

Children, Young People & Learning



The Resource Allocation System (RAS): A Fair Start for Children with Disabilities

September 2024

Resource Allocation System

Document name & file location		Resource Allocation System (RAS)	
Document Author		Lou Richer	
Document owner		Children's Social Care	
Review date		This document is to be reviewed a minimum of every 3 years, the next review to occur no later than September 2027. Incremental reviews may take place as required.	
Accessibility		This document can be made available in hard and electronic formats. No copies in other languages are currently available.	
Destruction date		Details of destruction dates	
How this document was created		Version 1	Author and Team
		Version 2	Team / Line Manager
		Version 3	CSLT / DMT / CMT
		Version 4	Executive Briefing / Executive / Full Council / Portfolio Holder
		Version 5	Public document or Pre-print Design Circulation
Circulation restrictions		No exceptions	
Version		Detail of change	Name & Date
1.0		Document created	
2.0		Amended	

Accessibility

This document can be made available in large print, Braille, audio or in electronic format.

Copies in alternative languages may also be obtained.

Please contact:

Head of Children's Specialist Family Safeguarding

Children's Social Care

Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Time Square

Market Street

Bracknell

Berkshire RG12 1JD

Email: Lou.Richer@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Telephone: 01344 353112

Resource Allocation System

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	2
1.1	Universal Provision and Targeted Provision.....	2
1.2	Additional Specialist Provision.....	2
2	Eligibility for a service from CSC and/ or a Personal Budget.....	3
2.1	Children's Specialist Support Team	3
2.2	Personal Budgets.....	3
2.3	Legal Context.....	4
3	Level of Funding.....	4
4	Process for allocating resources.....	5
4.1	Assessment.....	5
4.2	Support Planning	7
4.3	Arrangements.....	8
4.4	Review.....	9
5	Planning for the Future	10
6	Contingencies, Additional Burdens and Exceptional Circumstances.....	10
6.1	Contingency Funds.....	10
6.2	Exceptional Circumstances.....	10
7	Key National and Local Policy Documents	10
8	Appendices	11
8.1	Appendix 1 Worked examples of Financial Bands and Needs.....	11
8.2	Appendix 2 Personal Budget Flow Chart.....	18
8.3	Appendix 3 Dispute Resolution Process	20
8.4	Appendix 4 RAS Questionnaire	20
8.5	Appendix 5 RAS Terms of Reference.....	20

Resource Allocation System

1 Introduction

Bracknell Forest Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy 2023 – 2026 states:

Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Bracknell Forest, is they achieve their full potential in their early years, at school and in college and lead happy and fulfilled lives).

[Bracknell Forest SEND Strategy 2023 \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bracknell-forest-send-strategy-2023-2026)

Bracknell Forest Children's Social Care's Commitment to Children with SEND 'Empowering Futures', sets out:

We believe that all children and young people, including those with SEND, in Bracknell Forest should receive the right support, at the right time and from the right partner agencies. Everyone has a role to play and responsibility to help children with SEND thrive. This support should enable a child/young person to access their local community and engage in inclusive and meaningful social and educational activities, keep them safe and promote their welfare. Where the severity of a child/young person's SEND creates barriers to this, there is specialist support in place to enable access, at every stage of childhood, from early years through to transition to adulthood. We commit to working together to achieve the best possible outcomes for all families living with SEND.

https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/bracknell/services/files/empowering_futures_send_v4.pdf

The purpose of this policy is to describe the process for raising aspirations, meeting need and allocating resources for children with disabilities within Bracknell Forest Council's Children's Social Care (CSC). This is to ensure that children with disabilities get a fair start in life and the very best opportunities to succeed alongside their peers.

1.1 Universal Provision and Targeted Provision

Not every child with a disability/SEND will be eligible for services from CSC and/or a Personal Budget. Social Workers will always support families to look first at community resources, targeted services and activities that support the child to access the mainstream services which all children use, alongside the resources that one's own family and friends bring.

Sometimes there is no need for additional paid support when universal and targeted provisions are combined with the support that the family and community can offer. The range of services available in Bracknell at all levels can be viewed on the Local Offer, [Local Offer | Bracknell Directory \(openobjects.com\)](https://bracknell-forest.gov.uk/local-offer)

1.2 Additional Specialist Provision

However, some children in Bracknell Forest might need additional support to help them meet the outcomes identified as priorities within their Children's Social Care Plan:

- To keep children safe
- To enable access and inclusion

Resource Allocation System

- To have opportunities to achieve and develop in preparation for adulthood
- To be cared for wherever possible within their family/community.

2 Eligibility for a service from CSC and/ or a Personal Budget

2.1 Children's Specialist Support Team

The eligibility criteria for services are described in the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board Children's Threshold Guidance, found by following the link below:

[BF Children's Threshold Guidance 2023 \(bracknellforestsafeguarding.org.uk\)](https://bracknellforestsafeguarding.org.uk/BF-Childrens-Threshold-Guidance-2023)

When children with disabilities are referred to Children's Social Care for assessment, the Single Assessment is carried out by the Duty & Assessment Team. If the assessment identifies a need for a care and a support package, the child is transferred to a long-term team. The RAS questionnaire is usually completed by their allocated worker once they are transferred, however, where an urgent need is identified, the assessing social worker can, with support from the Designated Social Care Officer for SEND if required, complete a RAS questionnaire with the child/family and refer to RAS panel prior to transfer to ensure there is no delay in meeting an identified need.

