

The Public Law Outline: Guide for Social Workers and their Managers

Operational from:

Agreed by:

Version Number:

Responsible Service Team

Review Date:

The Public Law Outline (PLO) is the Ministry of Justice legal framework for children's care and supervision proceedings. It has been substantially revised, and the revised version had been piloted in all Court areas between July 2013 to March 2014. By April 2014 the new single Family Court will be fully operational and will have implemented the final version of the revised PLO.

This guidance must be understood in conjunction with the relevant statutory guidance: Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 1: Court Orders and Volume 2.

Table of contents

[Introduction](#)

[PLO Principles](#)

[Pre-proceedings social work – overview](#)

[Emergency arrangements](#)

[Consideration of the Legal Framework](#)

[Pre-proceedings – the letter before proceedings](#)

[The PLO Pre-proceedings meeting](#)

[Proceedings under the PLO: Issue and Allocation \(Days 1 & 2\)](#)

[Proceedings under the PLO: the Case Management Hearing \(CMH\) \(by Day 12\)](#)

[Proceedings under the PLO: The Issues Resolution Hearing \(IRH\)](#)

[Proceedings under the PLO: the Final Hearing](#)

[The Flexible Powers of the Court](#)

[The use of Experts](#)

[The role of the Children 's Guardian](#)

[Appendix 1: Legal Planning Meeting template](#)

[Appendix 2: Letter Before Proceedings \(LBP\) template](#)

[Appendix 3: Pre-Proceedings Meeting \(minutes / template\)](#)

[Appendix 4: Social Worker's Statement \(template\)](#)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A decision to intervene legally in a child's life and family is a significant one, which will have major consequences for that child. It is crucial that any decision to do so is based on clear, evidenced-based assessment and care planning which demonstrates what attempts have been made to manage the risks and support the child to remain in their family.

1.2 The Family Justice Review (November 2011) has stated that care proceeding cases take far too long, taking on average 52 weeks. In Devon the average time taken for care proceedings cases (between April-September 2011) was ?? weeks. The Review has recommended that this timescale be reduced to 26 weeks and that the system should become more child-focused.

2. PUBLIC LAW PRINCIPALS

2.1 The principles of the PLO remain unchanged – that care and supervision proceedings will only be used as a last resort, and when they are used they should be brief.

2.2 Research has established that the longer children experience abuse and neglect the less effective are interventions designed to promote their wellbeing. Decision-making needs to be within the *child's* timeframe only.

2.3 Hence a new reduced and tighter time limit has been set for care and supervision proceedings – that they should be concluded within 26 weeks from the day of issue. To achieve this target:

- the Court will require fewer, but more analytical documents on application,
- the Children's Guardian will be appointed on Day 1,
- there will be an early identification of cases that need to be transferred to a higher court,
- there will be a limit on the use of expert witnesses, and
- the timetable for Case Management and Issues Resolution Hearings has been streamlined.

2.4 The key aims to be achieved through the PLO are:

- Helping families – giving families a final opportunity to make changes to avoid care proceedings and helping them fully understand the consequence of care proceedings.

- Better informed resolution – ensuring applications to court are made after all safe and appropriate alternatives have been explored.
- Preparation for proceedings – improving the quality and consistency. During proceedings – improved case management.
- Inter-agency working- ensuring closer professional relationships.

2.5 Introducing the PLO revisions the President of the Family Division noted “the key principle is very simple: the Local Authority must deliver its material – the right kind of material – on Day 1. If that does not happen the entire timetable will be thrown out.” This has implications for:

- Good practice in assessment,
- Good practice in planning,
- Case recording,
- Keeping children and families informed, and
- Working in partnership with the County Legal Service.

