**Locality Panels (Locap) Terms of Reference**

1. **Introduction**
   1. The Locality Panel (‘the Panel’) is a multi-agency panel designed to act as a single point of service allocation to children, young people and families where additional needs at level 2 and 3 of the Child’s Journey Threshold Criteria (‘The Child’s Journey’) have been identified and established joint working processes via the professional support system and CAF are not sufficient to improve outcomes, but where there are no immediate safeguarding concerns.
   2. The functions of the Panel contribute to the implementation of Government Legislation and policy (including the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015) within Warwickshire through effective working together practices.
   3. There will be 5 panels who will each meet every 6 weeks. The panels are:

* North Warwickshire (Borough Wide)
* Nuneaton and Bedworth (Borough Wide)
* Rugby (Borough Wide)
* Warwick (District Wide)
* Stratford (District Wide)

1. **Functions**
   1. **Overall Aim:**

**2.1.1** For key agencies to work together to determine from the assessed need what service/s would be most appropriate to support each presented family to meet their desired outcomes and co-ordinate the timely referral and allocation of the required service/s. This will be in relation to cases where normal service delivery has failed to make the intended impact and/or where risks are perceived to be escalating and can no longer be managed through CAF/multi agency professional’s network.

* 1. **Key Objectives:**

1. To ensure that information regarding children with needs at Level 3 of The Child’s Journey is co-ordinated and appropriately shared to identify need and vulnerability, reduce risk factors and proved an appropriate service response at the earliest possible stage.
2. To ensure that all known risks related to the impact of parental mental ill-health, parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and disguised compliance are identified and inform the decision making and allocation of support.
3. To ensure that any specific needs related to the child/family’s ethnicity, culture, religion, language, disability, sexual orientation, gender, age and/or life experience are identified and inform the decision making and allocation of support.
4. To facilitate, systematic multi-agency collaboration that ensures a range of professional perspectives are integrated into the understanding of need and service response.
5. To facilitate the identification of families that meet the criteria under the Troubled Families Programme (known in Warwickshire as the Priority Families Programme) and ensure appropriate allocation of services to support these families and that suitable recording systems are in place to ensure Payment by Results.
6. To provide a co-ordinated and efficient system to allocate services to children and families that makes best use of resources without compromising the child’s welfare.
7. To ensure an efficient use of resources, avoid duplication and improve access to a wide range of support.
8. To ensure that service allocation and intervention includes clearly defined desired outcomes and professional accountability.
9. To problem solve where resources are not readily available and creative alternative solutions have to be identified and work to remove barriers where they have been identified.
10. To ensure that allocation leads to clear professional responsibility and accountability through the Lead Professional model.
11. To identify emerging trends in presenting needs, including but not limited to:
    1. Target groups within the local population
    2. Gaps in service provision and community infrastructure
    3. Training needs of professionals
12. To improve communication between professionals through an improved understanding of agency/service roles and thresholds.
13. To monitor referrals to Tier 3 of the continuum of need and response and outcomes to maximise PBR opportunities.
14. Signpost to the stepped approach at Tier 2 as necessary.
15. To ensure that the child, young person and family are encouraged to engage in taking up services that will meet their needs, through the assessment and decision making process, upholding the principles of informed voluntary consent.
16. To monitor referrals and the effectiveness of programmes to assist commissioners in developing strategic needs assessment and commissioning intelligence.
17. To provide feedback to strategic leads about the effectiveness of the continuum of need services and the packages developed.
18. To ensure that Early Help is seen to be instrumental and integral in the safeguarding agenda to ensure the prevention of escalation of needs.
19. **Access to panels**
    1. Access to the panel will be through the completion of a Locality Panel referral form in all cases:
    2. **Objective for the panels**

**Route 1:** Request for case to be heard at panel from a Lead Agency where they have assessed that an open Early Help case (CAF) is not progressing towards the desired outcomes and there is concerns that it will escalate to require statutory intervention. **Objective: panel to offer support and solutions to prevent escalation where necessary**

**Route 2 (Step Down):** From Children’s Social Care where statutory intervention has ended (does not meet threshold); it has been assessed that the child/family still requires further support and this has not been successfully achieved through the step down procedure.

**Objective: Panel to facilitate allocation to a Lead agency**

**Route 3:** Referral via MASH where Social Care thresholds have not been met, and where it has been identified that a case may be complex, concerning and in need of support. However, there are no arrangements in place to facilitate a single or multi-agency response.

**Objective: panel to decide which agency is most appropriate to respond and offer support**

* 1. The Panel will only discuss cases where the parent/ carer (and /or young person where appropriate) have agreed to support at tier 3 and have given consent for information to be shared with agencies to secure support. In the event that a referral is received without consent, the business support officer will send the referral back to the referrer to gain consent.
  2. The Panel will be held six weekly, but with provision for more frequent meetings where there is consensus that this is desirable in light of volume and complexity.
  3. Where an appropriate decision cannot be made on a referred case, Panel member/s will be charged with undertaking an appropriate action/s that allows for a decision to be made at the following Panel meeting and the case will be put back on the agenda for that meeting.
  4. Copies of the referral and summary of need will be provided to the allocating service at the Panel where they do not have access to Mosaic (the Children’s Service case management system) and there is clear consent for information to be shared.
  5. Where the allocating agency does have Mosaic access, the referral will be referred on electronically.
  6. After the Panel the business support officer is responsible for recording the decision to Mosaic and to notify the referrers (as outlined in section 6 below).