The Children's Specialist Support Team (CSST) is a team that specialises in delivering support to children and young people who have complex and enduring support needs with regard to a disability or complex health conditions. They work specifically to provide a more equal start to children with disabilities and resilience to permanency within a child's family. One aspect of their role includes administering access to Personal Budgets and or Direct Payments.

Not all children with SEND who are open to Children's Social Care will be eligible for a service from the CSST. Some children will receive a service from other social work teams, however if there is a need for a personal budget as a result of their disability, they will be referred to RAS to have their needs considered in the same way as children receiving a service from the CSST.

It should be noted however, that for children meeting the criteria, the Children's Specialist Support Team may first offer a family group conference to explore the resources within the family and wider community, before deciding whether further specialist support is required.

2.2 Personal Budgets

Personal budgets are a way in which the Council shares the decisions about the types of support with children and their families, in the belief that if people themselves have more control and creativity with regard to the resources available to them they will find solutions and support that works best for them.

It should be noted that this policy refers solely to how decisions are made about the resources available to children with disabilities who are accessing a service from Children's Social Care. More detail about how personal budgets operate for children with Education Health & Care (EHCPs) can be found within Bracknell Forest Council's Personal Budgets Policy:

[Personal Budgets Policy \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://bracknell-forest.gov.uk/Personal-Budgets-Policy)

Resource Allocation System

Eligibility for a **personal budget for social care** will be restricted to children and young people assessed as needing support on Level 3 or 4 of the Children's Threshold Guidance. The four levels are:

- Level 1 – No additional needs
- Level 2 – Early help
- Level 3 – Children with complex and multiple needs (Child in Need)
- Level 4 – Children in acute need (including Child Protection/Children Looked After)

2.3 Legal Context

The Children and Families Act 2014 enshrined in law the right for families to ask for a personal budget in order to manage and commission the support needs that have been assessed by CSC and other statutory bodies. Bracknell Forest Council is required, by law, to consider any request for a personal budget that is submitted. The individual circumstances of each case will be examined, and a decision taken as to whether or not a personal budget can be assigned. Decisions must be in line with the legal guidance that defines the eligibility criteria. Most young people and families will be able to receive a personal budget if they wish to have one.

How much funding a family receives to pay for support will depend on the needs that are identified and agreed in the child's assessment.

3 Level of Funding

Since September 2014 Bracknell Forest Council has used a Resource Allocation System (RAS) for all service requests which translates need into an indicative budget from which agreed services can be provided. The RAS enables the CSST to work on an indicative budget based on five bands of needs for support. These bands are:

- No support*
- Small support
- Some support
- Lots of support
- Exceptional support
- Crisis**

*Although 'No Support' is a category, it does not count towards need, as a child assessed as having no support needs in a certain area, will either need no support to achieve this, or the question will not be applicable to them, and again, they will not need support in this area.

** 'Crisis' is an extension of Exceptional Support. A score in this area indicates that there is a total breakdown of the family unit due to the stress/complexity of the care needed, or a child has been taken into care due to their vulnerability.

The bands describe how resources and/or funding is awarded for levels of support. These bands are guidelines and a child will be given an assessed amount based on the bands, to reach an indicative budget. The value of the bands will be considered each year as part of the Council's budget setting process. The financial bands, what they mean, and how they are evaluated is described in full on page 7. More detailed examples of needs within the bands are given in Appendix 1. Note: this is not an

Resource Allocation System

exhaustive list, nor is it meant to prescribe what we assess as need, it is simply an example to illustrate the process.

4 Process for allocating resources

A workflow explaining how a child or their family can access a personal budget, is found in Appendix 2.

4.1 Assessment

4.1.1 Single Assessment

A social worker will work with children and their families to carry out a Single Assessment. If the child has a social worker the assessment will be undertaken by that worker. If the child does not have a social worker then it will be a member of the Duty and Assessment Team. This assessment will look in detail at:

- Who the child is, their skills, talents and interests
- The support they need
- Building up a picture of the child's life including aspirations
- Parenting and family capacity, including the needs of parent carers
- Beginning to identify the community links that could work well for the child

If the outcome of an assessment is that the child is eligible for a service from the CSST and/or for funding for a support plan, the CSST will help the child and their family to fill in a RAS Questionnaire.

4.1.2 Resource Allocation System (RAS) Questionnaire

The RAS Questionnaire is used to support the assessment and helps understand how much funding and or resources are allocated.

Both aspects of the assessment process should be carried out with parent/carers and their child in co production. It is important that the social worker seeks the views, needs and aspirations of the child and other family members. The full form can be obtained using a link in Appendix 4 of this document.

Resource Allocation System

Financial Bands of Support

No Support* Less than 70 points	No Support (Universal)	Indicates that the child or young person needs no additional support or that this statement is not applicable to the individual child or young person.
---	-----------------------------------	---

*If there is no support needed, the child will be assessed as either age appropriately able and referred to universal services or the question is not applicable to the child. Children scoring under 70 points will not usually be eligible for support from the CSST. The five categories of support needs are outlined below:

Low /small Support Needs 70 to 100 points	Minimal Support (Universal/ Targeted)	Indicates that the child or young person needs a small amount of support, but the support needed is not at a level where there is a need for significant adjustments to be made.
Medium to High Support Needs 101 to 150 points	Additional Support (Targeted)	Indicates that the child or young person needs some additional support.
High Support Needs 151 to 200 points	Specialist Support (Specialist)	Indicates that the child needs specialist support.
Exceptional Support Needs 201 to 259 points	Exceptional Support (Crisis)	Indicates that the child needs more than 1:1 support.
Crisis** (an extension of Exceptional Support Needs) More than 260 points	Family in complete breakdown or child in care for their safety	Indicates that there is a total breakdown of the family unit due to the stress/ complexity of the care needed or a child has been taken into care due to their vulnerability.

