**Short Breaks Quality Assurance meeting Terms of Reference.**

**Date: 14th February 2024**

**Children’s Disability Team - Terms of reference for Short Break Quality Assurance Meeting. (SBQAM)**

**1. Purpose of panel**

1.1 To consider a request/s for Short Breaks made by Social Workers following the completion of a Child and Young Persons Assessment or submission of an updated SBQAM form, where unmet needs are identified for the child/young person up to the age of 18 years who’s resident within the Dudley area. All children in receipt of a specialist short break provision should be presented to SBQAM panel annually.

1.2 To consider Short Breaks requests which enable the child/young person to access services to enable them to fulfil their potential, in and around their place of residency and to collaborate with other commissioning colleagues i.e., Health to ensure that services are delivered in a planned and systematic way which meets the needs identified.

1.3 The voice of the child/young person, their parent and or carer, and professionals supporting the child will be reflected in any request made for a Short Break on the SBQAM form.

1.4 The panel will through a cross functional approach scrutinise information completed on the SBQAM form and discuss the request being made, based on the information presented. Panel members may refer to universal services or targeted services via the Local Offer that may be more suitable to meet the needs identified.

1.5 All requests will be considered in line with delivering best value and resources available, through universal and targeted short break services.

1.6 All decision making will be recorded on the SBQAM form along with a narrative and rationale on the panel decision and how this is a reasonable and proportionate response to meeting the identified unmet social care needs.

1.7 All SBQAM Referrals approved will be monitored via the Short Breaks Co-ordinator for direct payments and Social Workers through the Child in Need review process. Any changes of circumstances will be brought back to panel for consideration following reassessment of need. Depending on the nature of the change in circumstances this may either be an updated SBQAM report or for example where there are safeguarding concerns an updated CYPA.

**2.1 Panel Membership:**

- Membership Chair – Head of Service for SEND / CDT – Children Services

- Vice Chair – Service Manager CDT

- Short Breaks & Direct Payments Officer

- Team Manager / Advanced Social Work Practitioner - Childrens Disability Team

- SEND representative

- Early Help Representative

- DMBC Finance

- ICB Commissioning lead

- Continuing Health Care Nurse

- Social Care commissioning lead

**2. Panel criteria**

All children and young people where in receipt of an assessment of need which recommends provision of specialist short breaks service to meet unmet social care needs must be presented to SBQAM panel for consideration.

**3. Panel Process**

3.1 Panel meetings will take place every month with submissions checked and signed off before the SBQAM panel by designated Team Manager.

3.2 Panel decisions will be recorded at the end of the SBQAM form and uploaded on LCS, with any breakdown of costs, dates approved, and reviews identified.

3.3. Panel decision making can be deferred where information is not available to support the panel in the making of an informed decision. Panel will consider what interim support may be required whilst further enquiries are made to inform panel’s decision making. The matter will be re-heard for an update on any enquiries at the next available panel.

**4. Panel Attendance**

It is compulsory for the allocated practitioner to attend panel in person to provide additional information to assist with the decision-making process. In the event that the worker is unable to attend e.g. sickness or annual leave the line manager will present the case to panel to prevent delay in providing the most appropriate, reasonable and proportionate support to the child / young person and their family.

The outcome of SBQAM panel must be fed back the parent / carer within 2 working days of the date of panel – this feedback being provided to the parent must be recorded on the child’s file.

**5. Scheduled Reviews**

All panel decisions will have a set timeline for review e.g. a package of support agreed for 6 months and then directed to return to panel within this 6 month timescale for review. This must be returned and presented within this timescale by the allocated CDT practitioner.

At a minimum all Child in Need and Child Protection cases will be presented to SBQAM panel at least once annually to ensure that the support in place remains appropriate and proportionate to meet the identified unmet social care needs.

**8.1 Monitoring and Review**

Each SBQAM panel will provide an opportunity for panel members to reflect on any themes arising from case discussions or provide professional challenge to ensure that sound and consistent decisions are being made to meet individual children and families unmet social care needs.

Any areas of vulnerability where there is a limited-service provision and there are themes of emerging need within the Dudley Borough this will be reviewed as part of strategic service and multi-disciplinary planning.

**Urgent Decisions**

In the event of an urgent decision being required before a panel meeting, this will be reviewed and considered by the Children with Disabilities & SEN Head of Service. The SBQAM form should be submitted to the following panel meeting, for ratification and the decision noted, and why it was approved outside the panel for fairness and transparency.

**10. Panel Decision Challenge**

Where a child / young person or their parent / carer wish to challenge a decision made by the SBQAM panel they should do so within 28 calendar days of the date of panel, making their allocated CDT practitioner aware of their wish to challenge the decision.

To challenge the decision made by the SBQAM panel the child / young person or parent / carer must provide new information that has not already been heard and considered by the panel for example where a child has a disability that the panel were not aware, and a medical letter has been provided to evidence this diagnosis.

Where new written information and evidence, not already heard by the panel cannot be provided, the original panel decision will stand, and the matter will not be returned to panel until a review is required in line with the CDT assessment policy.

Children and young people, parents and carers have the right to make representations via the DMBC complaints procedure at any point.

**11. SBQAM Decision/Review**

Following the decision from the Short Breaks Panel, a letter will be sent to the child/young person or their family/carer stating the outcome of the request if a specialist short breaks service is to be provided.

Where a specialist short breaks service is not agreed by panel the allocated CDT practitioner will discuss the panel outcome and recommendations with the parent / carer within 2 working days of the panel. The parent / carer will also be advised of their right to challenge the panel outcome where new evidence is available in line with section 10 of this policy.