

TERMS OF REFERENCE LEGAL GATEWAY PANEL

PURPOSE OF LEGAL GATEWAY PANEL

The purpose of the Legal Gateway Panel is to provide a consistent and timely response in regards to Children's Social Care plan of intervention where legal proceedings are being considered.

The panel in considering all aspects of the child's circumstances will ensure that plans are clear with identifiable outcomes, service provision and actions to meet those needs

The Panel will enable senior managers to ensure consistent and robust decision making and care planning based on evidence informed practice.

AIMS AND KEY PRINCIPLES

- To increase the consistency of decision making in relation to children entering care.
- To reduce the number of unplanned admissions to care.
- To consider requests to commence legal proceedings, initiate Public Law Outline and requests for Section 20 arrangements.
- To review retrospective decisions in relation to Section 20 arrangements, EPO and Police Powers of Protection.
- To ensure that the needs of children are central to decision making processes.
- This meeting is not a care planning forum, however the chair may seek clarity on the overarching care plan and steps taken to date.

DECISION TO PRESENT A CASE TO A LEGAL GATEWAY MEETING

The decision to present a case to a Legal Gateway Panel will be made by a Service Manager with management responsibility for the case as a result of supervision or case discussion with the allocated Social Worker. This decision should be recorded within the child's case record.

DOCUMENTS TO BE PRESENTED AT LEGAL GATEWAY

- Genogram
- Up to date Chronology
- Up to date Assessment
- Up to date Plan for the child/children
- Legal Gateway Pro-forma

All relevant documents should be sent to the administrative support no later than **5pm on Wednesday** of the week prior to the meeting.

All documents must be submitted via email **legalgatewaypanel@kirklees.gov.uk**

FREQUENCY OF PANEL

Legal Gateway Panel is scheduled to take place on a weekly basis. However, if the welfare of the child requires that a decision is made before the next scheduled meeting, then the relevant Service Manager will discuss the case with the Head of Service. For example, where a decision is required to issue an application for an Emergency Protection Order.

The decision taken outside of the panel will be endorsed by the next panel.

The panel will meet every Tuesday afternoon and held at Civic Centre 1.

- You will receive an invite with the date, time and venue
- Any alterations to arrangements will be communicated to meeting attendees as soon as possible prior to the meeting.

PANEL MEETING

The meeting will be chaired by the Head of Service.

Panel members will include:

- Head of Service
- Service Manager
- Legal Representative
- Service Manager One Adoption
- Legal Project Officer
- Business Support

Prior to the meeting Service Delivery Managers will be required to sign off and quality assure all documents submitted to panel.

Each staff member attending will be expected to make a verbal summary of the reasons for and content of the request and be prepared to answer any points of clarification from the chair.

Service Delivery Managers and team managers to ensure that an alternative representative will be identified by the team to attend in the absence of the allocated worker.

Meeting attendance will be monitored and recorded in the minutes.

The administrative support will circulate all relevant documentation to panel members by close of business on Thursday of each week.

RECORDING OF LEGAL GATEWAY PANEL

The Business Administrator will be responsible for ensuring that a written record of the meeting is made.

The meeting proceedings will be recorded as a formal minute, including request details, brief summary of discussion and outcomes. A review timescale should also be included for each case discussed if appropriate.

The record should be checked for accuracy by the chair before being circulated to all attendees.

The panel decision for each child will be recorded on the child's record within 48 hours of the panel.

ROLE OF THE LEGAL PROJECT OFFICER

The Legal Project Officers main role within the Legal Gateway Panel is tracking of:

- Pre-birth assessment
- Children subject to pre-proceedings
- Children subject to Section 20 Accommodation
- Children in care proceedings (public and private law cases)

The Case Manager will provide the Legal Gateway Panel with regular updates in respect of tracking cases, identifying risks, drift and delay.

ROLE OF THE PANEL ADMINISTRATOR:

- Book a room
- Collate and distribute meeting documents.
- Prepare the agenda
- Take notes of each case discussion and decision.
- Distribute meeting notes and decisions following authorisation by the meeting Chair.
- Ensure that Legal Services have information about cases moving into pre-proceedings or proceedings so that they can notify CAFCASS.

REVIEW OF DECISIONS AT LEGAL GATEWAY PANEL

To ensure that decisions made at Legal Gateway Panel are progressed within the agreed timescales, the Principal Children and Families Social Worker will obtain quarterly updates from Service Managers, Social Workers and Legal Advisor as appropriate to ensure management oversight and challenge to avoid drift and delay for children and young people.