



## **Children's Safeguarding and Family Help**

Pre-Proceedings Panel Terms of  
Reference

## 1 Description and purpose of Panel

- The Pre-Proceedings Panel provides scrutiny and oversight of cases that have entered pre-proceedings by reviewing the case and monitoring progress in order to provide support and direction to social workers.
- The Panel aims to ensure that cases in pre-proceedings are appropriately planned for, timetabled, progressed and that the quality of the assessments help make timely decisions for children to either divert from court (this being the main focus) or, if required, to present clear, child focused, holistic evidence to the court.
- For each case, the panel will also review the purposefulness of pre proceedings and whether this remains the right pathway for the child and will consider how and when to exit pre-proceedings. The Panel will make recommendations for the child's plan but decisions on how to proceed will be taken by the service.
- Panel decisions will be based on the principles that the child's present and future welfare are safeguarded and decisions are made in a timely manner and are in their best interests.

## 2 Panel Membership

Membership of the Panel is:

- Head of Service - Children In Need (Chair)
- Head of Service, Quality Assurance (Deputy Chair)
- Service Manager, Legal Proceedings and Case Progression
- Service Manager, IRO/CPO (if unavailable, a CPO will attend)
- Service Manager, Family, Friends and Fostering (as available)
- Service Co-ordinator (CIN service) (minute taker)
- Representative from Legal Services

Attendees are social workers and their managers.

### 3 Roles and responsibilities

- Panel members should attend each meeting or if otherwise unable, ensure a deputy can attend in their absence.
- The Panel Chair is responsible for overseeing the Panel agenda to ensure efficient operation so that all cases are considered, progress on previous actions checked and recommendations made.
- Panel members should share their expert knowledge and experience in their field when considering cases and making recommendations and provide information on themes identified within their service.
- Allocated social workers and their team managers are expected to attend the Panel at the time appointed to provide relevant information to the Panel on progress made to date and to take part in discussion on recommendations for the case.
- Social workers are responsible for providing a written update to the Panel 48 hours prior to the meeting giving details of any issues arising and progress on carrying out previously agreed actions.
- There is an expectation that service managers have a full overview of the case and discuss and review cases in pre-proceedings with the social worker on a fortnightly basis in addition to discussion at Panel to ensure timely action.

### 4 Frequency of Panel meetings

- The first Panel meetings will be held on Thursday 25th January where cases that gone over 16 weeks and those at 12 weeks will be discussed.
- Subsequent meetings will be held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month in the afternoon.
- Dates will be set a year in advance.
- The meeting will be in person but hybrid arrangements can be arranged where required.
- The frequency of the Panel will be reviewed in 3 months to assess whether this frequency is sufficient to oversee all cases.

## 5 Administration of the Panel

- Panel meetings will be administered and minuted by a CIN service co-ordinator.
- The administrator is responsible for distributing the agenda 1 week in advance of the meeting to all team managers and should list the cases to be brought to Panel with their time slot. Minutes of the previous meeting will be distributed with the agenda.
- The administrator is responsible for distributing Panel meeting minutes to social workers and team managers and uploading the minutes (and any forms completed for Panel) onto the child's MOSAIC record within 3 working days of the Panel meeting.

## 6 Cases to be presented

- Every case entering pre-proceedings must be presented to Panel for review at 4 weeks, 8 weeks and 12 weeks.
- Cases must also be presented where they are likely to carry on past 16 weeks giving reasons for the delay. For these cases, the Chair should sign the Head of Service approval form (appendix 1) to formally record that the case will continue in pre-proceedings for a defined period after which the case must be referred back to the Care Pathways Panel.
- Each case will have a maximum 15 minute slot for discussion and social workers must complete the pre-proceedings Panel form (appendix 2) detailing progress made on previous actions and any delays.

## 7 Reporting

- Data provided at Panel meetings will be included in quarterly reports written by the Service manager for Legal Proceedings and Case Progression.
- The Service manager for Legal Proceedings and Case Progression will send weekly updates to service managers, Heads of Service, Legal Services and the CSFH Director.

## 8 Governance

- The Quality Assurance Board will have an overview of the quarterly reports, presented by the service manager for Legal Proceedings and Case Progression.
- Cases where there is a delay and/or exceed the 16 week or any other defined period will be presented to the Care Pathways Panel in the weekly PLO slot.

## Appendix 1

### Pre-Proceedings Over 16 weeks

#### Head of Service Approval

Children's Names:	
Mosaic Number:	
Date of last PLO meeting:	
Date of next PLO meeting:	
Target exit date of PLO:	
Likely number of weeks in PLO:	
Reason for extension:	
New assessment timetable: (including who will complete the work, and by when)	
Date of next Head of Service review:	

## Appendix 2

### Pre-Proceedings Panel Template

Children's Names:	
Mosaic Number:	
Date of last PLO meeting:	
Date of next PLO meeting:	
Target exit date of PLO:	
Likely number of weeks in PLO:	
Child protection reasons for being in PLO:	
Dates for assessments to be completed, and who is completing them: HST Expert assessments Parenting Assessments Viability Assessments SGO Any other assessment	
Date of FGC and outcome:	
Current care plan for children, including safety plan and intervention to mitigate risks:	
Likely outcome of PLO: Issue court application or step down? Care arrangements for the children?	
Challenges being faced in PLO, what needs to happen to overcome those challenges, and who needs to complete that work, and by when:	