible for making a final decision, with additional guidance from the Deputy Director where appropriate.