Newcastle Children’s Social Care: Pre-Proceedings meeting

Agenda and guidance

1. **The purpose of the meeting is to discuss:**

* What the parent does well
* What the local authority is worried about
* Clarify that it is not a child protection conference and that the minutes from this meeting will form part of the evidence presented to court if care proceedings become necessary
* At the end of the meeting it is hoped a plan can be agreed which if acted up on will avoid the need to initiate proceedings or reduce their length if they are needed.

1. **Agree who will take the minutes, and who will circulate them.**

*(This could be legal, the chair or the social worker. Minutes should be distributed within 5 working days)*

1. **Introductions**

* Check who was invited and whether the persons with PR have approached a solicitor to represent them
* Set out any special requirements e.g. advocate, interpreter
* Check that those with PR and their solicitors have copies of the Pre-Proceedings letter
* Consider any others permitted to attend, e.g. for support.

1. **Confirm family structure and the key people involved including extended family and friends**

* Explore who parents would want to be assessed to care for their child if the case went into care proceedings. Explain that viability assessments will be undertaken in pre proceedings to prevent delay if needed later

1. **What is working well?**

Brief summary by the chair or SW

1. **What the local authority is worried about**

* SW to briefly summarise the ‘bottom line’ concerns, as outlined in the PLO letter and the key evidence for them
* Discuss whether parents/carers agree that the concerns valid /accurate.

1. **What is the plan to safeguard the child?**

* The plan should have been outlined in summary in the PLO letter and form the basis of this discussion
* Go through the specifics of the plan and what parents/carers need to do and what the timescales are
* Plan should include if appropriate, where the child should live, any family time arrangements, any further assessments etc
* Give the parent/carer time if they wish to consult their solicitor at this point in the meeting
* Parent/carer must sign the plan at the meeting.

1. **Date for Review**

* This should be no later than 6-8 weeks and MUST be set at the meeting
* The Team Manager is responsible for identifying the Review Date on The PLO Tracker
* If a further review is required, this must be held within a further 6-8 weeks – again the Team Manager is responsible for ensuring the date of the Review Meeting is added to the PLO Tracker
* Pre proceedings should NOT go beyond 16 weeks unless approved by the Responsible Service Manager and the rationale for this recorded on the child’s file and reflected on the PLO Tracker

1. **Internally consider any other issues for follow up and by whom.**

* Liaison with legal if the parent was not legally represented by a solicitor

**Please note**

If the parent/carer refuses to attend the meeting, does not attend the meeting without good reason or refuses to sign the plan, the team manager **must immediately** return to Legal Clinic or seek legal advice if the initiation of Care Proceedings has not already been agreed.