

Title/Status-	Secure Accommodation Review Panel
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Date review	January 2023

Leicestershire Procedure for Secure Accommodation Review Panel Applies to- Looked after Children

Secure Accommodation Review Panel Procedure

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Secure Accommodation Review Panel is for the Panel to undertake the statutory review of the young person's placement in secure accommodation in accordance with s 25 Children Act 1989 and the Children (Secure Accommodation) Regulations 1991 and the Children (Secure Accommodation) (Amendment) Regulations 1992 and to satisfy themselves that:-
 - (i) The criteria for keeping the young person in Secure Accommodation continue to apply;
 - (ii) The placement in such accommodation continues to be necessary;
 - (iii) No other description of accommodation would be appropriate for the young person.
- 1.2 In considering the above, it is necessary to have regard to the welfare of the young person.
- 1.3 It is considered best practice for the meeting to take place with all participants at the secure accommodation where the child is living.

2. The Composition of the Secure Accommodation Review Panel.

- 2.1 The Secure Accommodation Review Panel will consist of two independent managers from within Children and Families Services but not involved in the



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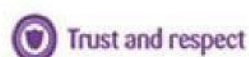


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daily decisions for the child/young person. and an independent person,¹ who have received relevant training and have a current DBS check.

- 2.2 Appropriate agencies can be approached to provide an Independent person as defined above. The independent person should have experience of work in children and family's services allowing them to make informed decisions.
- 2.2 Panel members will be approached to be a part of the panel by the Team Manager for the child/young person
- 2.3 Issues of ethnic background and gender will be addressed in deciding the make-up of the Panel.
 - Wherever practically possible the same Independent Person will act in all SAR's involving a particular young person. A change will only be considered if the young person or Chair of the Panel requests this, or if a new order is made.
- 2.4.1 The Independent Person will be provided with the opportunity for discussion with the Chair about any matters relevant to the review and will be provided with the appropriate background information about the young person.
- 2.5 The Secure Accommodation Review Panel will be chaired by one of the independent manager's. The managers will decide who chairs.
- 2.6 The Clerk to the Panel will be an experienced admin worker sourced through Children and Families Services.
- 2.7 The minutes of the Panel will include a statement from Legal Services on whether the criteria for keeping the young person in secure accommodation continue to apply.
- 2.8 During the course of its deliberations, the Panel will hear the voice and choice of the following:
 - The young person;
 - The social worker allocated to the case;
 - A senior representative from the Secure Unit;
 - The key worker from the Secure Unit;
 - The Children's Rights Officer;
 - The Child's Guardian
 - The young person's parents or any person who is not a parent but who has Parental Responsibility for the young person;
 - Any other person who has had the care of the child, whose views the Panel members consider should be taken into account;

¹ Regulations define an independent person as someone who is neither a member nor officer of the local authority responsible for looking after the young person, either the placing authority or the authority looking after the young person on behalf of the placing authority.



- The young person's independent visitor (if one has been appointed).
- 2.9 Any of the review participants listed in paragraph 2.9 above who are unable to attend the meeting must be offered the opportunity to submit written comments. These will be included in the written report to the Panel. If a review participant who is unable to attend declines to submit written comments, a statement to that effect should be included in the written report to the Panel.
- 2.10 As far as is practicable, the Panel must take into account the voice and choice of all review participants, except for interpreters, signers and observers.
- 2.11 It is helpful to consider the following points when assessing whether the criteria for the secure accommodation order continue to be met, although this list is not exclusive:-
- Since being placed in Secure Accommodation, has the young person shown any signs of understanding that his/her previous pattern of behaviour was dangerous?
 - Has the young person shown any signs that he/she would not revert to his/her previous pattern of behaviour if the secure accommodation order was no longer in place?
 - Have there been any signs to suggest that the young person would now function safely in an open environment?
 - Has the young person acquired sufficient internal controls to function safely in an open environment?
 - The young person's view of the time they have spent in secure accommodation and what if anything they feel has helped or changed for them.
- 2.12 Preparing the young person for a Secure Accommodation Review Panel
- Young people should be given details of the secure review process in advance of the secure accommodation review at least two days in advance of the meeting. This can be done by his/her key worker/social worker. The use of Jargon must be avoided.
 - The young person should be made aware exactly why the review is necessary, what to expect during and after it.
 - The young person to be informed that it is in their interest to attend the meeting so that their views and wishes can be heard by the panel, but that they do not have to attend.
 - Young person to be made aware what could happen if the Panel decide the secure criteria is not met.

- The young person has a right to a child's rights officer who can advocate on their behalf. Leicestershire County Council ensures a Children Rights Officer is present at its Secure Accommodation Review Panels. It is important that the role of this individual as an advocate is explained to the young person.
- The young person can be helped to prepare something in writing for the Secure Accommodation Review if they prefer not to speak during the meeting with support from a keyworker or other unit staff.
- The young person should meet the Independent Person before the Secure Accommodation Review takes place. This can happen on the actual day of the meeting or at another convenient time.