3. PRE-PROCEEDINGS SOCIAL WORK- OVERVIEW

3.1 The ADCS has published a model for good practice, “LA Pre-proceedings Practice: Good Practice Essential Essentials.”

3.2 The Ministry of Justice has published a comprehensive guide, “Preparing for Care and Supervision Proceedings.”

3.3 The key activities in pre-proceedings work are:

- To fully explore voluntary arrangements before an application to the Court is made
- To look within the child’s extended family network – using the Family Group Conference process – to determine whether the child can remain within their family, and whether this could prevent the child being looked after. (see FGC procedures).
- To be satisfied that those with parental responsibility (PR) have the capacity to consent to voluntary arrangements.
- To complete the relevant form of Assessment, Chronology and Genogram that provides enough evidence in support of the Local Authority’s application.
- To inform families in writing of the Local Authority’s concerns, through a “letter before proceedings”.
- To divert the child from proceedings, or narrow the contested issues, at a PLO Meeting before proceedings.

- To encourage families to take up their entitlement to non-means-tested legal advice and representation at the pre-proceedings meeting. Their solicitor is expected to encourage their engagement with the Local Authority.
- To inform families in writing of the Local Authority's intention to issue proceedings.

4. EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Nothing in the PLO requires the Local Authority to carry out any pre-proceedings steps if the concerns for the child warrant immediate protective intervention.

4.2 Annex A to the Pilot PLO practice direction, makes it clear that there may be pressing cases, where the use of an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) is not required, but the child's welfare needs make a rapid recourse to the court essential, and completing all pre-proceedings work and PLO documentation is not possible.

4.3. In these circumstances legal advice should be sought and good practice in pre-proceedings followed as far as is practicable. The family should continue to be kept informed, and the court must be given reasons why missing pieces of information cannot be supplied.

4.4 Where the grounds exist for seeking an EPO the good practice guidance published by the Department of Education should be followed: *insert link*.

5. CONSIDERATION OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 The decision to initiate PLO either pre-proceedings or immediate issue must be made by a senior manager after the case has been presented at the Children's Access to Resource Panel (CARP). Following the decision at CARP to initiate the PLO a Legal Planning Meeting must be convened within 5 working days, where a plan is devised in regards to the work that will be undertaken, the desired outcomes (the timeframe for sustained change) and the timescale: all of which will provide the foundation for securing early permanency for the outset.

5.2 In the case where the child is deemed to be in immediate risk of harm and an EPO is required to ensure the child's safety then the authority of a Senior Manager must be sought.

5.3 The LPM will be chaired by the Operational Manager with both the Team Manager and the child's social worker in attendance. The purpose of the LPM is to

consider the evidence, to take legal advice, and to make recommendations about future action.

5.4 The LPM will establish whether the threshold for care proceedings is met, and if that is the case whether proceedings should be issued without delay, or whether further work with parents, under the PLO, would either avoid proceedings or, if proceedings cannot be avoided, narrow the issues.

5.5 It will be the Operational Manager's responsibility to ensure the recommendations from the LPM are made available to all parties in attendance within one day of the meeting and that all the recommendations are completed within the stated timescales. The checklist in the appendix 1 must to be used for guidance throughout the whole process. Issues relating to drift should be reported to the relevant Senior Manager.

5.6 Legal attendance notes written by the attending local authority lawyer are documents legally privileged and should not be shared with parents or other parties. The outcome of the LPM needs to be recorded by the child's social worker on the child's electronic records and the attending local authority lawyer will send a record of their legal advice within three working days of the LPM being held (to be placed in child's file and stated that is legally privileged).

5.7 If the LPM recommends that the threshold criteria are met, that there is a need for an order and the situation requires an immediate response then brief legal advice just on these points must be provided within 24 hours.

6. THE PLO PRE-PROCEEDINGS MEETING LETTER

6.1 In cases where the LPM's outcome indicates the start of pre-proceedings, to identify actions which may reduce the need for the proceedings being initiated or for clarifying reasons of notification of proceedings only, parents and those with PR should be notified in writing.

6.2 The checklist and outcomes of the LPM should provide the essential information in the letter – the work that has been done, the further work that is necessary, and the specific concerns for the child.

