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| **Becoming Looked After Panels** |
| **Terms of Reference and Template** **Purpose***For the purpose of these Terms of Reference, a child is any person under 18 years old.*The purpose of the panel is to ensure the threshold for a child to become looked after has been fully considered, that no alternativearrangementscan be madeto prevent a child from entering into local authority care and full consideration has been made of their age and individual circumstances. Becoming looked after will **not** provide better outcomes for the child should they remain at home. Ensure effective, multi-agency, SMART care planning and purposeful intervention. This should be evidenced in the completed assessment. Agree and record whether accommodation under s20 or s31 is required; if the latter applies then the case is to be booked in for legal advice and the actions/timescales set out must be adhered to. When accommodating under s20, legal advice will be sought and any actions and timescales are to be adhered to.**Process:*** The BLA paperwork will be with business support ***three working days*** before the panel.
* The paperwork to be forwarded to SM/HOS ***two working days*** before the panel date.
* A 'slot' to attend will be co-ordinated by business support and the social worker and their manager will be notified.
* An outcome will be given on the date of ***approved/not approved/review date*** (for further information).
* This completed proforma with chair's decision will be uploaded on LCS by the business support worker; an update of actions for SW/TM/PM will be included on case notes.
* **NO** child or young person will be left at risk of harm whilst awaiting a 'slot' for approval. Approvals will be given in emergency situations, however the case will be listed for the first available panel date.
* The review date will be either BLA or permanence panel date.

**Expectations:*** With regards to s20, the practice manager and the social worker are to provide a clear plan to return the child home to their Senior Manager, identifying what resources are required and the timescales when this will be achieved. If the timescales set by the chair are different from those set in the social worker's plan, the chair's approval is required to extend those in permanency panel. An action will be for all BLA s20 cases approved at BLA to be reviewed at the permanency panel in 3 weeks; dates for permanency panel will be fixed at BLA panel. This will prevent drift/delay for child/children being returned home.
* It is the responsibility of the team/practice manager to ensure the actions from BLA are being followed and any barriers to completion are clearly recorded and escalated.
* Social workers/team/practice managers attending should have a comprehensive knowledge of the case and be able to answer queries.

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| **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE****BLA Panel Template and Agenda for requesting a child/children** **to become a "Child in our Care"** |
| **Date:** |  | **District:** |  |
| **Membership** | **Name** |
| **Chair of panel - HoS/senior manager** |  |
| **Team manager/practice manager/social worker** |  |
| **Family group conference coordinator/ representative** |  |
| **Outreach/edge of care representative - life chances** |  |
| **Paperwork** | **Completed** |
| **Request for BLA (this template) completed** |  |
| **Up to date care plan** |  |
| **Minutes of a care planning meeting with senior managers** |  |
| **An up to date social work assessment** |  |
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| **LCS No:** |  |
| **Child(ren)'s name(s):** |  | **Date of birth:** |  |
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| **Review the case:** | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Date when case last heard:** | **Date**: |  |
| **Legal status:** |  |
| **Is the chronology up to date:** | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Is the C&F completed:**  | **Yes** | **No** | **Date**: |
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| **Practice manager's rational (succinct) for accommodating child/children** *(PM to add case note to case file once completed)* |
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| ***Team Manager's rational (succinct) for accommodating child/children*** *(PM to add case note to case file once completed)* |
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| **The Threshold** |
| 1. **What are the risks to the child/children if they remain at home?**
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| 1. **Can the risks be managed by a robust risk management plan? If not, why not?**
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| 1. **How long has the child lived in in this environment /parenting style and what is the impact on the child if they stay?**
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| 1. **How have you managed the risk so far? Why now? What's tipped in the assessment to ask for removal?**
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| 1. **Do the parents recognise they need help in parenting their children? Are they working with you?**
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| 1. **What work have you completed with the family to prevent the child/children being in accommodation - timescales are to be noted.**
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| 1. **What are the child's views?**

*Describe behaviours with carers if too young to comment.* |
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| 1. **If pre-proceedings have not been tried - why should the child/children should be removed without trying pre-proceedings first**

