

PLO Toolkit

Title	PLO Toolkit Version 1
Purpose/scope	To assist in decision making when considering whether to enter PLO and to ensure that all planning for children and young people is appropriate, proportionate and timely.
Subject key words	Public Law Outline, PLO, safeguarding, permanence, chronology, Court, significant harm, Children,
Council Priority	High – Permanence for Children not necessarily meaning that they become Children Looked After.
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Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding

Public Law Outline (PLO) Toolkit

1. Introduction


The Public Law Advisory Group issued guidance to assist all those concerned with the child protection and family justice systems in England and Wales to promote improved practice and decision making in respect of pre-proceedings and public law applications.









The purpose of this Toolkit is to assist in decision making when considering whether to enter PLO and to ensure that all planning for children and young people is appropriate, proportionate and timely.







2. How to use this Toolkit

- Vital questions need to be answered to inform decision making when considering the need to issue proceedings and to endorse a care plan, taking account of the provisions of the PLO: crucially:
 - a) What is the child's chronology telling us about the risk?
 - b) What is the impact for the child or young person?
 - c) Do we need to take action now to safeguard the child and young person's welfare? and:
 - d) Do we need an Order if so which one?
- Where children face a serious and immediate risk of harm, the ability to enter court proceedings without delay is crucial in order to prevent harm, and to secure stability and / or long-term permanency.
- If a child is at ***immediate risk of harm***, the court's involvement should be sought ***without delay***. Adherence to and compliance with the PLO is required *before* a case is brought to court. However, ***the safety and welfare of the child should never be put in jeopardy*** by delaying issuing proceedings whether because of lack of documentation or otherwise.

- Labelling a case as **'urgent'** needs to be reserved solely for situations where there is an **immediate serious risk of harm**.
- Where Shropshire Council does have to issue proceedings the case should be as far as is possible 'ready to go' with assessments already completed available on issue, clear statements outlining threshold and clarity around future planning.
- The toolkit list below has a number of documents to support improved decision making, for example the PLO flow chart plots the decision-making process and the relevant documents at each stage of the PLO process.
- At the end of the table list are links to guidance and resources, for example the Family Justice Board statement which outlines the need for practice and culture change. There are also some legal judgement quotes for reference.
- The toolkit should be used flexibly and dynamically - the documents and resources may be updated/deleted as required.

No	Title	Author	Context	Document	Guidance
1	Care Proceedings in England. The case for Clear Blue Water.	Isabelle Trowler & University of Sheffield	<p>Summary</p> <p>This policy brief argues: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that families subject to thin red line decisions where the decision to remove a child could go either way should be diverted away from Court. • there should be clear blue water between children brought into care proceedings and other children considered to be at risk of significant harm. • Stronger family focused practice, better decision making and bespoke support services should create clear blue water ... • The No Order principle should be more readily applied. 	 Clear_Blue_Water_Policy_Briefing.pdf	

2	PLO Flow Chart	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding	Details the stages for decisions and practice when entering and reviewing PLO.	 PLO Flow Chart Final May 2022.docx	
3	Social Work Child's Impact Chronology Template	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding	Template for a Social Work Impact Chronology and guidance document	 Child's Impact Chronology May 2022	Chronologies Shropshire Council
4	Cultural Genogram examples	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding	Guide to creating a comprehensive family tree / network to enable an understanding of the dynamic and function of the family network.	 Cultural Genogram Examples ECC.pdf	
5	Initial Legal Planning Meeting Agenda and minutes	Shropshire Children's Social Care & Safeguarding	Template for initial Legal planning meetings including a discussion guide, views of all to be considered and a plan of action re PLO/issuing.	 LPM Request and Minutes Template Ma	 LPM Agenda -Guidance for Panel N
6	Legal Planning Mid-Point Review	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding	Template that can be used for review legal planning meetings - including a discussion guide, list of assessments, capacity & views of involved parties, legal input, actions for Issues Resolution Hearing.	 LPM Mid Point Review Template.docx	
7	Pre Proceedings Protocol	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding	Details the decision making points and process for Pre Proceedings.	 Pre Proceedings Protocol V1 May 2022	
8	PLO Letter to Parents Template	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding	Details to parents the reason for this action, what will happen next and what they need to do next.	 Sample LBP Letter.docx	

