

Terms of Reference

Decision Making Group



Walsall Council

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Terms of Reference: Decision-Making Group for EHCP Issuance, Setting Type, Placement Changes, and Funding

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to outline the terms of reference for the Decision-Making Group responsible for making decisions related to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), including EHCP issuance, determination of the type of setting, consideration of change requests from annual reviews, changes in placement, and changes in funding. The group is established to ensure a structured and collaborative approach to these crucial decisions in alignment with national and local SEND policies and procedures.

Objectives:

The objectives of the Decision-Making Group are as follows:

1. To review and make informed decisions regarding the issuance of EHCPs.
2. To assess and determine the appropriate type of educational setting for EHCPs, including requests for changes from annual reviews.
3. To evaluate and decide on changes in placement for children/young people with EHCPs.
4. To consider and decide on changes in funding allocations for EHCPs.
5. To ensure that all decisions are made in compliance with national and local SEND policies, procedures, and legal requirements.
6. To review and make decisions to cease EHCP's.

Membership:

The Decision-Making Group will consist of the following members:

1. SEND Service Manager (Chair)

2. EHC Team Manager (Chair in the absence of the SEND Service Manager)
3. Senior Caseworkers
4. Caseworkers
5. Educational Psychologist
6. Head of Virtual School (Children in Care only)

Meetings:

The Decision-Making Group will convene on a weekly basis, specifically on Wednesday mornings from 9:00 AM. Attendance at these meetings is mandatory for the senior caseworkers and caseworkers involved in the case. The meeting can only run when there is a manager and at least 2 other senior members of staff present. The Decision Making Group for Children in Care will run on a Monday at 2pm.

Preparation and Attendance:

1. **Decision to Issue:** For decisions regarding EHCP issuance, there is no expectation of a detailed case summary . Instead, a basic case summary sheet should be completed with essential details, and the decision to issue should be clearly written in the "Brief Case Summary" section. The assessment information should be saved in the Decision making folder.
2. **Case Summary and Supporting Evidence:** To facilitate efficient decision-making for setting type, placement changes, and funding changes, a case summary (including all relevant supporting evidence) must be uploaded to the Decision Making Team's designated area prior to 9:00 AM on the Wednesday when the meeting is scheduled. This information should be submitted by the responsible caseworker in advance of the meeting.
3. **IPA Requirement:** For decisions that include the completion of an Individual Placement Agreement (IPA), the IPA must be uploaded with the case summary before the Decision-Making Group can discuss the case.
4. **Attendance Expectation:** Senior caseworkers and caseworkers are expected to attend the meetings as scheduled. Their active participation is crucial in reaching well-informed decisions.

Decision-Making Process:

1. **Consensus Decision:** The Decision-Making Group will strive to reach a consensus on the decisions regarding EHCP issuance, setting type, placement changes, and funding changes. All members will actively contribute to discussions, and efforts will be made to achieve agreement among the group.
2. **Role of SEND Service Manager:** In cases where consensus cannot be reached within the Decision-Making Group, the final decision will be made by the SEND Service Manager. The SEND Service Manager will carefully consider all available information and input from the group before making a determination. In the absence of the SEND Service Manager this role will be taken on by the EHC Team Manager.
3. **Multi-Disciplinary Decisions:** For decisions that require a multi-disciplinary perspective or impact multiple areas of expertise, a separate multi-disciplinary panel will be convened. This panel will be chaired by the Head of Service and will include relevant professionals from various disciplines. The panel will collaborate to make informed decisions in the best interests of the child/young person with EHCPs.
4. **Children in Care:** For decisions about Children in Care the Head of the Virtual School will also be invited to the Decision Making Group.

Reporting:

The Decision-Making Group will provide regular reports to the SEND leadership team, including updates on decisions made regarding EHCP issuance, setting type, placement changes, and funding changes. These reports will include summaries of individual cases and any emerging issues or trends.

Review:

These terms of reference will be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness in guiding the Decision-Making Group's activities. Reviews will be initiated by the SEND Service Manager or as directed by the SEND leadership team.

Date of Approval: 06/09/2023

Rachael Beards

SEND Service Operational Manager

Walsall Council