Resource Allocation System

4.1.3 How the Single Assessment and RAS Questionnaire work together

The analysis section of the Single Assessment brings together the social workers conclusions about the child's level of needs, family resilience and capacity. This, coupled with the RAS Questionnaire, will show clearly a band of support, which correlates with a points total that has been discussed with the young person where appropriate, and/or their parents/carers. This will inform how much funding will be offered as an 'indicative' allocation.

4.1.4 The Indicative Allocation

The indicative allocation is the Council's view, after assessment of the child and family, of how much funding/ support/resources should be provided to meet the child or young person's needs and is a fair share of the money available for all children who live in Bracknell Forest with disabilities and who have additional need. It is important to be aware that this is a "starting point" for discussions around the support package needed. The assessed needs of a child or young person which the council has a statutory duty to meet, will be met irrespective of an indicative allocation. However, we will look to the young people and their families to tell us their preferences and we will work with them to realise the package of support they want to have.

4.1.5 RAS Panel

Once the Single Assessment and the RAS Questionnaire have been completed, the social worker will be able to ask the RAS Panel to provide an indicative budget allocation. This amount will be the starting point for determining the cost of the support that has been assessed for the child or young person.

The indicative allocation can then be shared with the family to enable them to know how much support their child could receive and what money is available to finance that need in order to meet eligible children's assessed needs and give those families a short break.

4.1.6 Membership of the Panel

The Panel will consist of the people representing the following organisations. Not all will be in attendance at all panel meetings; they will attend only when relevant to the business of the panel.

Flexibility of membership will be required to reflect requests and other representatives may be invited.

- Head of Service; Specialist Services - Chair
- Panel Administrator
- The child's allocated key worker
- Team Manager – Children's Specialist Support Team (CSST)
- Team Manager or Head of Service – Family Safeguarding Team (as required)
- Short Breaks Coordinator
- Larchwood Short Break Unit Manager/Senior Practitioner
- SEN Team representative
- Health representative – as required
- Occupational Therapist – as required
- Family Placement lead for Short Break Foster Care – as required
- Early Years/ community child minding – as required
- Behaviour Support Specialist – as required
- Other individuals may be invited – as required

4.2 Support Planning

Once a family has their indicative allocation, they can start to work out, with their allocated worker, how that budget could be used. The support plan offers the chance to think about what a really good life for the child would be now, and in the future, and explains how the family will use the allocation to make

Resource Allocation System

some of this happen. The support plan tests that the allocation can meet the child's needs, with future permanency in mind. The support plan must be set out in the child's social care plan, and should include:

Information about the child

- What is important to the child?
- What are the child's talents and skills?
- What are the child's hobbies and interests?
- What relationships and community resources does the child have which can work alongside the budget?
- What aspirations does the child/ family have.

What's working well in life now and what's not working?

- This gives the chance to work out what's going well and needs to continue and what isn't going so well and needs to change.

What are the aspirations for the next review period, and into the future?

- This is a really clear statement of what the plan hopes to achieve.

What are the child's support needs and how will they be met?

- The detail of how the child will be supported, by whom and when.

How does the plan help the family to be more in control of their support?

- How was the child involved in the plan?
- How can we help the child be in control of the plan?

The Council need to see that the budget that has been allocated to the child will support them well. The plan should lay out what is going to happen to make sure the child:

- Is kept safe
- Is able to be part of the community/be involved
- Has opportunities to develop for adulthood, and
- The plan also needs to show how the family as a whole is supported.

4.3 Arrangements

Personal Budgets have been designed to give children and their families more control of their support; being in control of support doesn't mean that a family has to take control of the money offered. Through the support planning process, a family or a young person will have decided exactly how they want to use the budget; and the options about how to manage the money. The options are:

- **Direct payment** - parents are given the funds to buy and manage the services themselves to meet the outcomes identified in the child's care plan.
- **An organisational arrangement** - no money changes hands. Parents find out how much money is available and with support identify the different ways to spend that money meeting the outcomes of the child's support plan. The services are then arranged on the family's behalf by the Local Authority, Education or Health Service.
- **Third party arrangement/ nominees** – a third party organisation, trust or nominated person holds the money and supports parents to decide the best way to spend the funding, they then buy the services chosen.
- **A combination of the above.**

Resource Allocation System

4.3.1 Options for buying support

There is a range of support a family can spend their personal budget on, and more information on this can be found in the Local Offer [Local Offer | Bracknell Directory \(openobjects.com\)](#).

Although there is a group of support providers working in partnership with the Council, we have included all providers who can deliver support, to increase awareness of the range of providers that may be able to assist in delivering the identified support. Whilst the Council works to make sure this local offer is useful to families; choice of provider is not limited to the providers within this partnership.

