

## **Appendix 2: Report following Review of Gateway Panel**

### **Introduction**

Calderdale Children Safeguarding Board recommended a review of Gateway Panel following a thematic review following the deaths of two young people

A sub group was set up to look at this, however following the appointment of Lisa Handley, Service Manager for Locality teams within Children's Social Care it was agreed that Lisa would lead the review. Lisa has consulted with the sub group and taken on board the work undertaken to date to inform this report.

### **Gateway Panel Historically**

Historically (and at the time of the young people's deaths) there was some confusion regarding what the role of Gateway Panel, - whether it was about 'Gateway to Care', accessing legal advice or about provision of service (or a combination of all 3). This confusion has historically not been assisted by there being conflicting literature available within the councils procedures about Gateway panels role.

The paperwork to apply to Gateway was and continues to be basic, with workers being asked to detail what they are requesting and provide a case summary. This does not lead to analysis of risk or promote the worker providing a structured concise summary of the case and why the child needs to be Looked After.

The decision record completed by the chair of Gateway was and continues to be basic, with the chair being required to tick options regarding the decisions made. There was and continues to be no record of who is present, the discussion that has taken place and the rationale regarding the decision that is then made. In respect of young people whose cases have been heard at Gateway panel, whilst basic information is available to analyse, this is limited.

### **Gateway Panel Currently**

Gateway Panel has evolved in recent months and the procedure for Gateway has been rewritten. Gateway Panel is clearly about the 'Gateway to Care'. It is an internal Children Services Panel that makes decision about whether children should become Looked After. Whilst a legal representative is present at all Gateway panels it is not necessary for social workers to apply to Gateway to access legal advice. If a decision is made that a child does not need to be looked after the panel can make a decision that PLO is appropriate (Public Law Outline).

In respect of resource provision Gateway can make recommendations about resources and decisions on children's services resources, however it is not necessary to apply to Gateway to access these. An example would be the allocation of a Family Intervention Worker. The usual route to access a Family Intervention worker would be via the Early Intervention Panel however if Gateway decided that this was required to prevent a child becoming Looked After the a decision could be made to allocate a worker (the Service Manager from Family Service sits of Gateway so is able to commit to this resource if appropriate).

If an emergency decision is required regarding a child becoming Looked After then a Head of Service (or Service Manager out of hours) can make this decision. However the child's case would need to come to the next Gateway Panel. This is to ensure consistency of decision making regarding how children enter and remain in the care system.

The current paperwork that supports Gateway remains insufficient as detailed above.

### **Gateway Panel in the Future**

The procedure that has recently been rewritten is clear that the remit of Gateway Panel is about whether a child should be Looked After. The terms of reference have been rewritten and agreed by panel members (see Appendix 1, Gateway Panel Procedure).

However there are issues in relation to the paperwork that supports this decision making. The application to Gateway needs to be redesigned, as does the decision record. These new pro formas are in the Forms Library. The decision record will ensure that there is transparency of decision making which is not currently evidence within Gateway Panel. Social workers will have a clear record of the decision and the reasoning for this and there will be clear recording on the child's file about why decisions have been made. If another agency is not in agreement with the decision of Gateway Panel then this would be escalated via the usual management route.

Currently there is no framework in place regarding the quality of applications, presentation of the social worker etc. Feedback from Gateway (see Forms Library) details the quality assurance form that will be completed by panel in respect of each case presented.

Lisa Handley

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