**Northumbria and North Durham: Assessment framework**

The framework aims to standardise the duration and type of assessments undertaken in public law proceedings.

* The LA is expected to have completed assessments before issue where possible;
* References should be made to assessments already completed in the initial SWET and should be included with the application;
* The LA is expected to tailor those assessments to the presenting issues/risks;
* The court will review the extent to which there are any gaps in such assessments and timetable accordingly to fill such gaps and otherwise update;
* The timescales for assessments in proceedings are for cases where assessments have not been undertaken prior to issue or, exceptionally, the court considers a further full assessment is required.

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| **Type of assessment**  | **Length of time allowed** | **Considerations** | **Good practice** |
| Risk assessment  | Expectation is within 2 weeks |  | 1. The assessments undertaken need to be focused on the issues in the case.
2. It would assist for the areas which are the focus of the assessment to be agreed/directed/recorded so there is no misunderstanding.
3. An assessment plan should be provided as a standard part of the assessment work. This should include:
* Name of worker;
* Location;
* Topic to be covered;
* Dates and times of appointments.

Kinship Carer AssessmentsWhere a number of kinship carers have a positive viability assessment, parents should be encouraged to agree who should proceed to a full assessment. |
| Contact assessment  | Expectation is within 4 weeks |  |
| Viability assessment  | Expectation is within 2/3 weeks |  |
| Parenting assessment  | Expectation is within 8 weeks | If appointments are not kept (and evidence may be required as to why not) the local authority will inform the court and the assessment may not be repeated. |
| PAMS assessment  | Expectation is within 12 weeks  | A FCMH should be listed after the PAMS has been completed to establish if a training programme is required to be implemented. The training programme should take no longer than 6 weeks |
| Kinship carer assessment SGO assessment | Expectation is within 12 - 16 weeks | * Time may be required to submit the report to fostering panel for consideration. This may add 4 weeks.
* Time may be required for the applicant to review the completed SGO assessment and provide consent to share, after seeking legal advice. This may add 4 weeks.
* The time required to submit the report to fostering panel and/ or seek consent to share is expected to be included in the maximum period of 16 weeks.
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| Sibling assessment | Expectation is within 6 weeks |  |  |
| ADM process | Expectation is that the ADM takes place within 2 weeks of the decision that the plan should be one of adoption (decision making meeting/ decision making LAC) |  |  |