

Title/Status-	TERMS OF REFERENCE- Children's Decision Making Panel
New document or revised	Revised
Date legal review	
Date approved SMT	October 2021
Responsible Head of Service	Fieldwork
Date review due	September 2024

Leicestershire Procedure for TERMS OF REFERENCE- Children's Decision Making Panel

Applies to- Children in particular circumstances

Membership:

Chair - Head of Service (or delegate)
 Service Managers by agreement
 Social Workers and Team Managers by agreement
 Commissioning Placements Team Manager,
 Legal Services

Quoracy:

Chair - Head of Service (or delegate)
 Children's Social Care Service Managers
 Legal Services

Requirements for the Case to be heard:

CDM MOSAIC Step fully completed
 Updated Chronology
 Updated Genogram
 Recent Key Decision Discussion Chaired by Service Manager
 Draft Letter before Proceedings (all requests for pre-proceedings)
 Pre-Proceedings Review Minutes (all requests for escalation into Care Proceedings)
 Proposed Plan/Trajectory



Positivity



Trust and respect



Flexibility



Openness and transparency

Frequency:

Weekly

Meeting Type:

Remote (MS Teams/Skype)

Governance

Annual reporting to SMT by the chair of the panel.

Our Priorities:

To ensure proportionate and timely interventions are taken in relation to children and their families to ensure that they are safe.

To ensure clear planning for children and young people and that services are identified to meet desired outcomes.

To ensure that children where possible are maintained within their own family and where not possible that suitable permanence arrangements are secured.

Purpose:

The key function of the Children's Decision-Making Panel is one of proportionate and considered decision making and proactive care planning.

CDM acts as Leicestershire County Council's primary gateway to the Public Law Outline.

CDM enables practitioners to seek considered legal advice in a planned way.

CDM to provide additional oversight in respect to complex matters

Decision- Making Remit:

Panel can agree –

Public Law Outline (Pre-Proceedings/Review of Pre-Proceedings/Initiating Care Proceedings)

Other Legal Interventions/matters for consideration (eg private law/legal funding)



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Status of Section 20 arrangements (entry into care, timescales and proportionality);
Status of case (Child in Need, Child Protection, Child(ren) in Care) and the allocation of specialist resources.

Should insufficient information be provided to the Panel to make a decision, recommendations and advice will be provided to the team.

Our Focus:

To ensure that children are, wherever possible best brought up within their own families or returned to their families as soon as possible;

Where this is not possible - timely, robust searches and commissioning for permanent and secure alternatives to be found as soon as possible.

Target Group:

Children, young people and their families for whom core services, safety planning and/or specific Social Care Interventions have not had the desired impact to secure the child or young person's wellbeing within their home or community.

Terms of Reference:

Chaired by the Head of Service for Fieldwork (or delegate)

Legal services are to be in attendance for all decisions requiring Legal Advice having already received all relevant papers.

Social Worker/Team Manager/Service Manager will present the case to panel

Panel will work to the principle of 'family resolution' which may include supporting children/young people under Section 17 Child in Need and/or through ensuring that families have the resources to seek orders without the need for care proceedings where that is appropriate.

Consideration as to the range of assessments that may be required to ensure interventions are fair and proportionate. This can include the commissioning of specialist assessments where deemed necessary, e.g. psychological assessments, specialist risk assessments, parenting assessments, drug and alcohol testing, viability assessments, domestic abuse assessments; sibling assessments etc.



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Significant changes to plans agreed at CDM are required to be returned to CDM where appropriate. If this would cause unnecessary delay, decisions outside of panel can be made by Head of Service.

Panel Role:

It is not Panel's role to quality assure work presented but it will offer:

Professional curiosity and respectful challenge to promote quality assessments and intervention to enable timely and appropriate case decision.

Oversight of assessment and planning (quality and timeliness).

Insight and consideration of forms of support that could be offered by internal and external partners/teams/services.

Panel will consider the duration of CP Plans and repeat CP Plan; re-referral rate and repeat concerns will be taken into consideration in all cases.

Panel will provide written notes of the discussion and decisions made within 7 days.

Minutes will be distributed specifically to SM's Fostering and Adoption for early identification of specialist resources.

What Success will look like?

Evidence of consistency, improved quality assessments and effective, transparent care planning.

Right decisions leading to the right services for children and families at the right time

Right assessments commissioned at the right time

Where possible, when it is safe to do so children are supported to live with their families.

There will be clear evidence of work to support children on the edge of care to remain within their families and improve their outcomes.

When it is not safe for children to remain within their families timely decisions are made that lead to permanence for them so improving the child's outcomes

Increased number of children and young people remaining in the care of their families or with connected persons.



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Early identification and planning where children living with families is not best for them

Reduction of drift, delay and repeat plans and referrals.

Transparent decisions and oversight

Head of Service oversight for children or young people entering care.