

# **REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

### **PRE-PROCEEDINGS PANEL (PPP)**

This document is intended to set out the remit, functions, constitution and requirements for the Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council Children & Families Pre-Proceedings Panel.

The Panel is intended to provide a constructive and supportive internal forum to scrutinise the progress of cases where it has been concluded that the issuing of proceedings in respect of a child by the Local Authority may be necessary, and ratify key decisions in this regard.

The Panel will consist of:-

- A senior manager, at a minimum level of Service Manager, within Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council Children & Families; and
- A legal representative.

It will only be quorate when both of the above individuals are present and on the attendance of either the named Social Worker for the child concerned and/or the named Team Manager. However nothing prevents the attendance of any other relevant Social Care professional involved in the case if required to assist in the process.

Specifically, the functions and remit of the Pre-Proceedings Panel (PPP) are as follows:

- (1) To ensure compliance with the revised Statutory Guidance "*Court Orders and Pre-Proceedings for Local Authorities*" (Department for Education: April 2014).
- (2) In the context of the above, to promote good social work practice, with particular reference to promoting high quality social work assessment and analysis and effective care planning for children.
- (3) To scrutinise effective management of risk and identify those cases where there is no realistic alternative than to issue Care Proceedings under s.31 Children Act 1989.
- (4) To explore alternative solutions which may bring about a resolution and avoid s.31 proceedings (e.g. Family Group Conference, family placement, provision of services).
- (5) Taking into account all of the above, approve at a senior management level a decision to issue s.31 proceedings.

- (6) To retrospectively scrutinise the issuing of emergency proceedings including those under s.44 Children Act 1989 (Emergency Protection Orders) and where an expedited application under s.38 Children Act 1989 (Interim Care Order) has been required.
- (7) To track the progress of pre-proceedings work and all s.31 proceedings that have been drawn to the attention of the Panel with particular reference to reducing and avoiding delay in achieving permanency for children.
- (8) To authorise the commissioning of external expert evidence within pre-proceedings work, for example (although not exhaustively):
  - a. Paternity Testing.
  - b. Drug and Alcohol Testing.
  - c. Psychological / Psychiatric Assessment.
  - d. Cognitive Assessments.
  - e. Specialist paediatric assessment.

### **Referring a Case into Panel**

Having regard to the above, the named Social Worker or Team Manager should refer cases into Panel in the following circumstances:

- i) Where, following an internal legal planning meeting, a decision has been reached that it would be appropriate to send a Letter before Proceedings in accordance with the April 2014 statutory guidance;
- ii) Where approval is sought of a decision to commission external expert evidence;
- iii) Where approval is sought to issue s.31 Care Proceedings;
- iv) Where specific guidance is sought from Panel in respect of progressing assessment and planning after the sending of a Letter before Proceedings;
- v) Where the issuing of emergency proceedings has been required, the urgency having prevented prior consideration or approval by Panel. These cases should be referred into Panel on the next available Panel date following the issuing of the emergency proceedings.

Panel will ordinarily be held on a Thursday afternoon at 2pm. Cases should be referred into Panel by no later than 4pm the day prior to the Panel. On referring a case into Panel, the following documents must be submitted:

- i) A short social work summary of the case (which need be no more than 250 words) outlining:
  - o The key case issues
  - o The current risk management plan

- The reason for the case being referred into the Panel and the specific issues if any Panel is being asked to consider.
- ii) The most recent C&F Assessment.
- iii) A Genogram (and insofar as available, Ecomap).
- iv) Insofar as it exists, any document setting out expectations and agreements between the family and Local Authority, e.g. a Working Agreement and Schedule of Expectations.
- v) In pre-proceedings cases where a Letter before Proceedings has been sent and a pre-proceedings meeting held with parents or those with Parental Responsibility, a copy of the Letter before Proceedings and minutes from the most recent meeting.
- vi) Any other document the Social Worker or Team Manager considers relevant.

The Social Work Summary should be completed on the Social Work Summary form.

If there are any questions regarding the functions or Panel they should be directed in the first instance to a Team Manager.

**NB: Nothing in this document or the functions of Panel should prevent any urgent action being taken to safeguard the protection of children.**

6<sup>th</sup> March 2019

## Document Control

<i>Date</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Change Description</i>	<i>Approved By</i>	<i>Document Review Date</i>
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