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**PRE-PROCEEDINGS TIMELINE – JULY 2022**

Note: References to parent includes all with parental responsibility

| **Week** | **Action** |
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| **- 3** | Initial Legal Planning Meeting (LPM) Request, fully completed by Social Worker (SW) and signed off by Team Manager (TM) and Head of Service (HoS), together with supporting documents\* to Legal - nsc.legal@n-somerset.gov.uk. \* Supporting documents: * Chronology of Significant Events (not LCS chronology)
* Three generational genogram – Maternal & Paternal
* Birth Certificate or Court Order or Marriage Certificate (to confirm father’s parental responsibility), if available
* Plan agreed of FGC / FNM
* Any other documents referred to in the LPM Request not available on LCS

Legal will obtain the most recent C&F Assessment and CIN/CP Plan from LCS. Family will be considered in Panel on the date indicated on the LPM Request Form. |
| **- 2** | **Initial LPM with outcome to enter pre-proceedings process** Held remotely via MS Teams. Attended by HoS, SW, TM, Legal and any others identified. Minute-Taker provided by Business Support (BS). \*\* see end for timescales re minutes. SW referral to Care & Resource Panel. If the decision is to issue care proceedings urgently (without entering pre-proceedings) and a meeting is required with the parent but their legal representative will not attend without funding, then an adapted pre-proceedings letter should be sent to trigger funding. This may be useful in obtaining agreement on arrangements pending issue, eg agreeing to or extending s20 accommodation.**Capacity/Learning difficulties:** If there is any question as to a parent’s capacity to understand and take part in the pre-proceedings process and/or their cognitive functioning, a capacity and/or cognitive assessment should be undertaken before meeting with the parent. An adapted pre-proceedings letter will be provided to the parent to trigger legal funding and agreement should be obtained from the parent, via their legal representative, to instruct an expert to undertake the assessment/s. Legal will instruct the expert. An Advocate should be agreed to support the parent at the pre-proceedings meeting and during the pre-proceedings process. Outcome of capacity assessment:* Parent has capacity – enter pre-proceedings process;
* Parent does not have capacity – RLPM / issue care proceedings.
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| **- 1** | **Pre-Proceedings Meeting (PPM) letter** and **Parenting Assessment Plan** (with week commencing and details of sessions but not actual dates) drafted by Children’s Social Care (CSC) and sent to Legal for comment/amendment. Finalised PPM letter and draft Parenting Assessment Plan hand-delivered to parent with list of local solicitors, parent pack and s20 leaflet (if relevant). Legal draft PPM Agenda and send to TM together with finalised letter & draft PA Plan (to assist). |
| **0** | **First PPM with parent**. Separate meeting for each parent. Parent and SW/TM will be legally represented. Chaired by TM, following PPM Agenda. Minute-taker provided by BS. Pre-Proceedings timeline commences on date of meeting with primary carer. |
| **0-1** | **Pre-Proceedings Timeline Overview Spreadsheet** completed and circulated by Legal with request for BS to set up RLPMs and RPPMs.**Pre-Proceedings Plan** drafted by Legal to capture agreements reached at PPM. Agreed version signed by SW and parent, signed copy to Legal. **Consent Form** drafted by Legal, SW arranges signature by parent and returns to Legal. **Family Group Conference** (FGC) / Family Network Meeting (FNM) referral by SW (if not already done or taken place). **Initial Screening** of family and friends (as identified at the PPM) completed by SW. Referral to Kinship Team for Viability Assessments in relation to positive outcomes. **Parenting Assessment Plan** finalised by SW, inserting dates of sessions as agreed with parent, copy to Legal to send to parent’s legal representative. SW arranges signature of finalised version, signed copy to Legal.**Parenting Assessment** commenced by SW/Agent SW. If Agent SW then legal will instruct. **Sibling Assessment** commenced by SW/Agent SW. If Agent SW then legal will instruct. Agreed **referrals for support/intervention** for parent and child(ren) as agreed at PPM, completed by SW.**Agent SW** and/or **Expert** instructions, **drug** and/or **alcohol** tests, **paternity** tests, **reports/statements** (school, GP etc) and **disclosure** (police, previous proceedings etc) led by Legal. Note: If paternity is questioned, putative fathers should not take part in the pre-proceedings process unless and until paternity has been confirmed through a DNA test, which will be arranged by Legal.  |
| **2-3** | **Viability Assessments** commence - Kinship Team & SW (as identified after Initial Screenings completed). |
| **4-15** | **Full Assessments** completed by Kinship Team(within 12 weeks, identified after positive Viability Assessments completed). |
| **7** | **Review LPM** (HoS, SW, TM, Legal & Minute-Taker provided by BS).**Possible outcomes of Review LPM:** * care proceedings to be issued (pre-proceedings will close when parent is advised at the Review PPM or by letter if appropriate);
* continue in pre-proceedings in order to complete assessments.

Note: A RLPM may be held at any time prior to Week 7 if the pre-proceedings process and assessments are not on track and/or the parent is not engaging. Legal lead on obtaining any additional evidence identified.  |
| **8** | **Depending on outcome of RLPM and if required:** **Social Care Review Meeting** (SW, TM & parent) – plan on track, to update parent. SW provides update to Legal afterwards. **OR****Review PPM** (Parent & their Legal, SW, TM, Legal & Minute-Taker provided by BS) to advise parent care proceedings to be issued. Legal provides TM with completed agenda & agreed Pre-Proceedings Plan in advance (to assist). Note: If continuing in pre-proceedings, due to limited funding for parent’s legal representatives, only meet to advise remaining in pre-proceedings process **if** there is a need to meet with parents in a scenario where they require legal advice, eg a change in care plan. |
| **12** | **Parenting & Sibling Assessment finalised by SW and approved by TM** to Legal for comment. Or provided by Agent SW.  |
| **15** | **Review LPM** (HoS, SW, TM, Legal & Minute-Taker provided by BS).Consider inviting the assessor from the Kinship Team and, if it appears that long-term fostering is a likely outcome, the Corporate Parenting Team.**Possible outcomes:** * care proceedings to be issued (pre-proceedings will close when primary carer is advised at the Review PPM or by letter if appropriate);
* pre-proceedings to be closed (pre-proceedings will close when primary carer is advised at the Review PPM or by letter if appropriate);
* continue in pre-proceedings in order to complete assessments (eg unborn baby) or if it is highly likely that extending the pre-proceedings process will avoid care proceedings (eg parents have separated or parent has commenced therapy and further period of assessment is required).

Full reasons for extending the pre-proceedings process must be recorded in the RLPM minutes. CSC & Legal finalise any pre-proceedings tasks, eg updating disclosure, finalise Pre-Proceedings Plan and finalise updating Safety Plan if required.  |
| **16** | **Review PPM** (Parent & their Legal, SW, TM, Legal & Minute-Taker provided by BS) to advise parent of outcome of RLPM/pre-proceedings process. Legal provides TM with completed agenda & agreed Pre-Proceedings Plan in advance (to assist).Pre-proceedings closes on meeting with primary carer to advise of decision to issue or to end pre-proceedings.  |
|  | **End of Week 16 - Latest date by which pre-proceedings should close unless an extension is agreed by Head of Service.**  |

**\* Timescales for Minutes (LPM, RLPM, PPM & RPPM)**

**By Working Day 3** – BS send draft minutes to legal

**By Working Day 5** – Legal send any track changes to HoS (copy in BS, TM & SW)

**By Working Day 7** – HoS returns any comments and agreements to Legal

**By Working Day 9** – Legal finalise and send to SW, TM, BS (to save) & parent’s legal representative (PPM/RPPM only)