**St Helens Council**

Immediate concerns about the welfare of a child may require accommodation via s.20 (see Guidance)or removal through use of Emergency Protection Ordrder Emergency Protection Order, Police Powers of Protection

NB it is expected that early intervention with the family, including Family Group Conference(s) and Initial Viability Assessments for possible alternative carers, would normally have taken place prior to the Legal Gatekeeping Panel, as part of the child’s journey. This may not apply if the case comes directly from the Front Door / MASH team or on an emergency basis.

**Children’s Services**

Child protection concerns increase to the point where s31 threshold appears to be met

**Public Law Outline Pre-Proceedings Flowchart**

Social Worker / Manager to arrange a Case Management Discussion with the Head of Service

Immediate decision to apply for an Order through the Court

Social Work Team Manager sends Letter of Issue: risk management reviewed

Social Worker submits request to attend Legal Gateway Panel to Business Support and prepares report and supporting documentation (to be submitted by 12 noon Monday of the week of Legal Gateway Panel)

Threshold not met; risk management reviewed.

Legal Gateway Panel agrees threshold is met to instigate PLO pre-proceedings. Date set for ‘Pre-Proceedings notification letter’ to be drafted and sent, date set for first PLO meeting and date agreed for return to Legal Gateway Panel for review.

Case

Intervention continues with updated Child Plan, i.e. Child in Need Child Protection or Looked After Child Care Plan.

Social Worker prepares ‘Pre-Proceedings notification letter’ and sends to Legal Services to be reviewed and agreed before sending to identified parent, person with parental responsibility and / or family members. Letter to be sent within 5 working days of the LGP

If PLO process is unsuccessful e.g. do not engage, matter to be retured to Legal Gateway PPanelapplication

PLO Meeting held within 10 working days of the decision of the Legal Gateway Panel – this marks the start of the PLO Timeline. Meeting to be documented on PLO agenda / minutes template and a copy provided to all attendees at the conclusion of the meeting. The document includes the PLO agreement, setting out what the parents / others with PR and Local Authority have agreed. Refer to PLO timeline for expected actions

Review PLO Meeting held. Plan reviewed and explained, the timing of which is in accordance with the needs of the child. Not later than week 6.

If successful

Collate documents to be disclosed from Local Authority files; prepare documents for court proceedings

Review PLO Meeting held. Plan reviewed and explained, the timing of which is in accordance with the needs of the child. Not later than week 12

Review Legal Gateway Panel held to review and monitor progress and change. Timescale to be set at initial Legal Gateway Panel. No later than week 12

Application for Order through the Court.

**NB** The PLO Meetings will continue during the maximum 26 week timescale and there may be more than 1 review by Legal GatewayPanel. The SW can return to Panel at any time for a review and decision

Final PLO Meeting held and decision made regarding outcome of PLO process. Not later than week 22. Case to be taken back to Legal Gateway Panel for sign off prior to the 26 week timescale.

All parties to be informed of decision in writing within 5 working days.

Pre-Proceedings ends