6.3 The letter will include an invitation to a PLO Pre-proceedings Meeting and the Pre-Proceedings Meeting should be held within maximum three weeks of the LPM.

6.4 The letter may be drafted by the social worker, but it must be vetted by the Legal Services and signed by the Team Manager. The letter must be delivered by hand or sent recorded delivery, and the child's social worker must ensure that parents understand the contents, and have the opportunity to discuss the letter prior to the PLO Pre-Proceedings Meeting.

6.5 In cases where the child concerned is 14 or older they should receive a letter in their own right, and consideration must be given to their right to advocacy, including consideration being given to their emotional age and their cognitive level of understanding.

6.6. Consideration must always be given at this stage to providing parents and others with parental responsibility with the Ministry of Justice booklet “Your child could be taken into care – Here’s what you need to know” available to download [provide link](#).

7. THE PLO PRE PROCEEDINGS MEETING

7.1 The date and time for the PLO Pre-proceedings Meeting will be agreed with the Legal Services before the letter before proceedings is sent to the parents. The legal adviser will attend in all cases, except where parents are not themselves represented. Where the local authority legal adviser does not attend the PLO meeting should not be cancelled or rescheduled, as this may create further delay in the management of the case.

7.2. The PLO meeting will be chaired by the Operational Manager and the social worker and Team Manager will both attend. The PLO meeting will be minuted by the operational team (see Appendix 3) and once completed (they should be available within seven days of the meeting) the minutes will need to be agreed by the parents and their legal representative, if present.

7.3. Parents (and their legal representatives) must be made aware of the serious nature of the Local Authority’s concerns, and readiness to go to court. They must be advised of precisely what is expected of them if proceedings are to be avoided, and they must give explicit agreement to a new plan.

7.4. The nature of the plan will depend upon the child’s specific circumstances, but the following may all need to be identified:-

- Agreement regarding social work visits (child and parent)
- Agreement regarding support groups and activities (parent or child)
- Agreement regarding specialist assessments (parent or child)
- Agreement regarding Family Group Conference
- Agreement regarding assessment of family and/or friends identified to care for the child
- Agreement regarding placement of the child (should it be agreed that the child will live with extended family or friends then regulation 24 must be followed, see Family and Friends Protocol)
- Agreement regarding other legal options (e.g. Special Guardianship, Residence Order or Adoption)

7.5 If no agreement can be reached it will be the decision of the meeting to seek the approval of the Children's Resource Panel to issue proceedings.

7.6. Following the meeting the Operational Manager will write to parents and those with parental responsibility:

- Enclosing the meeting minutes
- Setting out the pre-proceedings plan
- Giving the date and time of the PLO Review
- Setting out what the Local Authority will do if the plan is not successful

7.7. The plan will also be copied to the IRU Operational Manager and to other agencies working with the child, e.g. kinship fostering team.

7.8. To conclude, the following good practice principles should be taken into account in preparing the proposed care plan:

- The child needs to be protected and their welfare and safety is paramount;
- The child and family must be involved in the planning process, with their views and wishes determined and taken into account;
- The child's plan must include multi-agency consultation;
- The child's plan must address the need for security, stability and permanent attachment;
- Parallel planning should be evident and used to reduce any potential delay;
- Every effort should be made to keep the child within their immediate/extended family network;
- Where permanence options are being considered such as adoption, Special Guardianship (SGO), Residence Order (RO) then these should be a positive choice for children;
- Plans should be evidence based and provide a clear rationale for the care plan for the child.

7.9. The plan will be reviewed within a maximum of 3 months to see if all tasks have been completed and the PLO is satisfied that threshold criteria no longer applies. Parents and those with parental responsibility should be notified in writing by the Operation Manager if the plan has concluded successfully at that point, or if requires further reviewing.

7.10 If the plan is unsuccessful a further LPM will be convened. The Children's Recourse Panel's approval is required to issue proceedings.