9	PLO letter to Parents Template after the first Pre Proceedings meeting	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding	Details what has been agreed and sets out expectations.	 PLO outcome letter - to parents - REVISED.	
10	Issues Resolution Hearing (IRH) Checklist	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding	Checklist that details the issues required to have been addressed so that the court can list the final hearing at the Issues Resolution Hearing	 Issues Resolution Hearing Checklist.doc	
11	Urgent Hearing Checklist	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding	Checklist that details the issues that need to have been addressed to justify an urgent hearing	 Urgent Hearing Checklist Template.doc	 Guide for what is Urgent or Immediate
12	Legal Letter to Issue template	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding	Template for letter to parents explaining that the LA is issuing proceedings.	 Legal Letter to Issue Care Proceedings Template	
13	First and Final SW Statement	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding	Template for Social Worker statement for ICO	On LCS	 Good Practice Guidance for completion
14	Contact Policy, Procedures, and Practice Guidance	Shropshire Childrens Social Care & Safeguarding		Contact with Parents/Adults and Siblings (proceduresonline.com)	Delegation of Authority to Foster Carers and Residential Workers (proceduresonline.com)

1. Links to Useful Resources

1. [Family-Justice-Board-statement-Dec-2020 1.pdf \(judiciary.uk\)](#)

2. [The Road Ahead - Sir Andrew McFarlane - President of the Family Division for the Family Court in England and Wales](#)
3. [Public-Law-Advisory-Group-Report-Dec-2020-1.pdf \(judiciary.uk\)](#)
4. [Family Procedure Rules](#) - The guidance also includes case plan template
5. [PRACTICE DIRECTION 12A - CARE, SUPERVISION AND OTHER PART 4 PROCEEDINGS: GUIDE TO CASE MANAGEMENT \(justice.gov.uk\)](#)
6. [Public Law - Practice Directions 2014](#)
7. [Updated version of the Remote Family Access Court](#)
8. [The President of the Family Division Working Group on Medical Experts in the Family Courts Final Report](#)
9. [Remote hearings in the family justice system: reflections and experiences - Sept 2020](#)
10. [Safety from Domestic Abuse and Special Measures in Remote and Hybrid Hearings](#)
11. [Going to Court about a Family Issue? Leaflet](#)
12. [The Court and your Child](#)
13. [Representing yourself in family court – film](#)
14. [Initial Family and Friends Care Assessment: A good practice guide](#)
15. [Delivering Good Practice Initial Assessments of Family & Friends Carers - addendum in the context of Covid-19](#)
16. [Family Rights Group](#)
17. [Legal Judgement Quotes for reference](#)



Quotes.docx

Documents from the Public Law Working Group

18. Recommendations to Achieve Best Practice in the child protection and family Justice Systems – Interim Report - June 2019
[Microsoft Word - * Interim report \(final\).docx \(judiciary.uk\)](#)
19. Best Practice Guidance: The application and case management – March 2021
[Microsoft Word - Application and case management BPG report.docx \(judiciary.uk\)](#)
20. Best Practice Guidance: Support for and work with families prior to court proceedings – March 2021
[Microsoft Word - Prior to court proceedings BPG report.docx \(judiciary.uk\)](#)
21. Best Practice Guidance: Section 20 / Section 76 accommodation – March 2021
[Microsoft Word - S 20 : s 76 BPG report.docx \(judiciary.uk\)](#)

22. Best Practice Guidance: Special Guardianship Orders – March 2021
[Microsoft Word - Special guardianship BPG report.docx \(judiciary.uk\)](#)