

The Early Years Panel

Purpose of the Early Years Panel (EYP)

The Early Years Panel aims to combine the functions previously carried out by CDT and the Pre-school Inclusion Support Panel by improving co-ordination and planning for birth to four year olds (up to school age) with special needs or disabilities and moving towards greater integration of service delivery for children and families.

- ❑ Act as a single point of reference for those who have concerns about any child, aged 0 to 4 (up to school entry) in the city who appears to be presenting with significant
- ❑ Ensure that multi-agency assessment of a child's needs are co-ordinated and, with permission from parents/carers, share information relevant to the child's needs
- ❑ Jointly plan appropriate advice, intervention and provision in support of the child and family
- ❑ Monitor the needs and progress of children and review arrangements being made to support the child and the family
- ❑ Monitor and review the arrangements being made to support the child's transition into school in the reception year
- ❑ Maintain an overview of the needs of cohorts of children emerging across the city in order to inform strategic planning of services and provision.

Objectives of the Panel

The Panel convenes on the first Tuesday of every month each year with the exception of August.

1. Receive referrals from the Child Development Centre, Community Paediatricians, Health Visitors, Portage Visitors and any early education settings and health professionals involved with the child who is identified with significant special needs.
2. Identify specific needs of individual children by commissioning further assessments from appropriate professionals, including the Educational Psychology Team, or seek further information on the child's needs, including parental views, in order to provide advice on strategies and interventions for individual children.
3. Recommend placement at nursery settings with specialist provision based on information received from a range of professionals, in line with parental preference.
4. Where appropriate, and in line with the existing criteria, agree additional support to named children with social and emotional difficulties as determined by the KSI Primary Behaviour Support Team for transition into Reception Year.
5. Where appropriate, and in line with the existing criteria, agree additional support to nurseries for youngsters with SEND.
6. The Panel will review the progress of the children before they start school
7. Liaise with the SEND team and Inclusion Support Panel with regard to pre-school who have severe, long term or complex needs that may require and EHC needs assessment.

Please note that the Early Years Panel does not coordinate Two/Three Year Funding.

Membership of the Panel

The core members who regularly attend the monthly panel include:

- ❑ Principal Educational Psychologist and current Chair of the Panel
- ❑ Speciality doctor in community paediatrics
- ❑ Portage Team Leader
- ❑ Head Teacher of the Willows Nursery School
- ❑ Early Years Advisory Teacher
- ❑ Health Visitor Manager
- ❑ Speech and Language Therapy Service representative
- ❑ Educational Officer for Special Educational Needs

Information Sharing Protocol:

We follow the Portsmouth Information Sharing Framework, approved by the Portsmouth Children's Trust Board.

The Panel will share information and reports with Health and Educational professionals, and also with Social Care if the child is already known to Social Care. It is not the responsibility of the Panel to make referrals to Social Care.

Referrals to the Panel

Referrers must ensure that any referral is accompanied by the Ages and Stages Developmental Assessment (ASQ) carried out by Health Visitors, or that arrangements have been made with the relevant Health Visitor to complete and forward the ASQ directly to the Panel. The ASQ provides a good indication of the areas of need and helps the Panel members to decide the next steps to take. Paediatricians require this assessment to be completed before they can get involved. The Panel administrator will note when to expect an ASQ, if it does not arrive with the referral form and contact the relevant professional to find out when it is expected, and securely store the referral form until, the ASQ arrives.

The panel does not insist on receiving a SAF, but Panel members and professionals who go on to make contact with the family as a result of a decision made at Panel find it extremely helpful if a SAF has been completed and is sent in with the referral form. Parents and carers also find it helpful as it sensitises professionals to key issues for the family and the parents or carers are often relieved not to have to give the same information over again.

In terms of monitoring referrals to the panel and the outcome of referrals, in consultation with Panel representatives, the Panel has provided guidance on reasonable response times. It is anticipated that professionals will provide feedback to the Panel within 8 weeks of receiving a new referral or a request for n-dated information.