8. THE PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE PLO: ISSUE AND ALLOCATION

8.1 An application Form (C110A) and all the “Annex Documents” must be produced to the Court at the outset and copied on the same day to Cafcass – Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service.

8.2 The application form is to be completed by the Legal service in consultation with the child’s social worker. If any of the Annex documents are unavailable the reason should be given here. All the questions should be answered succinctly and accurately, ensuring that the essentials of the case and the rationale for bringing it are clear. The section on the timetable for the child should specify any dates and events important to the child over the likely timeframe for the proceedings.

8.3 The Annex documents comprise:

- Social Work Chronology.
- The Social Work Statement and genogram.
- Current assessments
- Threshold statement
- Care plan
- Allocation proposal form
- Index of Checklist documents

8.4 The documents required to issue care proceedings are:

- Form C110 (for care and supervision orders);
- Social Work Chronology;
- Genogram;
- Initial Statement;
- Individual care plan for each child

8.5 “Check list” documents are those already existing in the Local Authority files, and include *evidential* documents, e.g.

- Previous court orders, judgments, reasons,
- Assessment materials relevant to the key issues including s.7 and s.37 reports,
- Single, joint or interagency materials, such as health, education, Home Office/ Immigration Tribunals

and *decision making* records, including

- Records of key discussions with the family

- Key Local Authority minutes and records for the child
- Pre-existing care plans
- Letters before proceedings

8.6 Check list documents are not to be filed with the Court unless the Court directs otherwise, and they are not to be older than two years on the day of issue unless the Local Authority relies on them as evidence.

8.7. On Day 2 the Court will list a Case Management Hearing, by Day 12, and the Local Authority will serve on all the parties

- The Application Form
- Annex documents
- *Evidential* check list documents
- The date and time of the Case Management Hearing

Decision making check list documents are to be disclosed on request to any party, but there is no requirement that they be served.

8.8. Also on Day 2 the Court will give standard directions on Issue and Allocation.

9. PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE PLO: STAGE 2, THE CASE MANAGEMENT HEARING (CMH)- BY DAY 12

9.1 Two clear days before the Case Management Hearing the advocates will meet. The meeting may include “litigants in person” but not social care or other professionals. At the conclusion, the Local Authority advocate will file a draft Case Management Order. If necessary this will identify proposed experts and draft questions. The meeting will notify the Court immediately if a contested Interim Care Order hearing appears necessary.

9.2. The child’s social worker must attend the CMH and instruct the Local Authority advocate, appropriately supported by their line manager

9.3. The Case Management Hearing will

- Confirm allocation or consider transfer of the case
- Draw up timetables
- Identify additional parties, confirming the appointment of a Children’s Guardian
- Identify the key issues
- Identify the evidence required in order to resolve the key issues

- Decide whether there is an issue about threshold to be resolved
- Determine where it is necessary for expert(s) to be instructed
- Identify any necessary 3rd party disclosure
- Give directions for any concurrent proceedings
- Ensure compliance
- Direct filing of any threshold agreement, final evidence, Care Plan and responses
- Direct a Case Analysis by the Children's Guardian
- Direct a further Advocates meeting
- List all further hearings
- Give special directions e.g. for interpreters
- Issue a Case Management Order

9.4. A further Case Management Hearing (FCMH) may be held, but only if necessary and in any event no later than Day 20. It is expected that full case management will take place at the CMH, with parties prepared to deal with all the Stage 2 issues. A FCMH must not be regarded as a routine step in proceedings.

10. PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE PLO: THE ISSUE RESOLUTION HEARING (IRH)

10.1. The Issues Resolution Hearing takes place as directed by the Court, in accordance with the timetable for the proceedings.

