



# Cumbria Early Help and Family Support Panels

## Terms of Reference

The Early Help and Family Support Panel will be a multi-agency group which will work to help implement the CSCP's Early Help Strategy. The panel in each district will be accountable to the CSCP, via its Early Help sub group for the delivery of the functions listed below.

### (1) Frequency

The frequency of panel meetings will be as agreed and publicised in each area - fortnightly or monthly with neighbouring panels receiving referrals if necessary.

### (2) Functions

The functions of the panels will be as follows:

- To receive referrals for multi-agency support at an Early Help level where the Early Help Assessment (EHA) or Team Around the Child/Family (TAC/TAF) cannot be established, or, is not functioning effectively.
- To identify an appropriate organisation to coordinate the Team around the Family (TAF) if this has not otherwise been possible or is disputed.
- To allocate additional services to support a family and to strengthen the response to the identified needs.

### (3) Requests for consideration by the Panel

Individuals and families can only be considered by the panel when their consent has been given for this to happen, and recorded on the Early Help and Family Support panel referral form. Young People can consent to be considered if they are believed to be able to make this decision.

Families to be discussed at the panel will be considered in the first instance by relevant Early Help Officer. If, having discussed this with the Early Help Officer, it is agreed that the family circumstances meet the threshold for consideration by panel; the referring individual will lodge this with the Panel Administrator via the Early Help Panel Mailbox.

The referral should be made using the Early Help and Family Support panel referral form giving as much detail as possible to aid discussion. Parents and where appropriate, Young People must receive the information leaflet relating to referral to the panel.

### (4) Preparation for Panel meetings

At least 4 working days before each panel, all members will be sent details of the individuals being discussed at the panel. This will enable organisations to prepare in advance to allow for a holistic multi agency discussion of each case.

### (5) Membership

Members of the panel will include representatives of agencies providing support, advice and intervention with children, young people and families in the district. This will include both statutory and non-statutory organisations.

As the focus of the Panel is on Early Help services, membership will generally be from agencies providing support at this level. However, as co-ordination of approaches is vital, more intense services (including statutory) whose work directly links or who are making referrals should also attend.

All representatives on the panel must have the authority to allocate resources/staff time from their organisation in order to enable children, young people and families to have access to appropriate support. Each panel should have a manager from the local Support and Protect Team present to aid discussion regarding transition to CIN or CP.

### Outcomes from Panel

The key purpose of the Early Help and Family Support Panel is as described above and the outcomes to be achieved include:

- Identification of additional services to support an established Early Help assessment where progress has slowed or stopped and where other services may be able to provide additional support.
- To identify a Team Around the family (TAF) where a family are Stepping Down from a Statutory Assessment.
- Identification of a Coordinator where this has not been possible.

- Where a Coordinator and TAF are struggling to coordinate the level of intervention or level of risk, where it does not meet the Threshold for Statutory Assessment and where there are Young people in the family aged of 11 or over Targeted Youth Support can take on coordination role. This should follow discussion at the EHFSP.
- If following discussion the collective response is that the level of need meets the Threshold for Statutory Assessment this can Step Up from panel. If there is no Children's Services Manager present this outcome should be shared with them by the EHO or the Panel Chair after the panel has met - but on the same day and seek their opinion. The Panel Business Support will send the referral form, any accompanying paperwork and minutes of the discussion that led to the decision to Step Up, to the Early Help Mailbox clearly indicating that it is for inputting to ICS. This will enable the District Team to action the referral.

### **(6) Role of Panel Sponsor**

Each Panel has an CSCP member as a sponsor. The role of the Sponsor will be to:

- Attend panels at least 3 times a year to observe the panel's operation.
- To promote support for the panels and act as a conduit to the CSCP in respect of positive feedback on its impact.
- To provide challenge to organisations who are not supporting the panel effectively.

### **(7) Confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be maintained between panel members in the discussion of individuals and the sharing of information. A confidentiality statement appears on each panel signing in form. Any breach of this should be reported to the panel Chair. Similarly if anyone is aware of a conflict of interest that they know a family who has been referred on a personal basis - or as a colleague they should make the Chair aware of this and may stand down from that discussion.

### **(8) Recording**

Proceedings at the panels will be recorded by a suitable administrator to be agreed by chair of the CSCP Early Help subgroup. All records will be subject to data protection and data sharing protocols. The recording from each panel will be maintained on the agreed format. Following each panel, actions from the meeting will be circulated to all members highlighting points of discussion and actions resulting.

### **(9) Monitoring and Impact**

The data collected at each panel will routinely be collated and analysed. Summary information and analysis will be provided to the CSCP's Early Help group in order to aid the development of the panels and of the County's Early Help offer.

### **(10) Dispute resolution**

The panels are reliant on a trusting and problem solving ethos. It is envisaged that collective agreement can be reached on the significant majority of cases discussed. However on the rare occasions where this cannot be achieved, the referrer can choose to pursue a solution via the Conflict Resolution Procedure.

### **(11) Review**

These terms of reference will be reviewed annually - June 2020.