

Pre-proceedings Public Law Outline Timeline & Workflow

NB This Timeline should be read in conjunction with [Thurrock Pre-proceedings Public Law Outline \(PLO\) Guidance](#)

Legal Planning Meeting

- Legal advisor at Legal Planning Meeting (LPM) confirms threshold criteria are met
- Decision made to enter Pre proceedings Public Law Outline (PLO) process
- PLO plan agreed outlining the work to be undertaken including Assessments, referrals to other agencies, direct work with children/parents and if an Advocate should be appointed
- PLO timeline established with filing dates for Assessments and the initial PLO meeting
- LPM Chair notifies Administrator PLO Tracker Panel of new PLO case and PLO Plan within 1 working day

Week 1

Letter before Proceedings (PLO letter) and Letters of Instruction

- Administrator PLO Tracker Panel puts case on the next PLO Tracker Panel agenda and updates the Panel spreadsheet
- Within 2 working days of LPM – SW to draft PLO letter for parents and send to LA legal advisor, separate letters can be sent to parents if they are estranged
- Legal advisor to agree draft PLO letter within 3 working days
- Within 5 working days of LPM – SW to hand deliver/send letter to parents and anyone else that holds parental responsibility (PR)
- Experts and independent social workers (ISW) to be identified by the SW / Commissioning Team
- SW to tell their legal advisor who will undertake any Assessment(s)
- SW to provide instructions to their legal advisor so they can draft Letters of Instruction (LOI) for independent/expert Assessments

Weeks 2 - 4

Pre-proceedings PLO meetings

- Held within 10 – 15 days of LPM
- Separate PLO meetings can be held for parents who are estranged
- Team Manager (TM) Chairs these meetings
- SW can obtain telephone legal advice during the meeting if required but legal advisor will attend if the case is complex
- Parent's lawyer(s) invited but the meeting can go ahead if they do not attend

- Chair ensures the parents understand the LA's concerns and what will happen if things do not change
- Parents are clear about any Assessments/referrals that will be undertaken and the timescales for these
- Genogram is agreed with the family and any potential alternative carers
- Review PLO meeting dates agreed based on the PLO plan / timeline

Assessments

- LOI to be sent to the parent's lawyer(s) prior to the PLO Meeting so they can be discussed / agreed asap
- SW makes referrals to agencies in line with the PLO plan
- By end week 4 LOI sent to experts/ISW

Weeks 2 – 7

PLO Tracker Panel

- SW and TM attend the next PLO Tracker Panel following the LPM to confirm the PLO plan / work to be undertaken, and timescales
- Panel Chair agrees PLO Tracker Panel review dates (at least monthly) to monitor progress and address any delay

Review PLO meeting(s) with parents

These should be scheduled at key points in the PLO timeline eg when Assessments are filed, or convened urgently to address concerns or lack of progress

Week 8

Management Review

- Service Manager (SM) / TM / SW review progress of the PLO plan including engagement of parents and demonstrable change in family behaviour, progress of Assessments, safety planning/wellbeing of the child
- SM confirms whether the PLO plan should continue or if a LPM needs to be convened to consider issuing proceedings
- SM records the outcome of the review on the child's case file

Weeks 9-11

PLO Tracker Panel

SW and TM attend Panel as required to review progress and address delay **Review PLO meeting held with parents if required**

Weeks 12 - 15

Management Review

SM/TM/SW review the findings from the Assessments and decide whether:

- the LA's concerns have reduced sufficiently in which case the SW and TM should attend PLO Tracker Panel to discuss stepping out of PLO, or
- care proceedings should be considered in which case a review LPM should be held within 5 working days

Review Legal Planning Meeting / PLO Tracker Panel

Case direction is agreed:

- continue PLO process with clear timescales
- step out of PLO process
- issue proceedings

Cases going into proceedings will continue to be discussed at the PLO Tracker Panel until the Application to issue has been made, to monitor progress and timeliness

By Week 20

Decision to step out of Pre-proceedings PLO process or to Initiate Proceedings

Review PLO meeting convened with the parent(s) and their lawyers within 5 working days of the review LPM / PLO Tracker Panel to confirm the LA's position, this must be put in writing to them.

In the event that a decision is made to issue care proceedings, the review PLO meeting will take place immediately before the application for the Care Order is sent to the Court.

Letter of Issue

- Within 2 working days of LPM – SW to draft Letter of Issue for parents and send to the LA legal advisor
- Legal advisor to agree draft Letter of Issue within 3 working days
- Within 5 working days of LPM – SW to hand deliver/send letter to parents and anyone else that holds PR

Application to Court

- Within 2 weeks of the decision to issue – SW to send final Court documentation to Legal Services
- Within 5 working days of receipt (depending upon the level of risk) – Legal Services to make the Application to issue care proceedings