A young person or family can choose support for their child through employing personal assistants with their Personal Budget. The Direct Payments Team will provide advice as necessary about how to employ a Personal Assistant. More information about how direct payments operate can be found here: [Flowchart and Procedures for Direct Payments \(proceduresonline.com\)](#)

The budget can be used for a wide range of activities that benefit the child. For example, to support youth and community groups to welcome the child into the activity they want to take part in. This may involve funding training for staff, paying for an additional staff member or paying volunteers expenses or for equipment to ensure that the child can take part in activities and fully participate.

Support can also include transport for activities, accommodation, day trips, short breaks, equipment or small adaptations. What a family can and cannot buy is covered in greater detail in the Personal Budgets Policy.

4.4 Review

Whilst a family are in receipt of support that is funded by the Council a member of the Children's Specialist Support Team, or another lead professional will visit regularly (usually at least every six weeks). The first review will take place no later than three months after a child's plan 'goes live', so there is a chance to look back on how things have gone/are going. The review will be organised by the lead professional/social worker and will be held in a way which makes it comfortable and easy for children to get involved.

The review will be based on how the support plan is working and how it is helping the child stay safe, be included, achieve and support the family. The review will include:

- What are the child's needs?
- Are they being met?
- What is going well?
- What are we concerned about?
- What's been achieved?
- What needs to happen next?

The first review after 3 months will help to iron out any difficulties early on. After the first review there will be a review at least every 6 months or at agreed regular intervals. Planned reviews can be brought forward if there are any issues, problems or significant changes.

Should the review identify a need to amend the support plan, the key worker will return to RAS Panel to seek approval for proposed amendments. If the child's needs have changed, the RAS Questionnaire will be updated to reflect the changes in order that RAS Panel can consider the indicative budget. If there have been significant changes for the child and/or their family, an updating Single Assessment may also be required.

Resource Allocation System

5 Planning for the Future

Every child's needs will be re assessed if there is a change of circumstances, family needs or if their needs change. Your support plan should change as your child's needs change and/or grows older. This may mean several new Single Assessments and/or revising the RAS Questionnaire to ensure the support needs and resources are right.

6 Contingencies, Additional Burdens and Exceptional Circumstances

6.1 Contingency Funds

In order for the Council to meet its duty, it will hold a contingency fund in reserve that can be used to address fluctuations in needs. This will ensure that if there is an increase in needs presented by a child or young person, this can be provided for without a negative financial impact.

The use of the contingency funds will be monitored by the Council to ensure that it is being used for the appropriate purposes. In addition, there is a process by which an individual's budget can be supplemented if this is determined to be necessary through the support planning and panel process.

6.2 Exceptional Circumstances

Where the RAS identifies extremely high support needs, or the child/ young person's needs exceed the highest amount the RAS can allocate, we will work with the service user and family/support circle to find the best solution for their individual needs.

7 Key National and Local Policy Documents

Legislation

Primary Legislation	The Children & Families Act 2014 The Care Act 2014
Secondary Legislation	The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
Statutory Guidance	Special Educational Needs & Disability Code of Practice: 0 - 25 (2014, Department for Education)

Additional sources of information with regard to the legal framework, related relevant legislation and guidance:

- The National Health Act 2006
- The Children Act 1989
- The Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1970
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005

Resource Allocation System

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 Worked examples of Financial Bands and Needs

Keeping children safe

No Support	Small Support	Some Support	Lots of Support	Exceptional Support
Independent mobility	Requires occasional assistance with mobility	Needs some, regular support with mobility	Uses a wheelchair and can assist with transfers	Requires 2:1 support for mobility and transfers
Age appropriate understanding and awareness of danger	Age appropriate understanding and awareness of danger, but may need initial encouragement to engage	Comfortable in familiar surroundings, but would need some supervision in new environments / activities	Very limited understanding of risk and danger. Would need 1:1 support	Cannot be left alone at any time and requires 2:1 support to stay safe
Not bullied or in need of supervision	Child may need to have issues explained more than others of a similar age	Some support is needed to cope with issues of vulnerability or perpetration	Requires lots of care and support due to vulnerability. Minimal insight into how their actions can affect others. 1:1 support needed most of the time	Child is so vulnerable, they need a minimum of 1:1 support at all times. And may require more. No insight into actions and will need 2:1 care to maintain safety
Child poses no threat or danger to carer or others in their environment	Child poses no significant level of risk to others, but may require more explanation/ support than others of a similar age	Low level of risk posed to carers / others. The environment has had to be altered to ensure risks are kept minimal	Parents / carers feel at risk. The child poses significant risk to others in their environment. often 1:1 support is required to ensure safety	Severe behavioural issues that are not easily controlled. There is frequent lashing out / outbursts that result in injuries to self and others. 2:1 care is required
Young person is aware of personal relationships and needs no special support	Child / young person may need slightly more support or guidance than others of a similar age. They are otherwise age appropriately aware of risks	Child / young person will need more support to understand and come to terms with personal relationships. They will need some additional support to ensure safety	Child / young person will not be aware of personal relationships and would be vulnerable to being exploited. They would require close supervision or 1:1 support	Child / young person is very vulnerable and may be in a position where safeguarding protocols need to be enacted. A child may require 2:1 care to stay safe
Child is too young to have this arise as an issue and is not in a vulnerable position				

