

**Community Resource Panel Process**

**for Children with Disabilities**

1. **Purpose of the Community Resource Panel**

The Community Resource Panel (‘the Panel’) has a focus on children and young people with disabilities who are eligible for specialist support from the Children with Disabilities Service, and who have been assessed by a social worker as having unmet social care needs. Some of these needs will be able to be met by universal services but for those that cannot be met in this way a referral to the Panel should be made to identify and allocate services that enable their outcomes to be met.

During this process a focus should be kept on the unmet social care needs of the child and a stepped approach taken towards meeting those needs, based on the findings of the assessment.

Decisions will be made on individual funded packages of support at the Panel which will be held twice monthly.

The aim of the Panel is to ensure equity and consistency across the Trust and provides a moderation role to ensure families are treated fairly. Panel members will work in partnership to provide decision-making for services that:

* Give priority to those most in need
* Support children to live safely in their own families and communities
* Are responsive to their needs, culture, and disability
* Support with meeting a child’s social care need that is currently unmet
* Ensure young people are supported as they grow into adulthood and need to access adult’s services

The Panel decides the level and type of support to be offered, taking into account the documentation presented to the Panel and the individual needs and circumstances of the child and family.

The Panel will also signpost families to other services that might offer support, e.g. Forward Thinking Birmingham, and voluntary organisations such as Barnardos, Recourse for Autism and Midland Mencap

***See also Appendix One: Community Resource Panel Flowchart***

1. **Community Resource Panel Members**

To ensure continuity, wherever possible representation on the Panel should remain consistent, to include social care, health, voluntary organisations, and providers of short breaks.

In the event of annual leave, sickness or other unforeseen absences, a substitute team manager from the Children with Disabilities Service can be nominated to attend.

To ensure consistency and to be quorate, a minimum of three Panel members must attend each Panel meeting.

**Members:**

**Chair:**

Head of Service for Children with Disabilities

**Members:**

Children With Disabilities Team Manager

Health representative

Short breaks representative

Barnardo’s representative

Representatives from other providers as appropriate

Business support financial administration worker (generally the same worker as the minute taker)

**In attendance to present reports:**

Child’s allocated social worker and their team manager

1. **Preparation for Panel**
	1. **Assessment**

An assessment of the child’s and carer/s’ needs should be completed within 40 days of the referral being received. A possible outcome at this point would be to make an application to Community Resource Panel. If involvement with the child continues and a need is identified at a later stage to refer to Community Resource Panel, an updated assessment should be completed within three months of the planned Panel meeting.

The assessment should be needs-led, focus on the child, and include information from other agencies about what support they are currently providing to the family. Assessments should also identify circumstances where it is believed that needs are not being met or support is required that cannot be provided by family members and the services currently involved with the family.

A cultural genogram/ ecomap should be included, and information about the child’s daily life, based on direct work with the child and their family. The child’s views, wishes and feelings should be included in the assessment, including observation feedback from children who are unable to express their wishes and feelings. Where the child’s communication is non-verbal their views should still be obtained using picture cards or other communication methods where possible such as Makaton/Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS).

The assessment should consider the child and family’s strengths as well as difficulties – what are they able to do?

Where a child is already receiving a package of support, feedback or a report should be obtained during the assessment from the short breaks setting or carers currently supporting the family.

When the assessment process is complete, there will be an initial recommendation from the child’s social worker (subsequently approved by the social worker’s manager within the Children with Disabilities Team) as to the nature and extent of any services to be provided.

For further information about the assessment process and the eligibility criteria please see the Trust’s policy document: “How we assess the needs of, and deliver support to, disabled children and their families living in Birmingham (including eligibility criteria)”.

**3.2 Prior to applying for Community Resource Panel**

The following steps should be taken before making an application to the Panel.

* Hold a Family Group Conference, to include the family’s network. The meeting should consider whether the child’s needs can be met by the family and agree a family plan.
* Following the assessment hold a multi-agency meeting appropriate to the type of plan being used to provide support to the child (e.g. family plan or child in need plan if there is already one in place). The meeting should decide whether an application needs to be made to the Panel for any remaining unmet social care needs.
* Source community provision, make referrals and chase progress as appropriate.
* Discuss the child/ young person’s needs at reflective supervision to consider the impact of current support, the root causes of any issues and whether a Panel application is needed for any remaining unmet needs.

The above are all standard steps that should be carried out as part of the assessment process and will inform any initial decision on whether statutory services are necessary.

The above approach will help ensure that support from family network and community organisations is considered fully before making an application, make most effective use of Panel time and retain a focus on those children with higher levels of need. This approach is also less intrusive in family life, less disruptive for children and young people and likely to provide them with support in a timelier way.

It is recognised, however, that in some cases – for example, cases where it is clear from the outset that the needs are exceptionally complex such that statutory services are required – the approach above may not be appropriate. In such cases, a referral may be made directly to the Panel (with the approval of the Head of Service).

