

# Access to Care & Resources Panel

## Terms of Reference

### 1. Membership

Head of Service (CIN/ CLA)  
Placements Commissioning Manager  
Fostering Service manager  
CIN Provider Services Service manager  
Service Manager SQ&A  
Service Manager CIN and CLA

### 2. Introduction

- 2.1 The decision to accommodate a child or young person is a momentous and life changing event for them and their family and should only happen with due consideration of all the alternatives, with the needs of the child or young person at the forefront of our consideration. Departmentally we support the view that children's needs are best met within their own families, unless there is evidence that this would be detrimental to their welfare or protection.
- 2.2 Islington's Access to Care and Resources Panel will ensure that the recommendation for a child, between the ages of 0-17 to become Looked After has been robustly reviewed. The Panel will need to be satisfied that all options have been explored for example; to support children staying at home, or to support or make arrangements for a child to live with family and/ or friends in line with family and friends policy.

### 3. What Cases/requests need to be presented to the panel?

- 3.1 Islington's Access to Care and Resources Panel will agree specific specialist assessments use of the enhanced service and any independent specialist assessments. In the majority of cases these should be requested within pre-proceedings stage under the PLO or in high end child protection cases. However requests for specific independent assessments need to be presented at any stage in the Child's journey. This is because these have significant financial implications.
- 3.2 Islington's Access to Care and Resources Panel will endorse/authorise **all** recommendations to Look After children between the ages of 0-17 (under Section 31 and 20 of the Children Act 1989 (planned & unplanned):
- At completion of a children and family Assessment.
  - When there are concerns that there has been no evidence of sustained change within the goal based plan.
  - At any stage in a child's life which warrants such intervention to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.
  - Following a Legal planning meeting (LPM) seeking to initiate pre proceedings under PLO or to make an application to the Court to initiate proceedings.
  - Following a becoming looked after meeting (BLA) to seek s20 agreement for a child becoming looked after.



- 3.3 Children subject to Police Protection, Emergency Protection Orders whereby the plan is continued accommodation. Young people subject to Southwark ruling, including relevant young people under the Care leaving regulations who require housing as relevant children or children who also need to be accommodated under s.20 will need to be brought to the Board retrospectively and at the earliest opportunity. In these emergency situations a discussion should take place with the chair to agree what paperwork can be provided.
- 3.4 Make a decision about the first care placement requested within statutory sufficiency guidance. (Please note that any request for a residential unit/placement will need to be agreed by the Director of Child Protection once the panel has agreed this in principle).
- 3.5 To consider, approve and review if required requests for expenditure on resources to support families as an alternative to entering care, to include:
  - a) Community based supports and resources needed to maintain a child within his/her family or the wider network. For example Family Support packages over 15 hours per week or more than 3 times a week).
- 3.6 To agree supervised contact arrangements for the following children:
  - a) Children who are not looked after
  - b) Children looked after who are not in care or adoption proceedings
  - c) Children exiting care proceedings that need continued supervised contact in excess of six months. (Post care proceedings contact will be reviewed by service Manager and Head of Service CLA at three months after proceedings.)

#### **4. How to make a referral**

A referral to ACRP must be agreed, following consultation, with the Service Manager. An email needs to be sent to the panel administrator, stating what is being requested with the following paper work depending on the request;

##### **To request a child to be looked after:**

- i. An up to date Child & Family assessment
- ii. A completed family goals plan

##### **These need to contain:**

- i. a succinct and analytical history of family and child's care experience and how this has impacted on their safety, wellbeing and development,
- ii. Evidence to support threshold,
- iii. Evidence that the local authority have provided purposeful and proportionate intervention to support the family to make the recommended changes,
- iv. Clear rationale for the child becoming looked after, and
- v. Advice from Legal Services in the Legal Planning Meeting section.

## **Use of Public Law Outline (PLO)**

The ACRP will make decisions about whether a case should be stepped up to the PLO Pre-proceedings stage.

The PLO Pre-Proceedings process enables the local authority to step up intervention without entering into care proceedings, and provides the family with the opportunity to demonstrate that they are able to effect change and avoid care proceedings.

The ACRP will scrutinise the draft PLO Pre-Proceedings Plan. The PLO process will be reviewed at the PLO tracker meeting, which is chaired by a Service Manager

### **For use of the Enhanced Service;**

6. The ACRP will only consider cases that have an up to date Child & Family Assessment that include draft questions for the letter of instruction.

The draft questions must:

- i. focus on gaps in the Child & Family Assessment that fall outside the social workers expertise, or
- ii. where Specialist Family Support is requested, make this request when the recommended intensity falls outside of what can reasonable be managed by the social worker and demonstrate a proportionate approach to assessment and intervention.
- iii. An up to date Child & Family assessment
- iv. A completed family goals plan

### **Use of external experts and professional services will be considered:**

- i. where the Enhanced Team cannot provide the specific expertise, or
- ii. The team is at capacity and the needs of the child and family are such that the assessment cannot be delayed, or
- iii. The family does not consent to the assessment or intervention from the Enhanced Team, or Social worker is advocating for an independent assessment.