Resource Allocation System

Physical and emotional well-being

No support	Small Support	Some Support	Lots of Support	Exceptional Support
Requires no nursing support	Requires occasional nursing support	Requires some nursing support	Regular nursing support is needed (more than one a week, but less than daily)	Requires daily specialist medical or nursing support
Routine medical checks only (e.g. annual check ups); nil medication or treatment	More visits to the GP than a child of a similar age; minimal medication or treatment	Increased attendance at GP or nursing services; medication or treatment needed	Regular advice and guidance from a consultant to manage a health condition; complex medication which needs careful management / specialised or trained staff	Regular admissions to hospital or specialist treatment centre as a result of disability; unstable health which impacts adversely on the child / young person and family. Medication requiring constant review and change
Sleeps well, child and family well rested	Wakes occasionally (a couple of times each week for periods of more than half an hour)	Wakes frequently (several times each week for periods of more than half an hour)	Wakes frequently (once or twice per night, most nights, for periods of more than half an hour)	Wakes several times throughout the night every night for periods of more than half an hour at a time
No therapy involved with disability	Occasional therapy requires due to disability	Some / regular treatment with disability	Planned programme of therapy required to manage disability	Intensive programme of therapies which needs delivery by therapist many partners and usually on a daily basis
No specialist equipment needed	May need some small equipment that does not require assistance	Uses specialist equipment but does not require assistance	Uses specialist equipment that requires operational assistance	Daily use of complex specialist equipment and requires 2 or more people. Life limiting condition requires intensive programme

Resource Allocation System

No complex medical condition present which requires specialist care	Has a complex medical condition but is well managed and requires only regular medical review	Has a complex medical condition present which requires specialist medical care	Medical condition requires constant medical attention to maintain health	Medical condition requires 2 trained carers to be involved in the delivery of care in order to maintain health
---	--	--	--	--

Opportunities to develop for adulthood

No support	Small Support	Some Support	Lots of Support	Exceptional Support
Child / young person is learning at an age appropriate rate	May need occasional assistance in learning, but is not usual nor a specialist need	Will need some support to understand and learn. This may take the form of additional input from school or parents	Child will require lots of support. They have a limited understanding and will require specialist support to achieve	A child will have little awareness of their environment or social interactions. They will need intensive and specialist support to achieve
Child / young person is able to go places and meet friends / new people	A child may need occasional support to initiate activities or meet others, but is able to do so with very little support	May need some support in order to participate in activities. They may need initial support or have a familiar person with them	Children needing lots of support will need 1:1 care in order to participate in any activities	A child who finds it almost impossible to go to new places or meet others. They would need a lot of prep and 2:1 support to achieve this
Child lives in a house appropriate to their needs and abilities	Some small changes to the living environment may have to be made in order to maintain the child's safety	Some minor modifications have to be made to the home in order for the child to live safely. They may require some supervision over and above that of others	Significant modifications would need to be made to the living environment to allow the child to move about unassisted. The child would need 1:1 support	Major modifications would need to be made to the home to allow specialist equipment in. the child would need 2:1 care or specialist support of nursing care
Family finances are not restricting child/young person's ability to access extra curricular activities	There may be some small support needed to allow a child or young person to access activities	The family put their income toward the care and support of children but would benefit from some additional assistance to allow kids access to activities	The family has no spare income and would find it very difficult to find additional money to put toward social activities for their child	There are major financial issues and the family has no income or the family misuse what money they receive. Children do not even have basics

Resource Allocation System

Being part of the community / being involved

No support	Small Support	Some Support	Lots of Support	Exceptional Support
Able to communicate well and make themselves understood (age appropriate)	Can communicate well, but may struggle at times to convey complex information	Will require support to make themselves understood and will require some support to convey information	Needs lots of support to make themselves understood. May need 1:1 support from people they know in order to be understood	No communication skills. Child needs people they know well to interpret body language to determine needs
Knowing right from wrong (age appropriate)	May need to have some things explained more fully than their peers. Otherwise there is little concern	Will need some support as they could be vulnerable and be led into making poor choices. May need occasional 1:1 support	Will have little knowledge of social norms and interactions. Will need 1:1 support in all social situations	Will not have awareness of social norms and would be vulnerable. Requires 2:1 support to engage in any activities
Learning new skills and engaging with new activities (age appropriately)	Will need a small amount of support to engage with learning compared to their peers	Requires some support to engage and achieve. This may include additional support from school or other provider	Will need 1:1 support to engage and achieve. They will need significant support	Will need intensive support to engage and achieve. This will include 2:1 support and specialist input
Able to conceptualise and grasp abstract ideas and concepts (age appropriate)	May need a small amount of support to grasp ideas or concepts that their peers can grasp	Will need some support to achieve to the level of their peers. May require 1:1 support at times	Will require lots of support to achieve. May not be able to understand complex ideas. Will need 1:1 support to learn	Will understand simple concepts or ideas. Lives in the present. No concept of past or future. May need 2:1 care or support to achieve

