

## **PROCESS FOR CHILDREN TO BE DISCUSSED AT LEGAL GATEWAY PANEL**

This document provides the guidance for Social Workers, Team and Service Managers who need to attend Legal Gateway Panel.

### **PURPOSE OF LEGAL GATEWAY PANEL**

Please refer to Terms and Reference of Legal Gateway Panel for full details

- To seek permission to enter Pre-proceedings (PLO)
- To seek permission to initiate care proceedings
- To seek permission to instruct an expert during care proceedings

### **ROLE OF THE SOCIAL WORKER PRIOR TO LEGAL GATEWAY PANEL ATTENDANCE**

The Social Worker and Team Manager in consultation with the Service Manager should agree that a child's case needs to be presented to Legal Gateway Panel.

This decision (including timescale for attendance) should be clearly recorded in observations (Manager's decision).

### **DOCUMENTATION TO BE SUBMITTED TO PANEL**

The Legal Gateway Request Form is located on Wisdom (legal folder). This must be completed by the Social Worker and signed off by the Team Manager, Service Manager and Head of Service prior to submission.

In order for there to be a full, effective discussion and robust decision making, the following documents must be available in advance of the meeting:

- Genogram (with dates of birth)
- Chronology
- Last case supervision notes
- Most recent assessment
- Any expert or viability assessments conducted in the pre-proceedings process
- Minutes from the last LAC/CP/CIN review.

Documents should be sent to [LegalGatewayPanel@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:LegalGatewayPanel@kirklees.gov.uk) once approved and quality assured by the Team Manager, Service Manager and Head of Service.

### **SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS**

All documents required must be submitted by Tuesday 12noon for consideration at panel

An appointment at Panel will not be offered until all the paperwork has been submitted and signed by the Team Manager, Service Manager and Head of Service

### **Panel agenda**

The issues to be considered at Legal Gateway Panel will include the following:

- The reasons for the concerns and evidential basis for establishing significant harm and the threshold criteria.
- Why Care Proceedings/Pre-Proceedings is necessary- what is the aim, objective, purpose and plan?
- The steps already taken to clarify the issues of concern- i.e. assessments undertaken, information from partner agencies, pre proceedings work.
- The action/decision already taken and where the decisions were made (e.g. strategy meeting, Child Protection Conference).
- The proposed care plan for the child, including the proposed placement and potential EPP; any cultural, language and issues relating to ethnicity, the need to parallel plan, consultation with the parents and wider family, whether any family members are available to care on an interim or permanent basis, proposals for contact.
- Whether it may be appropriate to instruct any expert assessments before the commencement of court proceedings, if so, what is the proposed remit of the instruction and areas to be addressed?
- Any potential issues regarding parental capacity to litigate should be flagged up.

### **Outcomes**

There are the following possible outcomes of Legal Gateway Panel:

1. Issue care proceedings.
2. Formal Pre Proceedings/PLO process.
3. No legal intervention required at this stage.
4. Insufficient information to make a determination - case to return to Legal Gateway Panel upon collation of additional information

**ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN FOLLOWING LEGAL GATEWAY PANEL**

The Legal Gateway Panel is not the same as a legal planning meeting which should be planned and take place after the Legal Gateway Panel.

Please refer to Evidence Checklist for further guidance