

Change in Placement and Allowance Approval Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The aim to simplify all current processes to promote consistency of practice, decision making and value for money across Dorset Council.

This group will make decisions following carers requesting assessments for financial support linked to adoption, special guardianship, and child arrangements orders. The group will also have a key function to approve placement moves ensuring that children do not drift in inappropriate placements and that there is no move unless it is the right move.

Principles in Decision Making

The group will consider information provided and the following principles will underpin its decisions:

- Decisions are based on identified needs and best interests of the child
- Ensuring the child is safe, that decisions promote and safeguard their welfare and are timely, relevant to their age and development
- Clear focus on supporting families to stay together wherever it is safe to do so
- Robust and effective decision-making ensuring children have the best opportunity of experiencing permanency
- Giving due consideration to the child or young person wishes and feeling with due regard to his/her age and understanding.
- Giving due consideration to the child or young person's race, religion/belief, gender, culture and linguistic backgrounds, disability, and sexual orientation.
- Determining whether parents/carers' wishes, and feelings have been ascertained and that they are willing or actively engaged in using treatment or support resources offered to resolve identified concerns/issues
- Clarity of planning which includes specifying actions to be taken by all parties concerned to avoid the need for a change in placement unless it is a move towards permanence
- Effective use of all resources in the child's network, both professional and family based
- Targeting resources where they can most effectively assist families, and enable children and young people to remain within families or with carers in their local communities
- Promote early permanence and good outcomes for the child or young person

Frequency

The **Change in Placement and Allowance Approval Group** will meet weekly for an hour. 10 minutes will be allocated for each case. If a request is identified as particularly complex, a double slot may be allocated. This will be identified by the social worker at the time the request is made

Membership

Member	Roles and responsibilities
Chair – Head of Service Children in Care	To chair meetings and facilitate participation in discussion, constructive challenge and decision making Agree the recommendations and action plan proposed by the meeting
Business administrator	Put in place an effective booking system Receive and collate requests, and plan agenda Minute meeting and record decisions Add paperwork to Teams 2 days prior to the meeting Complete action log Input decisions on child's record in Mosaic
Locality Service Manager (rotation)	Contribute to discussion and use expertise to find creative solutions to meeting needs
Finance	Advise on financial compliance and add scrutiny to decision making process
Brokerage	Maintain up to date placement records Maintain and update records for payments and add scrutiny to decision making process Ensure contracts are up to date for independent placements
Fostering Service Manager	Fostering Advice including - placements which are available in-house Advise on other options which are available Take back needs information to inform ongoing fostering recruitment strategy
Adoption Service Manager	Adoption advice
Presenting worker and Team Manager	The Change in Placement and Allowance Approval Group Request will be approved and signed off by the Team Manager. The Team Manager must ensure: The request is fit for purpose, and meets the group's remit A clear summary and what's being asked to agree Any decision regarding potential carers allowance (CAO, Adoption or Special Guardianship) is in line with Dorset Council policy and legislation (see Adoption, Special Guardianship and Residence Order Allowances policy).

Process for requesting a Placement Move

Prior to requesting a placement move, the following must have been considered:

- Request to The Harbour to support with placement stability
- Completion of a stability meeting
- Has provider served notice to the Brokerage Team on current placement?

Social worker discusses the identified need with team manager in supervision.

Social worker completes an electronic request form for **Change in Placement and Allowance Approval Group** identifying nature of request and submits to the Group Administrator. If provider has served notice to the Brokerage Team on current placement, date of notice being given, and length of notice is to be recorded

Minutes of most recent Stability Meeting to be attached.

The Request Form should be with the Group administrator 3 working days before the Group date unless this is an emergency request.

Social workers will be expected to attend and inform the discussion.

Process for requesting a change in support level in independent placements following notice being given by Provider

Provider contacts the Brokerage team, who provide them with “request support variation form”. Once complete brokerage team forward to Social Worker who discusses the identified need with team manager in supervision.

Social worker completes an electronic request form for **Change in Placement and Allowance Approval Group** identifying nature of request and submits to the Group Administrator. Date of notice being given, and length of notice is to be recorded

The Request Form should be with the Group administrator 3 working days before the Group date unless this is an emergency request.

Social workers will be expected to attend and inform the discussion.

Brokerage team to notify provider of decision. If approved brokerage team to amend the Individual Placement Agreement (contract) and amend the purchase order to reflect the change in fee, for length of agreement only.

Process for Requesting Assessment for Financial Support linked to Special Guardianship Orders, Adoption Orders and Child Arrangements Orders

1. Social worker discusses the identified need with team manager in supervision (and considers the criteria identified in the Adoption Order, Special Guardianship Order and Child Arrangements Order allowances policy. *The possibility of the assessment should not be discussed with the carer before agreement from manager.*
2. Social worker requests that the carers complete a “financial assessment request form”.

3. Social worker completes an electronic request form identifying nature of request (attaching the carers completed financial assessment request form) which will be automatically emailed to team manager and service manager for agreement and to the Group Administrator.
4. The Request Form should be with the Group Administrator 3 working days before the date unless this is an emergency request.
5. Social workers and their managers will not be expected to attend the Group unless there are particular complexities that require discussion. These will be identified by the social worker at the time the request is made. This will allow the Group Administrator to allocate time for the social worker to attend.
6. It is not appropriate for parents, children, or young people to attend, although the social worker has a clear responsibility to reflect their views, wishes and feelings.
7. In the event that a request for assessment for financial support for an order is **NOT agreed**, the Group administrator will draft a letter to the carers signed by the Chair with the reasons for not agreeing to assess. An agreement should be made by the group as to the most appropriate way to inform the carers of this decision (e.g. letter sent out from Group or given to social worker to hand deliver.) The Group administrator should input the decision on to the child's electronic file.
8. In the event that a request for assessment for financial support for an order **is agreed**, the Group administrator should input the decision on to the child's electronic file and Care payments informed with an Updated CC2083 form via email including a signed SGO support plan.

For agreed ongoing and regular allowances – Following agreement by Change in Placement and Allowance Approval Group, if change in placement is with an independent placement, Brokerage can set up payments on payment system and amend the purchase order on Mosaic. If this is a placement move in house foster carer

For agreed ongoing regular lump sum payments linked to allowances (i.e. monthly transport costs for contact for families) – Following agreement by Change in Placement and Allowance Approval Group foster carer payments team will be notified of the payments from the panel minutes to progress.

For agreed ad hoc payments linked to allowances (i.e. transport costs for irregular contact) – carers will be requested to contact the child's allocated social worker to inform of any upcoming planned expenditure of which they will need to be refunded. Receipts/evidence of expenditure will be requested. This remains an operation led decision and held within the locality operation budget.

Decision

In most cases, the decision will be made on the day, and recorded by the Group administrator on the child's record by uploading the Change in Placement and Allowance Approval Decision Record. Actions will also be recorded in the action log by the Group Administrator.