Resource Allocation System

Socialising / having friends, activities and experiences

No support	Small Support	Some Support	Lots of Support	Exceptional Support
To be part of a group of friends	May need a small amount of support to make and keep friends	Will need support to make and keep friends. The child may need a known person to stay with them initially	Will need 1:1 support to make and keep friends. Will not engage with others without 1:1 support	Will not have awareness of others and will receive social interaction from family / carers. Would need 2:1 support to engage in activities
Able to take part in their community with no support	May need a small amount of support to initiate taking part in their community	Will require support to safely engage in their community. May require 1:1 at some point	Will need 1:1 support in order to engage within their community	Will need 2:1 support to engage. They may also need lot of preparation and time to reduce anxiety
Child/young person is able to explore their community (age appropriate) without additional support	May require slightly more instruction / supervision than their peers.	Will need support to explore their neighbourhood. Either due to mobility, lack of awareness or danger / vulnerable	Will require 1:1 support in order to be outside the family home. They will require constant supervision	Cannot leave the family home or other familiar setting without long preparation and 2:1 support
To be relaxed and not stressed	May require occasional small support to have things that are stressful to be explained	Will require some routines and other things to keep them calm and may need some thing explained that peers would not	Child will be anxious and will need 1:1 support at times in order to engage. They may be routine bound and these will need to be respected in order to calm the child	Child will be extremely anxious and may become overwhelmed by anxiety. They will need to have 2:1 support and may need frequent "quiet time" to regain calm

Resource Allocation System

The Family

No support	Small Support	Some Support	Lots of Support	Exceptional Support
Parenting capacity is good. No issues or concerns	Parenting capacity is good, but there are occasional times when the family could use a small amount of support	Parents could use some support to continue caring for their child. The parents would benefit from respite support	Parents are not coping and require lots of support in order to prevent a full family breakdown	Family is no longer functioning and will need an exceptional amount of support to rebuild the family and keep them together
Wider family / friend network is available to help family cope in difficult situations	The family has people they can count on to assist in some aspects, but may require a small amount of support from statutory services	The family need some support in order to continue caring for their child. They may require support or training in coping with their child's issues	The family have no one they can rely on outside of paid support. they need practical help and support in coping with their need and situation	The family has broken down. They do not have any support to call upon. They can no longer cope. This family will need exceptional amounts of input and restructuring to function as a unit again
Family recognises the importance of school attendance and makes every effort to ensure attendance	The family realises the importance of school attendance but will need occasional support to achieve this	The family require some support to ensure the child attends school. They may need practical support or training to cope with sending the child to school	The family require lots of support in order to get their child to school. They may not understand the importance of school or cannot get a child to go	The family is broken down and school is seen as a non priority. The child may not have the clothes or equipment to attend and the parents may not understand the need for attendance
Family has enough disposable income to ensure child is engaged in specialist activities	The family has a small amount of disposable income and uses this to help their child engage in activities. They could use a little support in continuing	The family has little or no disposable income and need some support to help their child engage in activities	The family have no income to spare. The family may not see the relevance of engagement. They will need lots of support to turn this around	The family is broken down. There is no income. Any money the family has may be misused. The child may be in a vulnerable position and subject to safeguarding

Resource Allocation System

Family functions as a unit and places their child at the centre of family life	The child is at the centre of the family. They may need occasional support to continue this	The family need some support to continue caring for their child. Working and caring for the child is becoming stressful	The family is a breaking point. They are caring for the child, but the stress they are under is severely impacting their physical and mental health	The family unit is broken down. They family are sick with stress and the child is in a precarious and vulnerable position. Safeguarding is probable
--	---	---	---	---