10.2. The Advocates and litigants in person will meet no later than 7 days before the IRH, review the evidence and the position of the parties. The meeting will identify

- The remaining key issues and how they may be narrowed or resolved at the IRH
- What further evidence is required
- Witnesses that may be required at the Final Hearing
- The need for a contested hearing or time for oral evidence at the IRH

10.3. The Local Authority will notify the Court immediately of the outcome of the discussion and file a draft Case Management Order for the IRH.

10.4. The child's social worker must attend the IRH and instruct the Local Authority advocate, appropriately supported by their line manager.

10.5. At the Issues Resolution Hearing the Court will:

- Identify the key issues and how far they may be narrowed or resolved at this hearing,
- Consider whether this hearing can be the Final Hearing,
- Hear evidence,
- Identify evidence that will be needed at the Final Hearing,
- Give final case management directions, regarding any extension of the timetable, and the documents to be filed, including final evidence and Care Plan,
- Issue a Case Management Order.

11. PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE PLO: THE FINAL HEARING

11.1 The Final Hearing will take place within 26 weeks of the Day of Issue. The Court may extend this time frame, but not routinely. The decision and reason for extending a case should be recorded in writing in the Case Management Order and stated orally in Court. An initial extension should be for no longer than 8 weeks, and the same for any further extension. There is no limit to the number of extensions that may be granted. The court must have regard to any impact of any extension on the welfare of the child.

11.2. The child's social worker must attend the Final Hearing and instruct the Local Authority advocate, appropriately supported by their line manager.

11.3. At the Final Hearing all of the issues not settled at the IRH will be resolved by the direction of the Court.

12. THE FLEXIBLE POWERS OF THE COURT

12.1 All staff involved in Court proceedings must be aware of the flexible powers of the Court, which include the power to give directions without a hearing, and to take steps at any stage in the proceedings, including cancelling or repeating a particular hearing, if the circumstances of the case merit this approach.

12.2. In particular, if the Court considers that taking evidence at the CMH or the IRH is likely to resolve the key issues, it must take a flexible approach. Where this is anticipated the Court must be notified as soon as possible and directions sought for the conduct of the hearing.

13. THE USE OF EXPERTS

13.1 An overall reduction in the use of experts, and a better informed use of expert opinion, are seen as key features of the drive to make care proceedings briefer.

13.2. Changes to the Court Rules and Practice Directions have set a higher threshold for the use of experts. The standard was previously that an expert is “reasonably required.” The standard now is that an expert will be instructed when it is “necessary.” The Court is required to consider why additional evidence is necessary, and what it will add to the evidence of the social worker and the Children’s Guardian; the social worker is seen a trusted professional playing a central role in the proceedings.

13.3. The Local Authority must have a view from Day 1 of any outstanding evidence, and this should be identified in the Social Work Statement. Any of the parties seeking the appointment of an expert must bring to the Advocates Meeting before the CMH a draft Application and Letter of Instruction. This will make clear

- which issues are to be addressed,
- what questions are to be asked,
- who will draft a letter of instruction, and
- what will be the timetable for the report

13.4. The request will be debated vigorously at the CMH before a decision is reached. Any expert then instructed will be expected to focus on a limited number of questions, and encouraged to provide evidence based analysis and opinion, using summaries where possible to promote brevity. This emphasizes the crucial role of the CMH in achieving the 26 weeks target.

14. THE ROLE THE CHILDREN’S GUARDIAN

14.1. The role of the Children’s Guardian is substantially changed under the revised PLO. The 3-stage case analysis no longer applies. Instead the Children’s Guardian will provide an initial case analysis by Day 10 – that is, in time for the Advocates Meeting before the CMH. Any gaps in evidence will be identified, forming the basis for an application to instruct an expert witness. In cases where the pre-proceedings work has been fully compliant it may not be necessary for the Guardian to report again. In those cases where the Guardian considers that a second report will be necessary this will be no later than the IRH.

14.2. The focus of the Guardian’s report will usually be less on the threshold criteria and primarily about the viability and effectiveness of the Local Authority Care Plan.