2.13 Information for the Young Person

Attending meetings with professionals can make some young people feel uncomfortable and anxious. The following information can be adapted and shared with the young person to help prepare them for their review meeting and for them to have a clearer idea of what to expect from the meeting.

- The purpose of a Secure Accommodation Review Panel is to consider your progress to see if you still meet the criteria for secure accommodation.
- These meetings should take place within one month of your placement and at intervals not exceeding three months after this.
- A number of people will participate in this meeting. You, your social worker, staff from the Secure Unit, your parent/carer, and other professionals where appropriate. There will also be a three-person panel which includes an Independent person (IP) from an organisation providing the IP, and two independent managers from the local authority (not your social worker or their manager) who will decide if you still meet the criteria to remain in secure accommodation.
- It is really important that you participate in the review meeting to hear what is being said and the decisions being made. A member of staff from the unit or an Advocate can help you write something to read out at the meeting.
- You are entitled to have an independent Advocate attend the meeting to support you and speak on your behalf, if you prefer. Speak to your social worker about this.
- Before the review an Independent Person (IP) will meet you to explain their role and find out how you feel about the time you have spent in secure accommodation and if you feel your needs could be better met somewhere else. The IP is not connected to your local authority. Their role is to listen



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carefully to your views as well as the opinions of those present at your review and to decide with the other panel members, if you still meet the criteria or not.

3. Frequency of Meetings of the Secure Accommodation Review Panel

- 3.1 The Secure Accommodation Review Panel must meet within 28 days of the young person being placed in secure accommodation.
- 3.2 Subsequent meetings of the Secure Accommodation Review Panel must take place at no more than three monthly intervals.
- 3.3 The frequency of Secure Accommodation Review Panel meetings should be determined on a case by case basis, at the discretion of the Panel.

0. Written Reports for Secure Accommodation Review Panels.

- 4.1 The social worker allocated to the case should send a report to admin support for circulation at least five clear days before the meeting providing details of the following:
 - A summary of why the Secure Accommodation Order was sought;
 - A summary of the work undertaken with the young person whilst in secure accommodation and its impact;
 - A summary of the exit plan;
 - The voice and choice of:-
 - (i) The young person;
 - (ii) The young person's parents;
 - (iii) Any person with Parental Responsibility for the young person;
 - (iv) Any other person who has cared for the young person whose views the Panel consider should be taken into account;
 - (v) The Local Authority;
 - (vi) The young person's independent visitor (if appointed)
- 4.2 The Secure Unit will also be expected to provide a written report on the young person, as well as a school report and, if relevant, psychiatric or psychological reports, as far as practicable, a week before the panel.
- 4.3 Reports circulated before the meeting will be redacted to comply with data protection legislation: the young person should be identifiable only by his/her first name and the initial of the family name.

5. Conduct of the Secure Accommodation Review Panel (see appendix

- 5.1 The Chairperson, as far as is practicable accompanied by the Children's Rights Officer, should wherever possible see the young person before the meeting to ascertain if the young person is willing to attend the meeting and, if not, to seek the views of the young person and represent them to the meeting.



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- 5.2 The Panel should have time before the meeting starts to read any reports provided by the secure unit that have not been circulated in advance of the meeting.
- 5.3 Although Panel meetings are within the County Council's formal decision-making process, it is recognised that the Panel should undertake any business such as appointing the Chairperson and confirming the minutes of the previous meeting before the young person is invited to attend the meeting.
- 5.4 The Chairperson should ensure that everyone at the meeting has been introduced and set out the purpose and structure of the meeting.
- 5.5 The social worker and a representative of the secure unit will then present information about the relevant circumstances and history of the case alongside more recent/current details of the young person's situation.
- 5.6 Professional's contributions should address the core issues of absconding, injury to self and/or injury to others and the welfare of the young person.
- 5.7 The young person and/or his/her representative should be permitted to offer a different view and challenge the information and opinions presented. Notes should be made in the minutes of different points of view or interpretation of the facts.
- 5.8 The young person and/or his/her representative should then be permitted to present the views and opinions for the young person and similarly the social worker and representative of the secure unit should be permitted to offer a different view and challenge the information presented.
- 5.9 Finally, the social worker and/or representative of the secure unit should be asked to summarise the facts and the young person or his/her representative may summarise their view of the facts.
- 5.10 The Review Panel members should then withdraw with the clerk to the Panel to discuss their findings before presenting them to the meeting.
- 5.11 The Chairperson must sum up and present the findings in language that the young person understands. The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring the young person is fully informed of the decision. If the young person chooses not to be present at the meeting, the Chairperson must make arrangements for the decision to be communicated to him/her.
- 5.12 The Panel should then agree the date for the next meeting if one is considered necessary.
- 5.13 The minutes of the meeting must detail the decision made and reasons for the decision. The outcome of the review will be communicated to all those who made representations to the panel.