1. **Membership**
   1. The membership of the Panel is made up of the range of agencies that provide services to children and families.
   2. The members of the meeting are required to be of a level of seniority (capacity permitting) in their own agencies to allow them to make decisions and accept allocations of work on behalf of their agency in the Panel meeting.
   3. The minimum number of members required to agree a decision is 3 services plus the chair but excluding the Business Support Officer.
   4. In order to ensure the effective operation of the Panels, it is envisaged that representatives of the following services / agencies will be required as core members:

* Borough / District Council (to cover Housing, Anti-Social Behaviour and Environmental Health/Housing Benefits)
* Social Housing Providers
* Early Help Officers (previously known as CAF Officers)
* Early Intervention / Vulnerable Learners
* Targeted Support for Young People
* Youth Justice Service (YJS)
* Area Behaviour Partnership
* Warwickshire Police
* Children Social Care
* Prospects
* Family and Parenting Support
* Warwickshire Probation and the Community Rehabilitation Company
* Universal Public Health Services (with an initial focus on Health Visitors and School Nurses)
* Health (GP, CAMHS etc)

The following may be invited on a case by case basis or according to local need and discretion:

* Local Schools
* Local 3rd sector / community organisations
* Representatives of local Children Centres
  1. Membership can change as the needs of the service are identified. Additional members will be agreed by all members and a formal invitation will be made via the Chair.

1. **Governance arrangements**
   1. The Panel will be chaired by Operational Managers from the Early Help Service and Vice-Chaired by the local CAF Officers.
   2. Administration will be provided by the designated and agreed Business Support Officers
2. **Managing Professional Differences**

Any issues or concerns that are identified through the locality panel should be party to a mechanism to escalate and address them.

Issues such as:

* Agencies refusing to take on cases
* Contested thresholds that could not be resolved.
* Trends patterns and themes coming through case discussion
* Suggestions for reducing inefficiencies
  1. Where there is a difference of opinion as to the most appropriate service to be allocated, the Chair will offer the opportunity to the involved agency representatives to present their views to the Panel, following which a vote will take place involving all attending Panel members and the majority vote will be actioned.
  2. If agreement cannot be achieved (including in the event of a tied vote) the Chair will
     1. A) Have the authority to nominate the relevant service to take a case
     2. Request a formal meeting with the involved parties and their line manager/s so that the issue can be explored within the context of senior management and the most appropriate threshold.
  3. In the event that this does not resolve the situation, the case will be escalated the Priority Families Service Manager.

1. **Accountability**
   1. Each attending agency has its own executive body and reporting lines of accountability.
2. **Service User involvement**
   1. Service users will not be present within the Panel. The views of children, young people and families on the efficiency of the system will be sought through the wider quality assurance processes within the home agency or WCC policy.
3. **Information Sharing**
   1. The sharing of information about individuals and families will be conducted in line with the principles and purposes of the Warwickshire Priority Families & MASH Information Sharing agreement.
   2. Consent will be sought from families to have their information discussed at panel. If consent is refused the case will not be heard.
4. **Review** 
   1. The operation, membership and terms of reference will be reviewed in March 2018, and thereafter annually by the Chairs of Panels via consultation with Panel members and wider stakeholders.
5. **Process management : The Business Support Officers Responsibilities**
   1. **Locality Panel planning**
6. Ensure meetings are booked and venues secured.
7. Ensure that refreshments are available
8. All panel members are invited.
9. Annual programme to be issued
10. Book in all pre meetings with chairs and vice chairs
    1. **Prior to the Locality Panel**
11. A cut-off point of 10 working days (5pm) prior to the Locality Panel will be imposed to receive referrals. Any referrals received after this time will not be considered.
12. Any referrals that are incomplete will be returned to the referrer for completion by the referrer.
13. To review all referrals to ensure that consent has been provided by the parent/carer (and/or young person where appropriate).
14. Add the referral to the district Spreadsheet completing all relevant fields and
15. Save referral electronically in the relevant locality folder *(H:\FPSTeam\Locality Panels)*
16. Attend Locality Panel Management pre meet: this meeting will include the Chair, the Vice chair and the Business Admin.
17. Any decisions made by the chair in relation to cases being considered at panel (or not) will be recorded by Business Support on the district spreadsheet (for example, signposting to stepped approach rather than heard at panel.)
18. Where the Chair identifies that there is points for clarification required, business support will make contact with the referrer and request the additional information (this should be by exception)
19. Business support will notify the referrer on the decision for the case to be considered at panel or not (Template)
20. Agenda needs to be agreed between Chair, Vice Chair and Business Support.
21. Business Support will send the panel members an email with the panel agenda and embedded with all the relevant information to be password protected.
    1. **At Locality Panel**
22. Meet and greet and coordinate refreshments.
23. Manage the signing is sheet for all attendees.
24. Take action and decision based minutes
25. Record learning log as requested by chair
26. Ensure room is left in the condition it was found
    1. **After Locality Panel**

Meeting minutes:

1. Will type up the draft minutes within 2 working days
2. Send it to the chair who will check and approve within 2 working days
3. Once approved the minutes will be distributed to the locality panel members within 5 working days of the meeting.

