

**Herefordshire Council - Children & Families  
Legal Toolkit**

<b>Version</b>	Legal Toolkit Version 2
<b>Purpose</b>	To assist in social work practice through the PLO process.
<b>Date signed off</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
<b>Date of next review</b>	<b>June 2026</b>

**Introduction:**

The purpose of this toolkit is to act as an aid in supporting practice in respect of pre-proceedings and public law applications. Templates, relevant information and guidance have been collated together to assist social workers through the pre-proceedings process, public law outline process and private law.

**How to use the Toolkit:**

The toolkit list below includes template documents to be used through the PLO process including pre-proceedings, proceedings and private law documents.

At the end of the table list are links to guidance and resources.

	LEGAL PROCESS DOCUMENTS			
No	Title	Context	Document	Guidance
1.	Routes to Legal Flowchart	Guide to how to access legal advice.	<a href="#">Legal flowchart</a>	A phone call can be made for urgent same day advice, if not simply send an email to the C&F email for duty advice.
2.	Process Guide- LGW	LGW referral documents	<a href="#">LGW TOR.docx</a>	There is a single LGW forum for all decision making
3.	Legal Gateway Referral Form	Template for LGW form for social worker to complete to book a slot at LGW.	<a href="#">New LGW form.docx</a>	New LGW referral form June 2025
4.	S.20 Agreement	Template S.20 Agreement	<a href="#">s20 Agreement</a>	<a href="#">s20 guidance</a> <a href="#">Leaflet for parents</a> <a href="#">Leaflet for children</a>
	PRE-PROCEEDINGS			
No	Title	Context	Document	Guidance
5.	Initial letter to parents- pre proceedings.	Template letter to parents to inform of commencement of pre proceedings.	<a href="#">Initial PLO letter to parents.docx</a> <a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">PLO plan</a>	

		<p>Letter should be sent with the following attached documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda</li> <li>• List of local solicitors</li> <li>• Information leaflet to parents</li> <li>• PLO plan</li> </ul>	<a href="#">List of solicitors</a> <a href="#">PLO leaflet</a>	
6.	Consent Form	Consent Form for parents to consent to GP records, statements, reports.	<a href="#">PLO medical record consent form</a>	
7.	Alternative Carers	Form to be completed by parents when putting forward alternative carers.	<a href="#">Friends and family form of those to be assessed</a>	
8.	PLO Plan	PLO plan to be completed through the pre-proceedings process, including minutes of all meetings to be saved on the child's file. If children's services issue then document to be filed with initial application as evidence.	<a href="#">PLO plan</a>	This document is completed by the social worker at the beginning of the pre-proceedings process and it is sent as an enclosure with the initial PLO letter.

9.	Letter Template- de-escalation	Template letter to parents for de-escalation of pre proceedings.	<a href="#">PLO de-escalation letter</a>	
10.	PLO minutes template	PLO minutes template	<a href="#">Template PLO Minutes - Dec 2024</a>	The minutes are completed by the legal team and sent to social worker and team manager for approval.
<b>COURT PROCEEDINGS</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Document</b>	<b>Guidance</b>
11.	Letter Template- Issue	Template letter to parents for intention to issue proceedings.	<a href="#">Letter informing parents of issuing proceedings</a>	
12.	Initial SWET	Template for social worker statement for ICO- make sure chronology is included if not on a separate document.	<a href="#">Initial SWET</a>	
13.	Initial SW Statement for EPO/Short Notice ICO	Template for social worker statement when applying for EPO/Short Notice ICO	<a href="#">Urgent SWET for abridged notice ICO or EPO</a>	
14.	Initial Care Plan	Template for Initial Care Plan to be signed off by TM and HOS.	<a href="#">Initial care plan</a>	
15.	Annex Documents Checklist Index	Annex Documents Checklist Index  Annex Documents are the documents specified in the Annex to the Application	<a href="#">Index of checklist documents</a>	<a href="#">Pre-proceedings checklist</a>

