

Children with Disabilities Service Operational Guidance for Allocation and Resource Panel.

Children with Disability (CWD) service assess children in need who meet the criteria for the CWD service within the Understanding Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) Framework. All assessments must be consistent with statutory obligations to assess need and provide services based on assessed need.

Children will be assessed under one of the following Pathways:

- Child Protection
- Children in need
- Looked After Children

Eligibility for any service will be determined following the assessment of need. This Operational Guidance should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- UNOCINI Thresholds of Need Model
- Children With Disabilities Regional Criteria
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (CO)
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1978 (CSDP)

The Resource Panel has the following functions:

1. Consider all assessments of need presented to ensure that they are comprehensive and clearly articulate the assessed needs of the child and family and that a Carer Assessment has been offered
2. To meet on a fortnightly basis to scrutinise assessments and service requests
3. To ensure that all assessments are comprehensive, consistent and of good quality
4. To ensure that statutory obligations under the Children Order and Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act are met in respect of the assessments
5. The Panel will provide assurance to the Co-Director that all assessments are carefully considered and that the provision of resources is commensurate with assessed need

6. The Panel will record all assessed need and provision and will record, report on and manage unmet need, including waiting lists for existing services
7. Allocate short break places in various residential settings and will ensure the suitability of children for the service requested and that their needs are in line with the relevant Statement of Purpose for the various services
8. The Panel will ensure that it records trends and pressures for statistical and planning purposes

Constitution of the Panel

A Senior Manager of Band 8A or above must Chair the Panel so that resources can be immediately agreed if there is evidence that not to do so would cause harm to a child or young person. The Panel requires at least four members to be quorate. Where possible the Panel should have more a representative from disciplines other than social work given the multidisciplinary nature of the CWD service.

In cases of urgent need, requests should be forwarded to the Head of Service/Children's Service Manager who can make an immediate decision based on the assessment presented to them in order to avoid any delay or distress. Such decisions will be recorded at the following Panel as approved.

The Head of Service will advise the Co Director on the functions and decision making of the Panel to the Co-Director on a regular basis.

The Head of Service will review a sample of case decisions on a quarterly basis to scrutinise the appropriateness of assessments and decision making .

The Head of Service will ensure that the Co-Director for Early Intervention and Safeguarding is appraised of service pressures and levels of unmet need, including action taken to prioritise resources and address any gaps in service. This information will also inform strategic planning within the Trust and the Region.

Pauline McDonald

Head of Service

Children with Disabilities

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