The referrer to the panel will be notified within 5 working days of the panel’s decision.

1. If the situation warrants a referral to the MASH as a safeguarding concern was identified the vice chair is nominated to contact the referrer within 2 hours of the meeting. They will then notify the Business support officer of the actions completion to be added to the minutes and log.
2. If the situation is not safeguarding, the Business Support officer will record the outcome on the decision box on the referral form , to be signed off by the chair or vice chair and sent back to the referrer within 3 days (encrypted)

If the case to be discussed has a profile on MOSAIC, business support will copy and paste the panel decision as a case note.

1. **The Chairs Responsibility**
   1. **In pre meet**
2. To review all referrals before the meeting to ensure they contain the necessary information to enable effective decision making by the Panel.
3. To ensure the agenda is correct and includes all necessary referrals before the agenda is sent to Panel members.
   1. **At the meeting**
4. To present each new referral at the meeting and facilitate constructive discussion and agreement on the Lead Agency to be allocated to a case.
5. To facilitate sharing of information and ensure this is appropriate and in accordance the rights of both the children and parents.
6. To instruct the vice chair to discuss the panel’s decision that a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is required where it is the view of the Panel that the identified needs in the case meet threshold for statutory intervention.
7. To ensure that it is clear what actions have come from the meeting, including when an agency needs to report progress to the Panel and who is responsible for the delivery of each action.
8. To monitor and follow up on any incomplete actions from the meeting.
9. To sign off the panel decision notification to referrer within 3 working days.
10. To ensure that all administration and documentation is maintained accurately and securely within agreed timescales.
    * To facilitate the progress monitoring of all cases that go through the Panel in accordance with the C&F Outcomes Framework (under development)
    * Monitor service attendance at the meeting and log issues on the learning log where concerns arise.
    * All agencies are clear what the expected timescales for intervention are
    * The allocated Lead Agency is clear when they have to report progress back to the Early Help Panel.
11. In the event of an absence of the regular Chair to ensure that the Vice-Chair has been notified.
12. Responsible for recognising and reporting concerns of the functioning of the panel and request Admin record on the learning log.
13. Attend a quarterly locality chairs steering group to review functioning of locality panels with a view to future development - raise and discuss local learning logs
14. **The Chairs Responsibility**
    1. **In Pre-Meet**
15. To attend the pre-meeting one week before Panel Meeting.
16. To review all referrals before the meeting to ensure they contain the necessary information to enable effective decision making by the Panel.
    1. **At the Meeting**
17. To facilitate the sharing of information and ensure that this is appropriate and in accordance with the rights of both the children and parents.
18. In the absence of the regular chair to perform the duties of the chair.
19. Attend a quarterly locality chairs steering group to review functioning of the locality panels with a view to future development and to raise and discuss learning logs.
    1. **After the Meeting**
20. To meet with Business Support immediately following the Panel to:

* Complete the Plan details section on the booking sheet
* Sign off panel decision notification to referrer.
* To make a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) where it is the view of the Panel that the identified needs in the case meet threshold for statutory intervention within 3 working days.

1. **Data Analyst**
2. Analyse learning logs for themes, trends and patterns.
3. To produce quarterly performance reports for the specified meetings such as:
   1. Service Manager reports
   2. Locality chairs steering group.
   3. Any other issues that may from time to time arise
4. **Service Manager Responsibility**
5. Analyse quarterly reports and learning logs.
6. Chair the Locality chairs steering group.
7. Managing professional differences.
8. Take concerns from the loc and seek resolution.
9. Where resolution is not found, report to BW to be reported to WSCB.
10. **Members Responsibilities**
11. To read all referrals in advance of the Panel.
12. To proactively share relevant information with the Panel to assist decision making.
13. To contribute to the Panel by providing advice and wider service information to assist appropriate allocation.
14. To undertake actions given to them by the chair and feed back to the Panel within agreed timescales.
15. To accept appropriate referrals into their service and in doing so undertake for their service to be the Lead Agency.
16. When a referral is accepted by their agency, undertake to ensure that the necessary resourcing is put in place to enable the required intervention.
17. Where the Lead Agency have assessed that an open Early Help case is not progressing towards the desired outcomes and there is concern that it is escalating to require statutory intervention, members will provide support and the necessary interventions to prevent escalation to children’s social care where appropriate.
18. To provide updates on cases as requested by the chair.
19. To give apologies for non-attendance at the Panel in good time and send a representative where possible
20. To contribute to reporting where required in order to enable accurate and effective reports to be provided to appropriate Boards and Partnerships.