**26 Week Pre-Proceedings Timeline Protocol**

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| **Week** | **Action** |
| 1 | **Legal Planning meeting (LPM).**  Before this meeting can be held:   * The Jones, Hindley and Ramchandani Model of Assessing Risk and the Basic Information Sheet. * Single Assessment, * Chronology, * Genogram, and * Legal Gateway Panel TM and SL Recommendation Form **must** be submitted. * Schedule of Kinship Carers should be submitted. * Any Viability Assessments should be submitted. * Submit details of the outcome of Family Group Conference/Family meeting, or the date of meeting. * Parenting assessments should be commissioned or started by the Social Worker, and a Parenting Assessment Plan should be submitted. * Any expert assessments, such as psychological assessments or drug testing, need to be set out in the SWET and agreed by the Locality Head of Service. * Date child referred to Children’s Services. * Date child subject to S20 (if applicable).   A referral is made to the Children’s Permanence Team for permanence planning by means of the LPM Panel minutes.  **By Working Day 1** **of LPM -** Actions agreed and outcome to be recorded on LCS (LL) by HOS.  **By Working Day 2 of LPM –** Lawyer updates the LPM spreadsheet.  **By Working Day 4 of LPM -** Minutes are prepared and circulated to all in attendance by Legal Services, including to the Case Progression Manager for the purpose of tracking. Any amendments are circulated and agreed. Birth certificate applied for by Legal.  **By Working Day 6 of LPM** Head of Service who chaired the LPM signs off the LPM minutes and sends to the Locality HOS  **By working day 7 of LPM –** Locality HOS uploads finalised minutes of LPM on to LCS (LL)  **By Working Day 5** Pre-Proceedings Letter is prepared by Social Worker and forwarded to Legal for comment.  Once agreed, the letter is then hand delivered to parents by the Social Work Team. |
| 2 | **One Working Days prior to the Initial Pre-Proceedings Meeting –** Social Work Team send the proposed Pre-Proceedings Agreement to Legal for comment. |
| 3 | **Initial Pre-Proceedings Meeting** takes place (lawyers to attend).   * The meeting is chaired by the Social Work Team Manager. * Plan agreed and is written up by the Social Work Team Manager. * Any outstanding Stage 1 Viability Assessments commence by Safeguarding Social Worker. These include Viability Assessments of Reg. 24, planned Kinship placements and/or Special Guardianship assessments. * Any referrals for Stage 2 viability assessments to be sent to FFAST within 48 hours. * Any final adjustments are made to Genogram. * Updated Schedule of Kinship Carers is sent to Legal. |
| 4 | **Pre-Proceedings Agreement** is typed up by Social Worker/Team Manager and sent to parents’ Solicitors by Legal and signed by all. Signed agreement is attached in the Documents Section of the child’s Liquidlogic file. Case Progression Manager to be alerted by Legal if agreement is not received.   * Experts (psychological, psychiatric) are instructed by Legal if necessary and as agreed by LPM Gateway Panel - **Locality Head of Service approval required before instruction**. * Tests (hair strand, DNA, Learning Capacity) are sought by Legal. |
| 5 | * Stage 2 Viability Assessments of Kinship Carers are completed by the FFAST Social Worker. These are sent to Safeguarding Social Worker within 24 hours of completion. Safeguarding Social Worker will respond within 48 to confirm that Stage 3 assessment is to commence. * Schedule of Kinship Carers is updated by Safeguarding Social Worker and sent to Legal. * Full Stage 3 assessments of Kinship Carers will commence by the FFAST Social Worker. |
| 7 | **LPM/Care Planning Meeting** takes place between Social Worker, Team Manager and Legal. If applicable, Permanence Social Worker, FFAST Social Worker are also to be invited i.e. if decision to issue or to discuss updated assessments  :   * To discuss progress and review Section 8 pre-proceedings plan (which is attached to the intial pre-proceedings agreement) * This discussion is arranged by Legal Services and takes place at Legal Services offices (or via conference call). * Legal Services will prepare and circulate minutes within four working days after the meeting. Minutes of all Care Planning/LPM discussions will be sent to Locality Head of Service for approval, as well as to the Case Progression Manager for the purpose of tracking. * Social Worker attaches the minutes in the Documents Section of the child’s LiquidLogic file and they or the Team Manager cross-references this in case notes within five working days. * If no progress is made case needs be considered for Care Proceedings (papers should be with Legal within 10 working days and case should be issued within 15 working days - Court timeline to be followed). * If there is delay in achieving actions agreed at this point the case is referred to the Case Progression Manager who will meet with the Social Worker and Team Manager to discuss and agree a plan to address the delay. In the event of further difficulties in addressing this delay, the locality Head of Service and Head of Service with a Court Lead will be alerted. |