*(we cannot manage the risk by leaving children at home)* |
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| 1. **Has a FGC taken place? If not why not?**
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| 1. **Connected carers? private fostering?**
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| 1. **Edge of care (outreach/ASU/respite/life chances)?**
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| 1. **What will be the will the impact on the child's/children's emotional/developmental/physical/ mental wellbeing if removed? Give a breakdown for each criteria).**

Is the request for one child to become looked after? Is there other children we are not seeking removal for? What will the impact and risks to others remaining at home or for the one that we are requesting to be removed?  |
| 1. **Emotional:**
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| 1. **Developmental:**
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| 1. **Physical:**
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| 1. **Mental:**
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| 1. **Have you advised the parents of your plan to ask for removal?**
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| 1. **Have you advised how to prevent of accommodation could be achieved?**
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| 1. **Have you advised that if child/children removed the case may go to court?**

\*(All family members should be considered where there is a 'realistic prospect' of a placement and for requests to place outside of the family, a good, balanced analysis is expected of why this is in the best interests of the child/young person).\*If s20 is being requested, **do parents have capacity to consent?** (No child should ever be accommodated under s20 (CA89), prior to **intense support** being put in place to allow the child to remain at home. Any s20 should take into consideration that we are more likely to return a child home if active intervention takes place and the child is returned home within 6 weeks. The parent/carer are to be an active part of the care plan from the onset, this includes bringing the child into care, being party to all decision making, proactively taking their child to school, events or activities wherever possible. |
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| 1. **What is your permanence plan? Why is that the best/only option for child/children?**
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| **Decision by Chair for not approving child/children to Become Looked After**The chair of the panel must:1. Record a clear rational as to why the decision has been made not to accommodate a child.
2. Give clear direction as to what should happen now, who or what services should be involved and a referral to edge of care, pre-proceedings, outreach, permanence panel, case planning, LGW.

Chairs decision with actions for (SW/PM/TM/SM)

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| **Action** | **By whom** | **Completion Date** |
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| **Decision by Chair and rational for accommodating child/children**\*Record a clear rational as to why the decision to accommodate a child has been reached including how threshold has been met and why there is no alternative option other than local authority care. Family and Friend Carers **must** be the first option and why they have been ruled out. Give direction on proposed type of placement. Unless there are significant identified needs that cannot be met in foster care a foster placement should always be the preferred placement, and placed within a 20 mile radius. The chair is confident that after considering this form, assessments/care plan and verbal discussion with the team; there is no alternative other than becoming looked after and this is in the child's best interest*because the* ***IMPACT*** ofthe child/children being in care will be provided a better outcome in the short/medium/long term than being at home with family/parents.1. The Chair agrees that pre-proceedings is not an option as the risk is too high for the children/child to remain in the home with parents
2. Child to be accommodated and case to be booked into LGW within 1 week?
3. Child to be accommodated under s20 for a period of six weeks (maximum) with the plan to reunify with family. Or connected carers with support to apply for SGO/CAO under private law.

Chairs decision with actions for (SW/PM/TM/SM)

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| **Action** | **By whom** | **Completion date** |
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| **Signed:** |  |
| **Print Name:** |  | **Date:** |  |

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**Examples**

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| **Scenario** | **Level of authorisation** | **Pre-requisite** |
| Issue care proceedings with proposed LA plan of foster care or residential | HoS care planning meeting | Senior manager care planning, or senior manager approval of team manager care planning |
| Issue care proceedings with LA plan of HPA | HoS care planning meeting | Senior manager care planning, or Senior manager approval of team manager care planning |
| Issue care proceedings with LA plan of supervision order | Senior manager care planning  | Team and practice manager agreement to the plan – via case discussion or care planning |
| Child subject to ICO and HPA with view to change care plan to one of foster care or residential | Senior manager care planning | Team and practice manager agreement to the plan – via case discussion or care planning |
| Child Looked After change of placement | Briefing note to senior manager | Team manager care planning |
| Request for child to Become Looked After (s20 or planned issue) | HoS/SM BLA panel | Senior manager care planning, or Senior manager approval of team manager care planning |