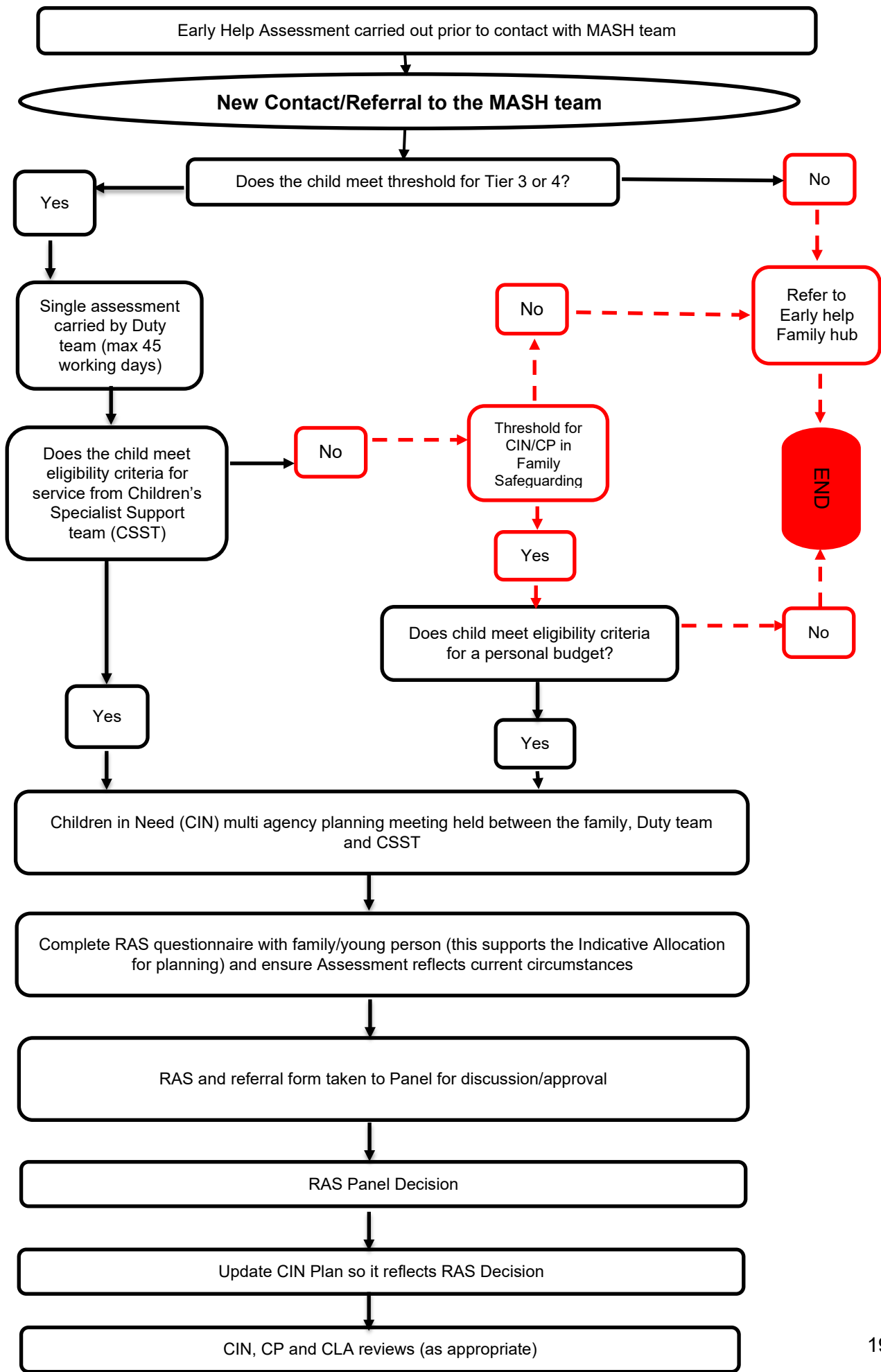
Resource Allocation Policy

8.2 Appendix 2 Personal Budget Flow Chart

The CSST is a team that specialises in delivering support to children and young people who have complex and enduring support needs with regard to a disability or complex health. A child will have to be referred to the CSST by the Duty & Assessment Team or the Family Safeguarding Team.

The workflow and time scales with regard to a Personal Budget are laid out overleaf.

Resource Allocation Policy



Resource Allocation Policy

8.3 Appendix 3 Dispute Resolution Process

If there are any disputes, we will try and resolve them as quickly and informally as possible. We want the best support we can give your child but will balance this with looking at the needs of the other children using our services within the Council's statutory duties.

The starting point is further discussion between the child/young person and their family and the Chair of the RAS Panel, in order that the rationale for the panel's decision can be understood by the family and they can present reasons why they wish the panel to reconsider the support needs of the child/family.

If the dispute cannot be resolved at this informal stage, the panel decision will be reviewed at Solutions Panel by at least two other Heads of Service within Children's Social Care. This panel takes place weekly, so that there are no delays to reviewing decisions.

If there is a formal grievance or dispute, we will follow the Bracknell Forest complaints process which can be found on our public website. A link to our complaints process can be found here: [Children's social care complaints | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/childrens-social-care-complaints)

8.4 Appendix 4 RAS Questionnaire

The RAS Questionnaire has been designed to differentiate, in accessible language, between no support and small support as well as some, lots and exceptional amounts of support. A copy of the form can be obtained by contacting short.breaks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

8.5 Appendix 5 RAS Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference Specialist Support Resource Allocation System Panel

1. TOR Statement
2. Principles
3. Process
4. Approval of plans
5. Organisation of Panel Information
6. Management of Panel Meeting
7. Membership

1. Terms of Reference (TOR) Statement

This Terms of Reference (TOR) describes the principles, process, and documentation for obtaining agreement for the provision of resources to meet the assessed needs of children and young people up to eighteen with disabilities and their families in Bracknell Forest.

The purpose of the Panel is to provide an opportunity for multi-agency partnership working to determine the most appropriate resources to achieve outcomes identified within an up-to-date assessment and/or Plan.

Resource Allocation Policy

The Panel will give due consideration to a child's health and well-being and ensure children with profound and complex disabilities or health needs receive co-ordinated, high-quality child and family-centred services.

2. Principles

The Panel has been set up as part of a Resource Allocation System (RAS) to enable us to prioritise and determine funding for care and support and ensure fair access to Children's Social Care Services.

Increasing options and improving provision for children with a disability is central to Bracknell Forest Council's Fair Access/ RAS arrangements.

The principles are based on the 'Support and Aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability' Children and Families Act 2014. The principles we subscribe to are for children:

- To be safe
- To enable access and inclusion
- To have opportunities to achieve
- To be cared for wherever possible within their family/ community

The function of providing social care support to children with disabilities and their families is to ensure that they are fully supported.

'Support and Aspirations' highlight five priority areas:

- Early identification and assessment of need
- Enabling choice and control
- Learning and achieving
- Preparing for adulthood
- Services working together for families

Through the RAS we aim to ensure:

- Good provision of information
- Transparency in how the available levels of support are determined
- Integrated Assessment
- Participation of children with a disability and their families in their own assessment
- Accessible feedback and appeals procedure
- That we assist families to be creative in developing plans
- Consistency
- Value for money in using public resources.

For the purpose of the Panel the definition of disability is that identified in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which defines a person with a disability as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and adverse, long-term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

3. Process (what the Panel needs and what it will do)

Please note - other agencies/ services should be approached prior to the Panel if these agencies/ services are needed; for example, waiting for a Panel decision should not delay referral to CAMHS, or access to a Family Group Conference.

