Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Social Care Resource Allocation System (RAS)

Quality Assurance Panel

Draft Terms of Reference for Consultation (April 2015)

Overview

The SEND Social Care Team Quality Assurance Panel (QAP) is responsible for the authorisation of Social Care direct payments for children and young people with SEND. The case should be presented to panel following the assessment of need and the Resource Allocation System (RAS) calculation.

It is important to note that discussion will take place at panel to explore the best value method of meeting the assessed need therefore the indicative planning amount for support planning will then be agreed so support-planning should not be commenced prior to Panel agreement.

During the QAP session, the eligibility criteria will be robustly applied. Various options will be explored which can best meet the service user’s assessed needs. The panel will take into account the RAS allocation, cost of traditional services, and make any moderations necessary. Following this QAP process, the agreed set of options should then be explored with the service user. Once they have decided which option they prefer, the support plan should then be designed to reflect how the assessed needs are to be met.

As well as having a Quality Assurance function, the panel will explore best value options. The panel will hold an overview of budget commitments / forecasts and community resources available and will take these into account whilst considering the best value way of meeting assessed needs. Opportunities for budget efficiencies are an essential function towards ensuring best use of resources for meeting the needs of the vulnerable of people within Warwickshire.

The panel will also consider justification of support plans where the RAS is being moderated. The panel is the final checking stage to ensure quality of practice, a person centred approach and best value principles have been consistently applied.

The Aim of the Quality Assurance Panel

The aim of the Panel is to:

* Approve personal budget and support services that are provided to service users across the county, ensure quality of practice, consistency and provide equity in decision making.
* Quality assurance panel will check assessments and review support plans to ensure that they are person centred and outcome focused and of a high standard of recording and practice. In the event that the panel identifies practice concerns or learning & development needs these will be reported to the relevant line-manager, alongside recommendations for corrective action.
* Ensure that independence has been fully optimised with a focus on Health and Well-being and leisure and social relationships.

Panel Process

The SEND Social Care Quality Assurance Panel will meet monthly and it is expected that the Practitioner will submit the required forms ten working days before panel. In exceptional circumstances where the assessment suggests an exceptionally large package (defined as more than 40/hrs month support requested) the practitioner will be expected to attend panel.

Stages of the Assessment & Support Plan Endorsement and Authorisation Process

Stage 1.

* Completion of the Assessment
* Completion of any other relevant assessments or process e.g. Continuing Health Care.

Stage 2.

* RAS - Personal Budget calculated

Stage 3.

* Completion of the Panel Presentation / Submission Form (Appendix 1)

Stage 4.

* Panel decision form sent to Practitioner – Support Plan co-produced based on various options agreed at panel. Practice Lead to sign off the support plan based on the original Personal Budget / costing as agreed by panel.
* Practitioner to update customer case records and inform Service User and/or parent carer of panel decision.

Stage 5

All support packages will be reviewed at the 6 monthly Child in Need (CIN), where a change of package is indicated (either up or down) the decision will require ratification at the QAP. Each support package will require resubmitting to QAP 12 calendar months from the initial decision and 12 monthly thereafter.

Panel Membership

The panel will be chaired by the SEND Social Care Operations Manager (in their absence the Service Manager will deputise)

The panel will also comprise of:

* 2 Parent representatives
* Practice Leads for North and South SEND Social Care Teams and the Countywide Family Support Work Team
* Admin support
* Other – as appropriate

Meetings will be held monthly and will alternate between the North and South SEND Social Care offices.

Out of Panel Process for Urgent Case Decisions

Cases that require an urgent decision out of panel should be presented to the Operations Manager initially and then forwarded to the next QAP for consideration of endorsement.