Appendix One

Legal Planning Meeting – Checklist/Template

Date	
Attendees	
Family Profile	Subject Child(ren): Mother and Father: Siblings: Connected Persons (any available details):
Documents available at the meeting and documents to be provided.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.4.5.
Summary of relevant background information.	

<p>Summary of the Local Authority's concerns about the actual or likely harm to the child(ren).</p>	<p>(Provable by the evidence in the available documents- basis for letter before proceedings and basis for threshold if care proceedings are issued)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
<p>Working with the family/support offered.</p>	<p>What worked and what did not? Is there any further work that needs to be done with the family and how long can this take? How long can the child wait while you do this work and is this timescale feasible (the timetable for the child)?</p>
<p>Parents' capacity to agree to the care plan in a letter before proceedings.</p>	<p>Test is the Mental Capacity Act 2005 test and parents must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the information relevant to the decision including information about the reasonably foreseeable consequence of either deciding one way or the other or failing to make the decision • Retain that information • Use or weigh that information as part of the process of making the decision • Communicate their decision

<p>Is parents' consent to the care plan going to be fully informed?</p>	<p>Are the consequences of giving this consent fully understood; are the range of choices available fully appreciated as well as the consequences of refusal as well as of giving consent; are the parents in possession of all the material facts and issues?</p>
<p>The use of a 'letter before proceedings' under the Public Law Outline.</p>	<p>Are the threshold criteria for care proceedings met? Will a 'Letter Before Proceedings' meet the child's identified short term needs? <i>or</i> Are the scale, nature and urgency of the safeguarding concerns such that it is not in the interests of the child for a 'Letter Before Proceedings' to be sent? <i>and</i> Is an order better for the child than making no order at all?</p>

Outline care plans for the children if care proceedings are to be issued.

Placement; contact; permanence planning from the outset; in which court should the application should be heard; whether to ask the court to make an ICO or ISO and why; where is any other relevant available information; are any further assessments needed and if not why not

Appendix Two – Letter before proceedings (LBP)

PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE THIS LETTER

TAKE IT TO A SOLICITOR NOW

Dear {parent and/or full name(s) of all people with parental responsibility}

**Re: DEVON'S CONCERNS ABOUT *{insert name(s) of child(ren)}* –
LETTER BEFORE PROCEEDINGS**

HOW TO AVOID GOING TO COURT

I am writing to let you know how concerned Devon County Council has become about your care of your child/ren. I am writing to tell you that the Council is thinking about starting Care Proceedings in respect of *{name(s) of child(ren)}*. This means that we may apply to Court and *{name(s) of child(ren)}* could, if the Court decides that this is best for him/her/them, be taken into care.

We are so worried about your child/ren that we will go to court unless you are able to improve things. There are things you can do which could stop this happening. We have set out in this letter the concerns that we have about *{name(s) of child(ren)}* and the things that have been done to try to help your family.

AN IMPORTANT MEETING ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT

Please come to a meeting with us to talk about these concerns on *{date and time}* at the Children & Young People's Service. The address is *{address}* and there is a map with this letter to help you find it. Please contact your social worker on *{tel.no.}* to tell us if you will come to the meeting.

At the meeting we will discuss with you and tell you what you will need to do to make your child safe. We will also talk to you about how we will support you to do this. We will also make clear what steps we will take if we continue to be worried about *{name(s) of child(ren)}*.

PLEASE BRING A SOLICITOR TO THE MEETING ON *{insert date}*

Take this letter to a solicitor and ask them to come to the meeting with you. The solicitor will advise you about getting legal aid (free legal advice). We have sent with this letter a list of local solicitors who work with children and families. They are all

separate from children's services. You do not have to bring a solicitor to the meeting, but it will be helpful if you do.

Information your Solicitor will need is:

Local Authority Legal Contact

Name and address of Lawyer

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DO NOTHING

If you do nothing we will have to go to Court. If you do not answer this letter or come to the meeting, we will go to Court as soon as we can to make sure *{name(s) of child(ren)}* are safe.