		<p>Form which are to be attached to that form and filed with the court:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Work Chronology</li> <li>• Social Work Statement and Genogram</li> <li>• The current assessments relating to the child and/or the family and friends of the child to which the Social Work Statement refers and on which the LA relies</li> <li>• Care Plan</li> <li>• Index of Checklist Documents</li> </ul>		
16.	Parenting Assessment Template	Template for parenting assessment.	<a href="#">Parenting Assessment template</a>	
17.	Sibling Assessment Template	Template for sibling assessment.	<a href="#">Sibling assessment template</a>	
18.	Family Time Assessment	Family Time Assessment Template	<a href="#">Family time assessment tool</a>	<a href="#">Family time flow chart</a>
19.	Risk Assessment Template	Risk Assessment Template	<a href="#">Risk assessment template</a>	
20.	Pre-Screening Viability	Pre Screening Viability Template	<a href="#">Pre-screening form</a>	
21.	Witness Statement Template	Witness Statement Template for third party witnesses/statement from senior staff member.	<a href="#">Witness statement template</a>	

22.	Final SWET	Template for final SWET.	<a href="#">Final SWET</a>	
23.	Final Care Plan	Template for Final Care Plan to be signed off by TM and HOS.	<a href="#">Final care plan</a>	
24.	Supervision Plan	Template for Supervision Plan to be signed off by TM and HOS.	<a href="#">Supervision plan</a>	
25.	16 week court timetable where adoption being considered		<a href="#">16 week plan where adoption is being considered</a>	
26.	16 week court timetable where adoption not being considered		<a href="#">16 week plan where adoption is NOT being considered</a>	
<b>DOLS</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Document</b>	<b>Guidance</b>
27.	DOLS Statement Template	DOLS statement Template	<a href="#">DOLs statement template</a>	
28.	DOLS Checklist	DOLS action plan	<a href="#">DOLs Checklist</a>	
<b>PRIVATE LAW</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Document</b>	<b>Guidance</b>
29.	s.7 Templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>s.7 Report Template</li> <li>s.7 Addendum Report Template.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">s7 report</a>  <a href="#">s7 addendum report</a>	<a href="#">Guidance on whether CAFCASS or LA prepare s7 report</a>  <a href="#">Guidance on s7 report drafting</a>  <a href="#">s7 report drafting guidance with domestic abuse considerations</a>

30.	s.37 Template	s.37 Template	<a href="#">s37 report</a>	When completing s.37 need to check Court Order as may direct other issues the court want the report to answer.
31.	First Report to Court	This is a First Report Template introduced by the Private Law West Mids initiative in 2024	<a href="#">Report for First Hearing with Guidance 21.05.24</a>	There is guidance on completion in red which should be deleted upon completion.
<b>DISCHARGE CARE ORDER</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Document</b>	<b>Guidance</b>
32.	Discharge of Care Order Documents	DCO documents:  1- Referral Form (use LGW referral form above)  2- Draft DCO statement  3- DCO fast track protocol	<a href="#">DCO statement</a>	<a href="#">DCO fast track process</a>

### Links to Useful Resources

- Recommendations to Achieve Best Practice in the child protection and family Justice Systems – Interim Report - June 2019  
[Microsoft Word - \\* Interim report \(final\).docx \(judiciary.uk\)](#)
- Best Practice Guidance: The application and case management – March 2021  
[Microsoft Word - Application and case management BPG report.docx \(judiciary.uk\)](#)

- Best Practice Guidance: Support for and work with families prior to court proceedings – March 2021  
[Microsoft Word - Prior to court proceedings BPG report.docx \(judiciary.uk\)](#)
- Best Practice Guidance: Section 20 / Section 76 accommodation – March 2021  
[Microsoft Word - S 20 : s 76 BPG report.docx \(judiciary.uk\)](#)
- Best Practice Guidance: Special Guardianship Orders – March 2021  
[Microsoft Word - Special guardianship BPG report.docx \(judiciary.uk\)](#)