

Practice Guide for Legal Gateway Panel (January 2024)

What is the Legal Gateway Panel (LGP)

The LGP is the mechanism we use to scrutinise plans and make decisions for children when requests are made to enter into pre-proceedings or care proceedings.

The panel will:

- Scrutinise evidence and decide whether pre-proceedings or care proceedings should be initiated where threshold is met.
- Ensure proper assessment, help, support, and interventions has been offered to families within the child protection process; where there are gaps advice will be given to the social work team and child protection chair regarding the actions required.
- Ensure the care of children within their families and communities has been thoroughly explored, including through a family meeting or family group conference.
- Ensure that safety planning is appropriate and clear.
- Timescales for completion of pre-birth assessments will be set and a date to return to LGP if care proceedings are needed. The panel will review the minutes of the pre-birth tracking panel and ensure help and support is in place.
- Analyse patterns and trends to determine best practice for example, gaps in knowledge, difference in practice, gaps in service provision to inform commissioning intentions, feedback to partners of gaps in provision.
- Ensure all children subject to S20 have a legal review.

Panel membership will be:

- Chair - Head of Service
- Co-chair – Head of Service/AD
- Service Manager
- A court consultant
- Social care lawyer
- Business support officer/minute taker
- Strengthening Families service manager
- One Adoption West Yorkshire

Process of Legal Gateway Panel

- LGP is scheduled to take place on a weekly basis.
- All relevant documents for each young person to be heard at LGP should be received no later than **5pm on Monday** before the meeting.
- All documents must be submitted by the social work team via email:

Legal.Gateway.Panel@bradford.gov.uk

- The panel will meet every Thursday from 10:00am onwards and will be held on Teams.
- The panel members will receive the agenda and the paperwork for panel **by 1pm on Tuesday**.
- The social worker and team manager will receive an invitation for their allocated time via LGPs Business Support Officer.
- Any alterations to arrangements will be communicated to meeting attendees as soon as possible prior to the meeting.

Preparation for Legal Gateway Panel

The decision to present a case to a LGP will be made by a service Manager with management responsibility for the child/ren following a care planning meeting. The meeting and decision and rationale will be recorded on the child's case record. The referral to LGP will be approved by the head of service.

The social worker and team manager will prepare the necessary paperwork to submit to LGP.

All paperwork for LGP should be completed within the Legal tab on LCS.

Paperwork will include:

- LGP referral
- Single assessment to enter Pre-Proceedings
- Up to date Chronology
- Genogram
- PLO draft letter before proceedings/or intent to issue.
- PLO plan
- Parenting assessment if the request is to step up to care proceedings from pre-proceedings.

Post Legal Gateway Panel actions

The Business Support Officer will be responsible for ensuring that a written record of the meeting is made, and the record should be checked for accuracy by the chair before being recorded on the child's file **within 48 hours of the panel**.

All timescales agreed at LGP will be monitored by the court consultant to prevent that delay and escalate to service managers where timescales not met.

The solicitor with conduct of the case will complete the Legal Planning Advice Memo and circulate it to the allocated Social Worker and Team Manager. This is to be done within 24 hours for urgent cases and within 3 days for other cases.