YOUR WIDER FAMILY

Our concerns about *{name(s) of child(ren)}* are very serious. If we do have to go to Court and the Court decides you cannot care for your children, we will first try and place them with one of your relatives, if it is best for your child(ren) to do this. At the meeting we will want to talk to you and your solicitor about who might look after your child if the Court decides that it is no longer safe for you to do so.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting with your solicitor on {date}. If you do not understand any part of this letter, please contact your social worker {name} on {tel. no.}. Please tell your social worker if you need any help with child care or transport arrangements in order to come to the meeting, and we will try to help.

Yours sincerely

{name}

Team Manager

Local office/service

Copy to: Social Worker *{name}*

Local Authority In-house Legal Team

Enclosures:

Map of office

List of local Law Society Children Panel Solicitors

List of things we are worried about

PLEASE SHOW / TAKE THIS TO A SOLICITOR

HERE ARE THE MAIN THINGS THAT WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT:

1. *{Outline concern and give examples of when this happened. This should capture chronic ongoing concerns as well as acute episodes/incidents}*

<i>Date(s)</i>	<i>Problem</i>

- 2.

<i>Date(s)</i>	<i>Problem</i>

WHAT CHILDREN'S SERVICES HAVE DONE TO TRY TO HELP

<i>{Who?}</i>	<i>{What help has been given?}</i>	<i>{When?}</i>

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO SO THAT WE WILL NOT GO TO COURT:

1. Confirm that you will come to a meeting to talk about these concerns. Please try to bring a solicitor with you.
2. Continue to see and work with your social worker *{insert name}* and allow him/her to see *{name(s) of child(ren)}*.
3. At the meeting you will be asked to talk about how *{name(s) of child(ren)}* will be kept safe, with our help.

Appendix Three: PLO Pre-proceedings meeting / minutes

Minutes of Public Law Outline Meeting		Date:
Subject/s:		
Social Worker:	Team Manager: Operational Manager (Chair):	
Attended by:		
	Mother of	
	Father of	
	Solicitor for	
	Solicitor for	
	L.A. Legal Representative	
	Partner of	
	Family Support Worker	
	Senior Practitioner	
	Minute Taker	
<u>Introductions</u> As part of introductions the chair.....will ensure the 'ground rules' for the duration of the meeting are clearly set up:		
a) That the local authority will provide the minutes of the meeting (a summary of discussions and the decisions made):		
b) That there must be no video or audio recording for the whole duration of the meeting and all parties are required to confirm they have switched off all such devices, including mobile phones;		
c) That the minutes are confidential to the parties involved (their legal representatives, CAFCASS and the court, if an application is made) and should not be disclosed to others without the agreement of all parties.		

Purpose of this meeting

The key purpose of this meeting is to ensure that (Name/s) have permanent plans in place for their care to ensure their safety and wellbeing for the rest of their childhood and for this to be achieved in a timely way.

The chair informed that this is a 'PLO' meeting, convened because the LA has concerns serious enough to lead to consideration of putting the matter before a court and, if possible, to explore ways of avoiding the need to place the matter before the court.

The chairconfirmed that this was a review PLO meeting, following the meeting held on and will consider the actions agreed at that meeting, and the next steps.

The chairconfirmed that parties had received copies of the letter inviting them to this meeting, which includes details of the LA's concerns, and is used as the agenda for this meeting. In respect of opportunity to discuss the letter contents with a legal representative,

The purpose of this meeting is to clarify the reasons why the Local Authority will be making an application in proceedings in respect of (Name/s), offering parents the opportunity to seek legal advice and guidance prior to this action being taken.

Concerns as identified in the letter, and any additions from the chair, and response from parties

Positives Identified

Summary of discussions and LA proposed plans

Decisions (including Actions/By whom/Date)

Review Date (as appropriate)

Signed

Chair.....