| 8 | **Pre Proceedings Review Meeting** is arranged and chaired by the Social Work Team Manager. (No lawyers attend unless Care Proceedings will be issued).   * Any drug and alcohol test results are discussed. * Schedule of Kinship Carers is updated and schedule sent to Legal. * Writing of the Child Permanence Report will commence if appropriate. * Updated Pre-proceedings Plan (Section 8 of the agreement) is prepared and circulated by the Social Work Team Manager including the Permanence Team if required for adoption planning. This agreement is sent to the parents’ Solicitors by Legal and signed by all parties. The signed agreement is attached in the Documents Section of the Child’s Liquidlogic file within a week. Case Progression Manager will be notified by Legal if agreement is not received. |
| 9 | **Mid-point review is held for all Kinship Assessments, including planned and Regulation 24, as well as Special Guardian assessment between the Safeguarding and FFAST Social Workers -** Draft support plan for prospective Special Guardians is prepared jointly by the Safeguarding and FFAST Social Worker at this stage, if applicable. |
| 13 | * Final assessments should be completed by this stage. |
| 14 | **Further LPM/ Care Plan Meeting** takes place between Social Worker, Team Manager, and Legal. Permanence Social Worker, FFAST Social Worker (if applicable) also to be invited. Consideration of section 8 pre-proceedings plan, taken from the last pre-proceedings review. Consider whether:   * **If no progress made then consider Care Proceedings (children’s case should issued within 3 weeks and court timeline followed)** or continue in Pre proceedings if it is likely that it can be diverted from careorclosed. * Outcome of mid-point review of full Kinship Assessments is discussed. * This discussion is arranged by Legal Services. * This discussion takes place at Legal Services offices (or via conference call). * Legal Services prepare and circulate minutes * Minutes are sent to Locality Head of Service for approval within four working days of the meeting. Case Progression Manager included for the purpose of tracking. Social Worker who attended attaches the LPM minutes in the Documents Section of the child’s Liquidlogic file and cross-references this in the child’s record within five working days. |
| 15 | **Pre proceedings Review Meeting** takes place and is arranged and chaired by the Social Work Team Manager, lawyers should attend.   * Full assessments of family members and expert reports should be available and discussed. * Kinship Carers will be advised of outcome of assessments and should be supported to seek legal advice where appropriate. * Decision from LPM/Care Planning Meeting will be fed back to family. * Updated Pre-Proceedings Plan (contained in Section 8 of the Agreement) is prepared and circulated by the Social Work Team Manager, including the Permanence Team to enable adoption planning. This agreement is signed by all parties and sent to the parents’ Solicitors by Legal. The signed agreement is attached in the Documents Section of the child’s LiquidLogic record within five working days. Case Progression Manager to be notified by Legal if agreement is not received. * If the decision is to end pre-proceedings then pre-proceedings will end. This is treated as Final Pre-proceedings Review Meeting. Letter to end pre-proceedings to be sent to parents (see template) |
| 20 | **If the decision is to continue with Pre-Proceedings a further LPM/ Care Planning Meeting** is held with the Social Worker, Social Work Team Manager, Permanence Social Worker, FFAST Social Worker and Legal (as per week 14):   * This discussion is arranged by Legal Services and takes place at Legal Services offices (or via conference call). * Final decision is made about either ending pre-proceedings or entering Care Proceedings. If Care Proceedings to be issued – papers should be prepared and sent to Legal within 10 working days and should be issued within three weeks and Court Timeline to be followed. * If it looks likely that the child’s case will need to remain in pre-proceedings beyond week 26, then approval needs to be obtained from the Locality Head of Service via the LPM minutes. * Legal Services prepare and circulate minutes. * Minutes of all LPM/Care Planning Meetings are sent to Locality Head of Service for approval within four working days of the meeting. Case Progression Manager included for the purpose of tracking. Social Worker who attended the meeting attaches the minutes in the Documents Section of the child’s Liquidlogic record and cross-references in case notes within five working days. |
| 21 | **Final Pre Proceedings Meeting** is arranged and chaired by the Social Work Team Manager. (No Lawyers will attend unless otherwise advised).   * Family is advised of the Local Authority’s final plans. * Updated Pre-Proceedings Agreement is prepared and circulated by the Social Worker/Team Manager, including the Permanence Team to enable adoption planning. Again this agreement is signed by all parties and sent to parents’ Solicitors by Legal. Signed agreement is then attached in the Documents Section of the child’s Liquidlogic file within five working days. Case Progression manager to be notified by Legal if Agreement is not received. |
| 26 | Pre-proceedings ended or if it is to continue beyond 26 weeks in Pre-Proceedings this should be no more than four weeks and further LPM/PPM reviews should be held. **Express permission must be sought from the Locality Head of Service and Legal Liaison Head of Service to continue beyond 26 weeks.** |