Resource Allocation Policy

Each month the Panel will consider service requests that relate to amendments/additions to current provision as well as new cases. The Panel will consider the support needs of all children with disabilities, regardless of which social care team is supporting them. It is recognised that most children referred to RAS Panel will be supported by the Children's Specialist Support Team, but referrals from the Duty & Assessment Team during the initial Single Assessment are actively encouraged to minimise delay in provision of services. Many children with SEND are supported by the Family Safeguarding Team, or might be Looked After, and supported by the Children Looked After Team. The Designated Social Care Officer for SEND can provide support for workers less familiar with the RAS assessment process as required.

The assessments required will be proportionate to the presenting needs of the child/young person and their families. (If you are not sure if your assessment reflects current needs please take advice from your appropriate manager).

Plans made will be proportional to the presenting needs of the child/ young person and their families, therefore it is important to ensure the assessment captures every aspect that is relevant. It must be clearly stated what other services or activities the child is accessing e.g., Kids, youth groups etc.

All assessments and plans must identify the desired outcome for the child/ young person.

NB – to ensure there is adequate time to read everything that you have worked on prior to the Panel meeting, papers are required at least five working days before the Panel date. A list of dates is available from the CSST Administrator.

Panel Meeting

As a minimum to enable the Panel to make good decisions there should be:

- **A current Single Assessment that has considered the holistic needs of the child/ young person and family, including consideration of caring responsibilities and needs of siblings. The assessment will be authorised by the appropriate Manager before presentation to the Panel.**
- **Resource Allocation System Questionnaire – this will need to be reviewed each time a young person is brought to be discussed at Panel to ensure it reflects current needs.**
- **RAS Referral (request to be discussed) – which is triggered following completion of the RAS Questionnaire.**
- It may also be appropriate to include other specialist assessments i.e., Education or Health assessments.

What the Panel will do:

- Consider the Assessment(s) and the Resource Allocation Questionnaire and reach a decision regarding an Indicative Budget to enable the Social Worker/Lead Professional and family to create a plan to meet the needs identified.
- Discuss the possible options/ provision of services specifically identified for children with disabilities and their families, as detailed in our Local Offer, such as:
 - Short Break provision and activities available within the community
 - Access to other leisure activities
 - Direct Payments/Personal Budgets
 - Family Based Shared Care i.e., Short Break Fostering
 - Short Break residential services i.e., Larchwood
 - Specialist Child Minding

Resource Allocation Policy

The Worker may bring a **draft plan with costings** -The Social Worker/ Family Worker will present the Plan (to meet need) for approval.

The Panel may suggest exploration of other services:

- Travel training
- Sleep clinic
- Referral to the Permanency Team for behaviour support and/or therapeutic input

A Family Group Conference should be considered for all children/young people referred to Panel.

The Panel will consider opportunities for joint commissioning with Health or Education where appropriate. Social Workers/Family Workers will be asked to refer children/young people to Frimley ICB's Integrated Resource Allocation Panel (IRAP) if health needs that may warrant joint commissioning are identified.

4. Approval of Plans

Parents, carers, child/ young person if appropriate, should be informed of the decision within 7 days. This information should be shared in writing by the Social Worker, with a verbal explanation as appropriate. The feedback will include information relating to the necessity to review all service provision, at a minimum of 6 monthly intervals.

More complex support packages may be requested to be reviewed by Panel members at any time. This review can be requested by any Panel member.

5. Organisation of Panel Information

Information needs to be sent to and collated by the Panel Administrator at least five working days prior to the Panel date, in order for appropriate timetabling of case discussion. It may not be necessary for all Panel members to attend the whole of the meeting or every meeting; this will depend on the Agenda and Panel members will be informed of this prior to the meeting.

Information will be circulated electronically (secure) for members to print as appropriate. All printed copies must be left for destruction, by the Panel Administrator, after the meeting.

All information contains personal information relating to children/ young people and their families. Security of this information is paramount. Panel members and their managers will be individually responsible for the management of this information, and any security measures imposed by individual agencies must be adhered to.

6. Management of Panel Meeting

The Panel Meeting will be Chaired by the Head of Service Specialist Family Safeguarding. In the absence of the HOS the Short Breaks Co-ordinator will Chair the meeting.

Social Workers/Family Workers will be invited to the Panel to present their request(s) to panel members - it will be for an allocated amount of time.

Maximum duration of Panel meeting will be 3 hours. Any Panel meeting exceeding 2 hours will include a 10-minute comfort break.

The meetings will be minuted, by the Panel Administrator with the minutes available for audit/ scrutiny.

Decisions will be recorded at the time of the Panel discussion. Minutes will be agreed and signed by the Chair/Short Break Co-Ordinator prior to distribution.

Resource Allocation Policy

In the event of panel members not agreeing, there will be opportunity for further discussion and if necessary, the Head of Service Specialist Family Safeguarding will make the overriding decision.

7. Membership

Flexibility of membership will be required to reflect requests and other representatives may be invited:

- Head of Service; Specialist Services - Chair
- Panel Administrator
- The child's allocated key worker
- Team Manager – Children's Specialist Support Team (CSST)
- Team Manager or Head of Service – Family Safeguarding Team (as required)
- Short Breaks Coordinator
- Larchwood Short Break Unit Manager/Senior Practitioner
- SEN Team representative
- Health representative – as required
- Occupational Therapist – as required
- Family Placement lead for Short Break Foster Care – as required
- Early Years/ community child minding – as required
- Behaviour Support Specialist – as required

Lou Richer
Head of Service, Children's Specialist Support Team
Revised July 2024