

# **LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON**



## **Hillingdon Access to Resource Panel Procedure (HARP) and Complex HARP**



## **Hillingdon Access to Resource Panel (HARP) Procedure**

### **1. Role of HARP and Complex HARP (the Panels)**

HARP and Complex HARP have been established to ensure that the decisions for children at the verge of accommodation or legal proceedings are appropriate and consistent, that practice is child centred and relationship based and children are supported at home within their family (including wider family and connected persons) wherever possible. Also the panels ensure the effective and proportionate use of council's resources.

The Panels include an element of reflection and learning where the lessons learned from the cases reviewed by the panel are shared and implemented wider in the service.

### **2. Purpose of HARP and complex HARP**

The Panels are established to ensure that:

- Decisions for children on the edge of becoming accommodated or subject to legal proceedings are appropriately and consistently considered and scrutinised;
- Agree and oversee the appropriate use of resources to support children at home, within their family, extended family, or friendship groups where appropriate
- Care packages for children in the Local Authority's care and those with disabilities are appropriately considered to ensure services are proportionate and represents value for money.
- Agrees packages of care for children who are at risk of being remanded or are exiting remand
- Review and agreement for enhanced fostering allowance
- Review and agree the ending or extensions to Supervision Orders

Whilst the HARP can be used to provide a reflective forum and complex discussions for “stuck” cases, this will not replace normal discussions with the Team Manager and the Head of Service. These discussions should take place before HARP presentation.



### **3. Criteria for presenting children's cases to Panel**

#### **3.1. HARP**

- Situations where the team considers that a child or young person should be looked after by the Local Authority. This includes Unaccompanied Young People seeking asylum who arrived in the borough and require support and/or accommodation.
- Children for whom an agreement is requested to stay put;
- Children who have been subject to a Supervision Order that is due to end
- Requests for external Specialist Assessments (cognitive, etc.) and Therapy (such as for Children and YP with harmful sexual behaviours etc.) and where agreement is needed for funding outside of PLO or Care Proceedings.
- situations where there is a need to fund external placements (IFAs for instance) for long term matches;
- Change of placements if there is a cost implication
- Post 18 accommodation arrangements in semi-independent, etc will be agreed at HARP and then reviewed through the High Cost panel (unless HARP specifically request the decision to be reviewed by HARP).
- Placements remaining in place for a short period of time when the young person is over the age of 18 years old
- An existing package of care (including Direct Payments) needs amending and it is over the approval level of Head of Service or where it is felt by the TM and HoS that additional scrutiny is required

#### **3.2. Complex harp**

- Cases where the child/ren and /or family needs are complex or high risk cases which require a high level of support services to meet that need/ manage the risk;
- Cases where the worker has made efforts to find resources to meet the identified need but the needs remain unmet; the Complex HARP will not replace supervision discussing and therefore before the case comes to HARP the TM and the HOS will discuss the situation and explore the role of Complex harp in unblocking any pathways.



- Children, excluding UASC, who have been subject of s20 arrangements for more than 6 months if required and if they were not already discussed at the PLO Monitoring Panel or subject to Care Proceedings
- Cases where a legal planning meeting is being requested ;
- Cases where the team consider that legal proceedings are required and need to be issued; (immediate issuing of legal proceedings to safeguard a child will not wait for the Complex HARP. The relevant HoS and the HoS for Court will agree LPM outside the Complex HARP and record the outcome of the discussion onto the HARP log)
- 11.5
- 9 applications

### **3.3. Associated panels and decision forums**

- Looked after young people over the age of 14 who require permanency decisions are presented to fostering panel for matching considerations
- High cost placement packages are scrutinised by the [High Cost Panel](#). When a placement is agreed at HARP the ongoing monitoring will be completed through the High Cost Panel, unless HARP decides otherwise.
- Situation where a child needs to move placements are considered and discussed at the **Placement Stability Meeting** and the feedback and learning is captured on the same location as HARP and Complex HARP.
- PLO monitoring panel oversees all PLOs to ensure progress and prevent any delays in progression of the plan and actions. The panel ensures that the PLO process is in keeping with the agreed PLO toolkit and timescales and decisions for escalation or de-escalation is timely.

### **Additional criteria to be considered for attendance to Panel:**

- When immediate legal advice, immediate legal proceedings or immediate accommodation is required, authorisation is required from the Director or delegate; if this is needed out of hours the authorisation will be sought from the Senior Manager on duty. These young people must be presented at the next appropriate HARP Panel;



#### **4. The impact of HARP**

- Improved quality and consistency in decision making for children and young people;
- Risks and decisions are known and shared with senior managers;
- Ensure all avenues are explored to support the family;
- Where legal proceedings are considered the issues are narrowed and the work is “frontloaded” in a proportionate, child centred way;
- Scrutiny and consistency when agreeing accommodation and legal proceedings.
- Input from other teams towards the support plan for the family;
- Provides financial accountability;
- A check and balance to ensure no drift in planning and actions;
- Opportunity to review the quality of social work practice and identify learning to inform outcomes.

