**Procedure on Legal Planning Meetings Panel**

Before a decision can be made to initiate care proceedings a Legal Planning Meeting should be held and the following Protocol should be adhered to:

**Protocol and Function of Initial Legal Planning Meeting Panel**

1. Where Leicester City Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding considers that the threshold may have been reached and :
2. there may be a need for the Local Authority to share parental responsibility for a child or children and/or
3. a child has been accommodated under Section 20 and is unlikely to return home in the near future (1 month); or
4. there are no assessed family members to assume permanent legal responsibility for the child; or
5. there has been no improvement in family circumstances despite Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding services intervention

**it should refer the matter to the responsible Service Manager for approval to book a Legal Planning Meeting.**

The LPM request form shall be completed by the allocated Social Worker and approved by the Team Manager before being passed to the responsible Service Manager for consideration.

The relevant accompanying documents (minimum documentation required) should be attached to the request form. Those documents are:

* genogram
* up to date chronology
* most up to date Single assessment
* any relevant CP outcomes/s47 reports
* any relevant reports/assessments from professionals

Once the request for LPM is approved by the responsible Service Manager, they will sign the request form and pass to the Admin and Business Support Officer responsible for co-ordinating LPMs (ABSO) who will book a slot and notify the Social worker and Team manager of the meeting date and time by way of calendar invite.

1. The LPM will be booked onto the LPM panel on the following Thursday for CIN, SAT, DAS and DC Service cases and the next available LAC LPM panel for LAC cases, provided the request is received by the ABSO by the Friday prior to that panel (at least 4 working days in advance of the panel date) with the accompanying paperwork which will then be forwarded to the panel members.
2. The Panel will meet weekly to consider all requests for CIN, SAT, DAS and DC Service cases and monthly to consider all requests for LAC Service cases.

**Protocol and Function of Legal Planning Meeting Panel**

1. LPMs will be allocated 45 minutes, unless a different duration is already agreed by the chair in advance of the meeting. If the Social Worker/Team Manager believes the meeting is likely to take more than 45 minutes, they should flag this up at the time of requesting the LPM. It is expected that Team Managers attend at LPMs.
2. The Panel should consider:
3. The evidence;
4. The plan;
5. The timetable for the child;
6. The resources required;
7. Any investigations yet to be undertaken (SW to arrange);
8. The pre-proceedings letter (if appropriate);
9. The timing of such proceedings ;
10. Any assessment previously undertaken, proposed or information missing;
11. The purpose and likely action of any proceedings;
12. At the conclusion of the LPM, if necessary deadlines will be set for actions to be completed. Those dates will be recorded on the standard Action Sheet which will then be saved onto the child’s record within 48 hours of the meeting by the ABSO responsible for co-ordination of LPMs.

Calendar appointments will also be made for these deadlines by the Case Progression Manager and sent to the Social Worker and Team Manager (Service Managers have access to the Calendar).

1. Any deadlines set at LPM must be complied with by Social Worker and Team Manager and any change to those agreed dates must be agreed by the responsible Service Manager who will notify the Case Progression Manager and allocated Legal Representative.
2. **Review Legal Planning Meeting**

The need for such a meeting may be agreed at the Initial LPM and a date and time set for that meeting.

No less than 7 working days before the review LPM date the completed standard Review LPM request form and any relevant accompanying documents (checked by the Team Manager) shall be passed to the responsible Service Manager for approval.

Once the request for LPM is approved by the responsible Service Manager, they will sign the request form and pass to the ABSO.

In the event the responsible Service Manager is not satisfied that the matter is ready for the scheduled review LPM, they will notify the ABSO who will cancel the scheduled meeting and set a new date for the meeting. The ABSO will then inform the social work team and allocated legal representative of the change.

1. **Final Legal Planning Meeting**

Each case will be presented for final LPM in advance of final evidence being filed with the Court. This will ensure final care plans are ratified.

The Case Progression Manager/ABSO will schedule the final LPM once the date for filing of final evidence is confirmed by the Court. A calendar invite will be sent to the Social Worker, Team Manager and allocated legal representative.

No less than 4 working days in advance of the meeting, the Social Worker shall send the completed Final LPM request form along with relevant accompanying documentation to the ABSO. Such paperwork must be checked by the Team Manager before submission.

There will be an expectation that Social Workers will present their final assessment at a review legal planning meeting in advance of the filing date for final evidence so that a final care plan can be agreed. Copies of all expert assessment reports will be sent to panel members in advance of the meeting in order to ensure the panel has sufficient information to consider a final care plan.

1. Legal Planning Meeting minutes will be typed and sent to the Chair for approval within 5 working days of the Legal Planning Meeting.
2. Copies of all approved Legal Planning Meetings minutes will be sent to the allocated legal representative for their file.
3. Approved minutes will also be saved onto EDRMS to ensure social care professionals have access to the same.
4. Written legal advice will be provided by the Legal Representative who attended the LPM within 3 working days of the date of the meeting. The legal advice shall be sent to:
* Allocated Social Worker
* Team Manager
* Chair of the LPM
* Case Progression
1. **Emergency/Urgent LPMs**

In the event there is a need for an urgent LPM which cannot wait until the next LPM panel, the Team Manager must seek verbal/written agreement from the responsible Service Manager for an urgent LPM to be convened away from panel.

The Service Manager shall confirm the need for an urgent LPM to the ABSO who will then organise a meeting, taking into consideration the availability of the Social Worker, Team Manager and legal representation.