Responsibilities of professionals who make referrals to the Early Years Panel

Professionals making a referral to the Panel must ensure parents give informed consent. The leaflet for parents is available in the current format and has also been appended to the end of the referral form to make it easier to share this information with parents.

All sections of the referral form should be completed. (Please note the section above relating to the ASQ form.)

Professionals should explain to parents/carers that there are specific meeting dates and deadlines for getting information to the Panel, as this will help parents to know when they might expect to hear from the Panel.

Hand-written referral forms are sometimes difficult to read and this could lead to inaccurate information being recorded by the panel administrator. The referral form is available electronically and professionals may find it easier to complete the form electronically, wherever possible and send a typed version through a secure email account. Hand-written forms will still be accepted though.

It is informative when professionals making a referral to the Panel, or sending in an up-date to the Panel, to describe the specific outcome that they think would be helpful. (For example, "consideration of a referral to the Educational Psychology Team".) However professionals must bear in mind that the Panel is not bound to agree or action this outcome and decisions taken at Panel will be informed by the full range of information available at the time. Services to whom the Panel frequently make referrals will provide criteria for referral and a list of priorities for service delivery (see below) to help professionals know when it may be appropriate to request consideration to a specific team or agency and any particular demands on that team or agency that are impacting on service delivery.

If there is a safeguarding concern, the professional who is concerned is responsible for taking action, as set out in the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board policy. It is not the responsibility of the Panel to contact MASH or Social Care about safeguarding issues.

Responsibilities of Panel Members

Panel members will receive a copy of the agenda for the next meeting, a week in advance and will come to the meeting with relevant information to share, from their service area, about the children to be discussed.

Panel members can jointly decide which services need to be involved and the Panel will make the necessary referrals. Each Panel representative can ensure that their team or service members are aware of meeting dates and deadlines and the expectation that information should be back with the panel 8 weeks after the referral has been received. If this is not forthcoming the Panel representative must take responsibility for making enquiries with the relevant team member. The Panel cannot enforce these guidelines.

Panel members are expected to disseminate information and feedback from the Panel to their individual teams, for example, with regard to the SEND legislation and Education, Health and Care Plans, or availability of specialist provision. This is important so that professionals can provide accurate advice to parents, which prevents confusion and ultimately, frustration for families.

Communication with and from the Panel

Professionals wishing to contact the Panel can use the email address: EYSP@portsmouth.gcsx.gov.uk. This is a secure address and messages must also be sent from a secure email account. Professionals are asked not to contact the Chair of the Panel or the administrators by individual email addresses. The phone number for the Panel is 023 9284 1316. If information cannot be sent or accessed by a secure email address, information needs to be posted to the EYP panel.

Following a Panel meeting the professional who has made a referral can expect to receive a letter outlining what action is to be taken next. This will be copied to the Health Visitor. A separate letter is also sent to parent/carer. The services to whom a child is referred will also receive a letter.

The panel will respond to nursery updates received either by way of copy of action letter or send a separate letter saying will be continuing to monitor.

Referrals and correspondence will be actioned within 5 working days following the Panel.

The EYP spreadsheet will be updated regularly and sent out, securely, on a monthly basis to Panel members for information.

EYP processes

1. Referrals, reports, updates and enquiries are sent to the administrator of the Panel by professionals and Panel representatives on a continuous basis throughout each month.
2. The Chair of the Panel constructs an agenda for the up-coming panel. There is a cut-off date for each Panel, after which information received will be deferred to the next Panel.
3. The agenda is circulated to Panel members five working days in advance of the meeting in order for Panel members to prepare by checking files or seeking information from colleagues.
4. Following the Panel meeting, action notes are distributed to the Panel members.
5. Panel members then liaise with their colleagues to follow up on actions.

Annual summary report

In order to help support forward planning and commissioning within the Education Department and Health Services, the Chair of the Panel produces a brief report on an annual basis, outlining, amongst other issues, the number of youngsters referred to the Panel annually and the primary area of need.

Liz Robinson, Chair of EYP and Service Manager, Education Support and Principal Educational Psychologist
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