#### **5. Composition of the Panels**

Both HARP and Complex HARP will include a Head of Service (HoS) who will chair and at least one other HoS (ideally two) who will provide independent scrutiny and challenge and help in exploring the issues. As and when needed, the HoS for the team supporting the child discussed will be asked to attend. This decision rests with the Chair of the Panel.

In addition to this, various colleagues from across the service and the council will be asked to attend in supporting the decision making:

##### **5.1. HARP Panel Membership and attendees**

- Chairperson - Head of Service (on a rota)
- 1 or 2 Head of Service independent (on a rota)
- Team Manager - line manager for the child discussed
- Allocated worker (Social Worker and/or PA)
- Virtual School Head Teacher
- Independent Reviewing Officer allocated to LAC children
- Team manager for the Brokerage Team
- Administrator



- Other colleagues can be invited case by case (for instance MAPS, Key Worker, CP Chair, housing etc)

#### **5.2. Complex HARP Panel Membership and attendees:**

- Chairperson - Head of Service for Court Service – Permanent member
- Head of Children in Need and Need of Protection - Permanent member
- Head of Service or Deputy for Regulated Service – Permanent member
- Head of Service for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance;
- Head of service and allocated workers from the Youth Justice Service where cases of young people in custody are discussed
- Team Manager - line manager of the allocated worker
- Allocated worker (Social Worker and/or PA)
- Designated custody IRO for cases of Young people who are in custody and expected to be remanded in the case of the Local Authority
- Administrator;
- Other colleagues can be invited case by case (for instance MAPS, Key Worker, CP Chair, SEND, housing etc).

### **6. Frequency**

The panels will meet weekly. HARP usually take place in the morning and Complex HARP in the afternoon (at times, exceptions from this schedule will be agreed)

### **7. Request to the Panel**

- The request for the HARP is completed on the HARP request form available in ICS (Access to resource panel form and the Stand alone form for the cases presented by YJS).
- Supplementary information can be submitted as required
- The Panel applications should be analytical, child focussed and highlighting the desired outcomes. The application form will specify clearly which panel will hear the case and, when requesting financial support, the known financial implications will be detailed in the form (NB:



when a change in packages is requested, the application will detail the difference in service and in cost)

- The application forms will be quality assured and signed off by the team manager who will also include their comments and pass to their respective HoS for endorsement.
- The application will be submitted by 12 noon the Friday before the Panel. Any late submissions will have to be agreed individually with the Chair of the Panel.
- The HARP panel will normally hear no more than 10 cases. However, in circumstances agreed with the chair, this limit can be exceeded. Each case will have 15 minutes slot allocated and a “live” agenda is maintained by the minute taker during the meeting
- The Complex Harp will hear less cases due to the different nature of the issues and time allocated for discussion. Therefore a maximum of 5 cases will be heard. However in circumstances agreed with the chair this limit can be exceeded. Each case will have 30 minutes slot allocated and “live” agenda is maintained by the minute taker during the meeting.
- Once the case is heard at the Panel the outcome and overview of discussion/decisions will be recorded in the child's ICS case recording by the Panel administrator;
- Team manager has to ensure that actions are completed in timescales and recorded on ICS, if actions have not been completed, the reasons also to be recorded on ICS

## **8. Support Panel Decisions**

- All Panel decisions are to be carried out
- If changes in circumstances occur approval is required from the respective Head of Service for alternative actions. Any agreement needs to be recorded on Case Notes for the respective child/ren.
- Panel decisions need to be discussed and reviewed in Supervision as required;
- Evidence of completed actions needs to be recorded on the child's file;



## **9. Regulation 24 Placements**

- Social Care Teams need to be more robust in identifying and understanding when children are residing with family members and/or connected persons and when this becomes a Regulation 24 Placement. The basic test is – What would you do if the parent/carer wanted to have the child/ren back in their care? If the answer is you would not support this; you would ask the Police to exercise Powers of Police Protection; you would want to seek legal advice to initiate Care Proceedings, then this is a Regulation 24 Placement and the child/ren will acquire Looked After status (consent of the Director will be required for this). Carers with Parental Responsibility will need to be asked to sign s. 20 consent, if they have capacity to do so.
- If a Regulation 24 Placement is identified it needs to be actioned immediately, specifically in the following circumstances:
  - The child/ren are subject to Powers of Police Protection.
- If a Regulation 24 Placement is identified the Viability Assessment needs to be completed (written up) prior to or within 5 days of the placement being made;
- The carers need to be identified as connected persons carers and the Connected Persons Viability needs to be initiated

## **10. HARP Panel Disagreements**

Where members of the Panel remain unable to agree the recommendations of the Panel, the areas of disagreement should be noted at Panel and the decision made by the Panel Chair.

## **11. Review**

Regular staff surveys will seek feedback regarding the effectiveness of panel.

Panel activity is reviewed quarterly and this analysis will be used to contribute to learning and improvement across Children's services.

The process and the Panels arrangements are reviewed every 24 months





**Review Date:** February 2025

## **12. Appendixes**

### **12.1. Appendix 1: Caring for Somebody Else's Child Options**



app\_1\_caring\_some  
body\_else.pdf

### **12.2. Appendix 2 – Section 20 checklist**



Checklist for SW for Section 20 template  
S20 cases.doc                      - 2017.doc