* 1. **Making an application to the Community Resource Panel**

Applications must be submitted to Panel seven days before it is due to meet. Applications should include the following documents to provide a detailed rationale for the request being made:

* Children’s Community Resource Panel Application form, signed and approved by the Team Manager
* Assessment by social worker
* Carers assessment
* Most recent minutes of meetings that have been held to discuss the child’s current plan (this could be ‘My Family Plan’ CiN Plan, Child Protection Plan, Short Breaks Plan etc)
* Evidence regarding how any current support is being used and why this no longer meets the need
* Details of how any requested support would be used and how it would meet identified outcomes for the child
* Additional evidence e.g. the impact of any support currently being provided
1. **Community Resource Panel Meeting**

Reports are sent to Panel members in advance of the Panel meeting to provide them with sufficient time to consider their content, analysis, and recommendation. Reports should include an update on progress regarding actions agreed at previous Panels or meetings/ reviews. At Panel, each report and any views from children, parents and professionals are considered alongside accompanying documentation.

The child/young person’s social worker and their team manager should attend Panel and present verbally:

* An update of the child’s circumstances based on a recent visit (within a week of Panel)
* A summary of their needs which are being met or have been referred for community resources, including the progress of referrals
* Any unmet needs identified in the Family, CiN or other Plan, the impact of this on the child and the reason for not accessing community resources to meet the need

Following discussion and consideration, Panel will decide as follows, based on the evidence presented and the eligibility criteria (see How we assess the needs of, and deliver support to, disabled children and their families living in Birmingham (including eligibility criteria):

* **Agree the request and the allocation of service / range of services**
* **Offer alternative services which Panel members consider more closely meet the assessed needs highlighted in the reports presented to Panel**
* **Signpost to more appropriate services**
* **Request further information or period of assessment work and set a return to panel date to review the additional information**

**The final decision is made by the Panel’s Chair (Head of Service), and it is then the responsibility of the social worker and team manager to seek support in line with the agreed panel outcome. Where this is not possible there may be a request to return to panel to review the package of support which had been agreed with a view to adjusting it in line with support available, or considering alternatives.**

**The Panel will then agree dates for review or updates about progress.**

1. **Decision-making outside of Community Resource Panel meetings**

There will be occasions when a child or young person’s assessed needs are urgent, and where it would be detrimental to them to wait for a meeting of the Panel. In these circumstances emergency decisions may be made as follows:

* Emergency support packages can be allocated on a short-term basis between Panel meetings with the approval of the Chair or agreed deputies within the Trust
1. **Support packages**

The level of support depends on the child / family's assessed needs. Detailed assessment will reveal many different needs, some of which will not be eligible for the relevant statutory services. A family's current level of support from family, friends and other services will be considered when deciding the support package.

Support packages aim to support parents in their caring role and to help meet the physical, emotional, and social needs of children with disabilities. Families will be encouraged to access support from other community provisions where this is available and suitable for their needs.

1. **Unmet Need**

If the provider is unable to provide a particular resource due to capacity, Community Resource Panel will always consider how, the service required could be provided through different service provision.

A record of unmet need will be kept within the Panel tracking system to enable gap analysis and commissioning to have access to relevant information about current and future service provision and commissioning.

1. **Communication of Decision**

Following Panel, the social worker will arrange to discuss the Panel *Outcome Letter* with the parents / carers / child / young person. The family will also receive a copy of this letter sent by the Panel financial administration team. The letter will include details of the outcome, including what has been agreed with the reasons for it, and details about how to request a decision review.

If it has been decided **not** to offer a support package, or to offer a different level of support from that requested by the family, the social worker will explain the rationale for this decision and provide details about how to appeal if they are unhappy with the decision.

1. **Decision Review**

A decision is made at Community Resource Panel which is communicated to the family by letter or email. The decision letter explains the reasons for the decision as well as how to request a decision review.

Review of a Community Resource Panel decision must be made within six weeks of the original Community Resource Panel date. This is to provide enough time for parent/carer or representative to receive the Community Resource Panel outcome and send further supporting evidence to be heard at the next available Community Resource Panel date. Supporting evidence must include the reasons why the parent/carer or representative wish for this to be reconsidered and must provide reasoning and any new supporting information they believe Community Resource Panel was not able to consider at first presentation to Community Resource Panel.

Community Resource Panel will re consider their decision taking account of parent/carer or representative comments and new information and the outcome of the Decision Review will be sent in writing to the parent/carer or representative with a rationale and explanation of the reasoning for the decision made.

If parent/carer or representative are unhappy with the outcome at Community Resource Panel they may make a complaint at any time following the panel decision.

* Website:

<https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/info/6/contact_us/41/give_feedback_or_complain_about_birmingham_childrens_trust>

* Email address:

CustomerRelations@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

1. **Community Resource Panel Review Process**

There may be occasions when a support package is agreed for a set period or for specific circumstances where a review would be required at Panel that falls outside the CIN/EH reviewing process. These reviews will be held at a frequency agreed by Panel and attended by the child/ young person’s social worker or team manager.

Reviews will be informed by information from Family Plan or Child in Need Reviews, updated assessments, and additional evidence regarding the impact of services provided on the child/ young person’s needs and wellbeing.

Consideration should be given at each review to changes in the child’s needs, transition planning and other issues such as medication reviews.

**APPENDIX ONE**

**FLOWCHART OF COMMUNITY RESOURCE PANEL PROCESS**

**TO BE FOLLOWED BY SOCIAL WORKERS**

