

**PRE- PROCEEDING MEETING****AGENDA AND GUIDANCE****1. Introductions**

- Check who was invited and whether the persons with parental responsibility have approached a solicitor to represent them
- Set out any special requirements e.g. advocate, Interpreter
- Check that those with PR and their solicitors have copies of the Pre Proceedings letter
- Consider any others permitted to attend (e.g. for parental support)

**2. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss:**

- What the parent does well
- What the local authority is worried about
- Clarify that it is not a child protection conference and that the minutes from the meeting will form part of the evidence presented to court if care proceedings become necessary
- At the end of the meeting it is hoped a plan can be agreed which if acted upon will avoid the need to initiate proceedings or reduce their length if they are needed

**3. Agree who will take the minutes and who will circulate them**

This could be legal, the chair or the social worker. Minutes will be distributed within 5 working days.

**4. Confirm family structure and the key people involved including extended family and friends**

- Explore who parents would want to be assessed to care for their children if the case went into care proceedings. Explain that viability assessments will be undertaken in pre proceedings to prevent delay if needed later
- Encourage use of family group conference

**5. What is working well:**

- Brief summary by the chair and social worker

**6. What the local authority is worried about:**

- Social Worker to briefly summarise the ' concerns' as outlined in the Pre-proceedings letter and the key evidence for them
- Discuss whether parents/carers agree that the concerns are valid/accurate

**7. What is the plan to safeguard the children(ren)**

- The plan should have been outlined in summary in the Pre-proceedings letter and form the basis of this discussion
- Go through the specifics of the plan and what parents/carers need to do and what the timescales are
- Plan should include, if appropriate, where the children should live, any contact arrangements, any further assessments and any contracts in place
- Give the parents/carers time if they wish to consult their solicitor at this point in the meeting
- Parent/carer signs the plan at the meeting

**8. Family members:**

- Explore who parents would want to be assessed to care for their children if the case went into proceedings. Explain that viability assessments will be undertaken in pre proceedings to prevent delay if needed later
- Encourage uptake of Family Group Conference

**9. Date for Review**

- This should be no later than 6-8 weeks and **MUST** be set at the meeting
- If a further review is required this must be held within a further 6-8 weeks
- Pre proceedings should **NOT** go beyond 16 weeks unless approved by the Head of Service who will record the rationale for this decision on the child's case file

**10. Internally consider any other issues for follow up and by whom**

- Liaison with legal if the parents was not legally represented by a solicitor
- Liaison with legal if LA solicitor was not in attendance or arrived late

**Please note:**

If the parent/carer refused to attend the meeting, does not attend the meeting without good reason or refused to sign the plan, the Social Worker and Team Manager must immediately return the matter to Legal Gateway Panel to determine whether care proceedings should be initiated.