

## **Northern Health and Social Care Trust Children's Disability Resource Panel Guidance**

### **1. Introduction**

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust (the Trust) convenes the Children's Disability Resource Panel (the panel) to consider the assessed need of a child, their family and carers.

The Trust is committed to working in partnership with service users, carers and relevant voluntary and statutory organisations to provide support to children with disabilities, their families and carers. The panel will endeavour to allocate services in a fair and equitable manner, based on individual, assessed need.

The Children's Disability Resource Panel comprises of multi-disciplinary panel. The panel will ensure that it is a representative of the Trust's Values.

### **2. Purpose and Function of Panel**

The panel manages access to all support services for Children with disabilities.

The Self Directed Support (SDS) framework provides service users choice in how support services, based on assessed need, is provided. They can choose between a Direct Service provided by the Trust, a Direct Payment, a managed budget or a mixture of these options.

When considering a Direct Service the panel will identify the most suitable service. These may include:-

- Short Breaks provided by a host family via Sharing the Care
- Residential short breaks at Rainbow/Whitehaven
- Domiciliary support
- Support in Playgroup during a child's pre-school year
- Residential accommodation in Rainbow – long term specialist placement
- Financial Scrutiny
- Support packages for children with complex physical health care needs

Decisions made at panel are based on a robust social work assessment of need using the UNOCINI Framework in conjunction with an assessment of the needs of carers which is incorporated into the UNOCINI or recorded on NISAT. To be assessed, the child or young person must meet the Regional Children's Disability Team criteria (see attached).

It is the duty of the panel to ensure the decision making process safeguards and promotes the human rights and welfare of the child. The focus is on achieving positive outcomes in the lives of children and young people and their families whilst keeping the child central.

Quarterly the Panel will review service waiting lists and ensure a record of unmet need is maintained.

### **3. Membership of the Panel**

The panel comprises:

- Chair – Head of Service
- Deputy Chair – Social Work Service Manager
- Team Manager or Senior Social Worker from Children’s Disability Team (x2)
- Team manager from residential short break service - Whitehaven
- Discharge Coordinator (Nursing)
- Team Manager or Senior Social Worker Sharing The Care short break service
- Panel Administrator

Quorum is achieved through chair/deputy plus 4 panel members, one of which must be non-social work.

The panel welcomes the participation of an independent service provider and a service user and this will continue to be sought.

### **4. Role of Chairperson**

- The Head of Service for Children’s Disability will be the lead for the panel. In the absence of the Head of Service a Social Work Service Manager will deputise as the Chair.
- Chair will ensure panel meetings are scheduled in advance.
- The Chair will ensure panel members participate fully and cases are discussed in a professional and respectful manner in line with the Trust’s values.
- The Chair will ensure panel decisions are clear and have been accurately recorded.
- The Chair will ensure panel decisions are shared with service user/parents/carers and the assessing social worker within 14 days of the panel.
- The Chair will ensure any safeguarding and/or practice issues raised at panel are addressed with the appropriate Head of Service and/or Social Work Service Manager.
- The chair can, in an emergency, agree a service/financial request directly with Senior Social Worker/Social Worker. The assessment will then be presented to the next panel for further discussion and ratification.

### **5. Role of Panel Members**

- Panel members will ensure they are fully prepared for panel meetings, have read all case material enabling them to make an informed contribution to the discussion.
- Panel members will provide colleagues/staff with positive feedback when appropriate in relation to quality of assessments.
- Panel members will ensure the emphasis is on positive outcomes and that the child is central to decision making.
- Panel members will provide up to date information about their resource/service (ie: waiting lists, unmet need etc.)

## 6. Presenting a Case to Panel

The social worker will complete a UNOCINI assessment. This should :-

- incorporate the elements of the Carers Assessment where consent for this has been given and/or Northern Ireland Single Assessment (NISAT) Appendix B.
- focus on the needs of the child/family/parent/carer and provide an analysis of presenting need.
- evidence any disagreement between assessing social work and the family regarding need and how these have been reconciled
- include the child's voice, where possible, or an explanation as to why this has not been possible.
- consider the impact of the family circumstances on other children within the home and their needs
- evidence that the family network has been fully explored and consider to the approved of a network meeting
- be quality assured by the Senior Social Worker before being agreed and signed by parent/carer and Senior Social Worker.
- forwarded the signed assessment to the Panel Administrator at least 3 full working days prior to panel (Monday at 12noon).
- Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Assessment of the Child (CMAC) process will form the assessment for a child with complex physical healthcare needs. This may be presented to panel jointly by nursing and social work.

In the event of an emergency an agreement can be sought with the Chair for late submission of an assessment.

## 7. Decision Making Remit of Panel

In most cases, decisions will be made on the day of panel however in some cases decision making may be deferred if information is incomplete. The case will then be heard as soon as possible.

If panel members cannot come to an agreed decision, the Chair will make the final decision.

A summary of the panel discussion and decision will be sent to case social worker within 14 days of the panel and a letter of outcome will be sent to family within the same timescale. A copy of the decisions will be placed on the child's file.

## 8. Reviews/Appeals/Complaints

In the event of a child/parent or carer disagreeing with the recommendation made by the assessing social worker in the assessment, **BEFORE** it goes to panel, the Senior Social Worker for the assessing team should arrange to meet with the child/parent or carer to discuss this.

If resolution cannot be achieved, the Senior Social Worker should liaise with another Senior Social Worker for another Children's Disability Team, seeking a 2nd opinion and review of the assessment.

Further to the above actions, if the child/parent or carer continues to be in disagreement, a consultation will be sought at Panel. The Social Worker/Senior Social Worker will provide the child/parents or carer with feedback on the panel outcome.

If the child/parent or carer is unhappy with decision made at panel, they are advised to put their concerns in writing to Children's Disability Head of Service within 7 days of the panel outcome. The Head of Service will convene a Review Panel. (See attached form)

The **Review Panel** will be made up of a Head of Service from another discipline in Children's Services, a Social Work Service Manager from another discipline in Children's Services, two Senior Social Workers from Children's Disability social work teams who were not at attendance of the first panel, a community children's nursing representative who was not at the first panel, a Whitehaven representative who was not in attendance at the first panel and a Sharing the Care representative who was not in attendance at the first panel. The child/parent or carer will be invited to put in writing their reason/s for disagreement 7 days prior to the Review Panel meeting. The child/parent or carer will be invited to attend the Review panel discussion.

If the child/parent or carer remains dissatisfied with the Review Panel decision they can make a written request to the Children's Disability Head of Service to appeal the decision within 7 days of the panel outcome.

An **Appeal Panel** will be convened within 14 working days, chaired by the Assistant Director for Children's Disability and two other professionals, one of which will be social work and who have not previously been involved in the decision making panel. Decisions made by the Appeal Panel will be provided to the appeal applicant in writing within 7 days of the panel meeting.

## **Complaints**

Should a child/parent or carer feel dissatisfied with any other aspect of the social work involvement they are invited to contact the Senior Social Worker in the first instance. If the matter remains unresolved the child/parent or carer may wish to make a formal complaint by contacting:-

**Service User Feedback Department  
Northern Health and Social Care Trust  
Bush House  
45 Bush Road  
Antrim  
BT41 2QB**

Telephone number – 028 9442 4655  
Email – [user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net)

## **9. Review and Evaluation**

An independent member of the panel will complete an annual review and evaluation of the functioning of the panel making recommendations to enhance panel performance.