SW to submit

- v. An up to date Child & Family assessment detailing why further assessment needed ( see below for more details )
- vi. A completed family goals plan

### **Use of Family Support over 15 hours/more than 3 times a week/Supervised contact outside of care proceedings;**

- i. An up to date Child & Family assessment
- ii. A completed family goals plan – which clarifies what support is needed with a timeframe and outcomes for intervention

The objective of the panel is to

- 4.1 To ensure resources available to support families have been fully explored and utilised where appropriate and that each package has clear outcomes and is financially accountable.
- 4.2 To ensure consistent thresholds and standards for children becoming Looked After are applied and rigorous monitoring is in place to help minimise drift in care planning. This will be achieved by managers ( CIN /CLA) updating an ACRP tracking sheet- reviewed weekly until orders are made in court.

- 4.3 To meet the requirements of the council's financial and decision making delegations
- 4.4 To provide QA of case planning and assurance that children and young people experience timely and effective multi agency help and protection through risk based assessment, authoritative practice, planning and review that secures change. Any concerns in relation to these that arise at panel will be taken up by the service Manager outside of the panel.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1 Role of Service Manager and Team Manager and Social worker

#### **The role of Team manager will be:**

Prior to referral to ACRP, Team Managers:

- must be satisfied that sufficient steps have been taken to work with the family to achieve meaningful and sustainable change and improve the circumstances for the child through the provision of goal based interventions and consider if alternate processes such as ICPC should be considered if not already in place .Chair any legal planning meeting .

Upon referral to ACRP Team Managers should ensure that they are in agreement with the request /plan to be presented. The Team Manager will quality assure the updated Child & Family Assessment against the following best practice points:

- the significant factors and assessment clearly sets out the evidence relied upon to prove threshold;
  - the analysis section clearly sets out the impact of the care on the child, the risks to the child, and the capacity of the parent to meet the child's specific needs; Where the enhanced service or other commissioned service is recommended, the evidence should be evaluated to identify gaps in the evidence, assessment or intervention, and draft questions should be included to outline the scope of the intervention or assessment being requested.
- Managers need to be satisfied that all steps have been taken to avoid care proceedings and have an overview of the case and quality of intervention.
- To accompany the SW to panel to present the case for the relevant request.
- To update the weekly tracker

#### **The Role of the Social worker will be**

- Provide summary of current intervention and progress of goals and why request being made.
- Present evidence in respect of the s 31 threshold criteria including any harm alleged and attribution to the parent(s) care including whether any of the facts alleged are disputed by the parents
- To present the case for continuation of a placement where a young person has become Looked After in an emergency
- To present the case for supervised contact to support a child outside of proceedings (not those subject to adoption or special guardianship orders)

- To ensure up to date relevant reports to support the presentation of the case are available for the panel to view on ICS.

**The Service Manager** has a responsibility to ensure that the tracker is updated by their managers and that the LPM is of a good quality. Any issues arising with planning, quality of work or paperwork presented will be taken up with the appropriate TM by the Operational manager in supervision /meeting outside if the panel.

The Operational manager may chair the LPM /BLA meeting if in agreement due to the complexity of the case or due to capacity issues.

## 5.2 Panel Administrator

### **The role of the Panel administrator will be:**

- To ensure effective running of the Panel
- To book cases for review and inform the Chair of the Panel of upcoming cases
- To ensure that the correct paperwork is completed and that a named social worker and Manager is able to present the case.
- To email any issues that needs follow up or clarification from TM /Service Managers the day following the ACRP.
- To document the minutes and decision of the meeting within the Childs record on the pro forma in ICS.
- To organise the agenda for the panel and papers of cases to be reviewed by the ACRP.
- To ensure that the ACRP tracker is updated (to include agreement to BLA /pre proceedings under PLO/assessments agreed) and inform operational managers if updates are not provided by TM. To email Team Managers on Wednesday preceding the meeting to remind them to update the tracker. To inform Service managers Friday morning if no updates have been received.

## 5.3 Chair

The Panel will be asked to come to an agreement if however not possible the Chair would make the final decision regarding provision of resources and the decision in respect of whether a child should be become looked after or not and sign off the records which will be placed on LCS .The decision will need to be completed and placed on LCS by Friday of the week the ACRP took place at the latest.

Please note any change from the decisions from ACRP will need to go back to ACRP for discussion /ratification.

## 5.4 Time of Access to Care & Resources Board and Venue

Meetings are every Monday, from 10 – 12pm  
Each case will be given 20 minutes.

The Access to Care & Resources Board will meet at:  
222 Upper Street  
London  
N1 1XR

M Davies August 2016