



Spot purchasing usually occurs when there is an immediate requirement to make a purchase quite literally 'on the spot.' Spot purchasing can also refer to purchasing provision that falls outside agreed pay rates. All requests / referrals **must** be done in a planned way, to minimise the demand on service budgets, by following this process.

For the purposes of this guidance, spot purchasing requests include emergency placements, requests for provision, and requests that fall outside of the Cumbria County Council agreed payment rates

The voice and views of the child / young person should always be considered when decisions are being made about their placements / provision.

In certain circumstances, reflecting the specialist needs of the family and / or the availability of certain services, the County Council might continue to spot purchase services or make referrals on behalf of the family.

Officers making referrals, **must** avoid requesting tight or restrictive criteria, for example, making a request for a specific named / type of provision.

Process for Requests

New requests for placements / provision should be referred to the appropriate panel for the service area, for example:

- The Short Breaks Decision Making Panel for Children with Disabilities Team
- The Education Health and Care Panel Decision Making Panel for the Special Educational Needs and Disability Team
- The Complex Needs Panel for joint funding arrangements (Education, Health and Social Care) etc.

It is anticipated that panels will refer their recommendations to their Service Leads, for sign-off and further challenge, as appropriate.

In circumstances where an urgent decision is required, the relevant Team Manager must arrange to meet the appropriate Service Lead. The Team Manager will seek to justify how the request meets the plans / outcomes for the child / young person and will request agreement and sign-off for the placement / provision. Cases requiring urgent decisions will still need to be referred to the next relevant panel for acknowledgement, to enable the panel to continue to be aware of the overall service budget and enable robust challenge with regards decision making.

Process Flow Chart

