**INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this written procedure and guidance document is to assist the Children's Social Care teams with the requirements and process of submitting paperwork to the Agency Decision Maker for a ' should be placed for adoption' (SHOPA) decision.

**WHAT TO DO BEFORE SUBMISSION TO SHOPA AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE**

1. As soon as you are aware that you may need a SHOPA decision email the SHOPA admin team on: [CentralAdoptionBusinessSupport@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:CentralAdoptionBusinessSupport@lancashire.gov.uk) to book on one of the available SHOPA dates (there are 3 dates per month all fall on a Friday). Admin will provide you with the full list of dates. Please note that there is limited scope for decisions outside of the scheduled dates and any requests for urgent decisions will need to be made by the team manager explaining the reasons why the submission could not be achieved in time for a scheduled decision. The admin team will make you aware of the date that you must have your submission to them by if you want a decision by the SHOPA date given. Please be aware that your submission must be in by 9 am on the submission date and not by the end of the day as the first QA is now completed on this day. Any that are not received by 9 am will be moved to the next SHOPA date. Admin will also provide you with a good practice guidance template to assist you to write the CPR (Child Permanence Record). However please be aware that this guide is not exhaustive.
2. There is already a 'twin tracking' process and twin tracking/writing CPR workshops are available from the advanced practitioners. If you follow the twin tracking process then when you come to book onto SHOPA you will already have ensured that an adoption medical has either taken place or is planned to take place. You cannot submit to SHOPA without the paperwork from the adoption medical being complete. This paperwork is then sent to the medical advisor for a report which then forms part of your CPR. The process of obtaining a date for an adoption medical, receiving the paperwork and forwarding this to the advisor for their full report cannot be achieved in the timescale between your date for submission of paperwork and the date the ADM has for the decision. This work does need to have been done prior to submission. For assistance with the twin tracking medical process and the required paperwork please contact: [cypsupporttwintracking@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cypsupporttwintracking@lancashire.gov.uk)
3. Make sure the IRO has ratified the plan of adoption and that this is clear on LCS. The ADM cannot consider a SHOPA decision until the IRO has either:

* Ratified the plan of adoption and recorded this on LCS, or
* If the IRO does not agree with the plan, this has been through the resolution process (speak to your team manager for more details) and a copy of the minutes from this is included in your submission for the ADM to consider.

1. Ensure that there are no outstanding assessments. This includes viabilities of family members and specialist assessments. The ADM cannot make a decision until all assessments have been concluded and copies of them forwarded as part of your SHOPA submission. Please note that where family members have not specifically been put forward by the parents there is still an expectation that all known family are ruled out before you can achieve a SHOPA decision.
2. The CPR does have to be completed on LCS and this means that the adoption pathway must be started by the IRO in order for you to complete the CPR. If the review has not yet taken place at the point and you are starting the CPR please raise this with the IRO and their manager to ensure they open the pathway. The ADM will no longer accept CPRs completed on a word document unless there are unforeseen difficulties with LCS that prevent this (i.e. the record is in the process of rollback and Court timescales direct that you cannot delay). Your team manager will be required to email a request to SHOPA admin for a word document to be submitted, explaining the reason.
3. You can email the panel advisor prior to completing your submission if you need some additional guidance at [tracey.ellis@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:tracey.ellis@lancashire.gov.uk).
4. You can enlist the support of the advanced practitioner for your area for practical help writing your submission. Speak to your PM for their details.

**THE REQUIRED LIST OF PAPERWORK FOR SUBMISSION**

1. **A fully completed submission sheet** with all the required data provided. This information is vital and is collated by admin and used to produce formal reports. We therefore need you to ensure that all relevant dates are provided and are accurate and that you indicate if you have the 3yrs post qualifying experience to write a CPR. If you don’t then your PM must sign and add their post qualifying experience. This information is mandatory and we have to report on this every 6 months so please do not leave it blank. Your PM or TM must then sign the submission sheet at the end to verify that they have read all the paperwork and agree with the information provided.

1. **A fully completed CPR** with no sections left blank or partially completed (see good practice points at the end of this guide for further information on what to include in your CPR).
2. **A fully completed genogram** that includes both maternal and paternal family and all family known to us ( anyone mentioned in the paperwork or on LCS); that indicates the relationship between the family member and the child and that gives the ages of any minors so that the ADM knows they do not need ruling out as potential carers. All siblings whether full or half must be included on the genogram. If a family member is deceased this must also be clear. Please note that a submission will be automatically moved to the next scheduled SHOPA irrespective of court dates if the fully completed genogram is not submitted at the same time as the CPR as a QA (quality assurance audit) cannot be completed without it. The genogram is a mandatory and regulatory part of the submission to SHOPA.
3. **A copy of the child's birth certificate**
4. **A copy of any viabilities completed on family or friends**
5. **A copy of any specialist assessments that have been requested by court and/or that are pertinent to your submission.** Such as PAMS assessments, Psychology and Psychiatric assessments, Independent Social Work assessments. This list is not exhaustive.
6. **Legal advice report.** This is obtained by the SHOPA admin team when you submit your paperwork to them on the date they give you. They send it to our principal lawyer who requires at least 5 working days to obtain this. The ADM cannot make a decision without this advice hence late submissions cannot progress to SHOPA on the scheduled date and have to be moved to the next available scheduled SHOPA.
7. **Medical summary**. This is obtained by the SHOPA admin team providing you have followed the twin tracking process as highlighted above to ensure that the adoption medical paperwork is available for the medical advisor to consider and complete their report.

**HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR PAPERWORK FOR A SHOPA DECISION**

1. On the day your submission is due you must make sure it is received by the SHOPA admin team by 9 am that day, the deadline is now the start of the working day not the end of it. This is to assist you as it will enable a QA to be completed in time for you to make amendments as the deadline for finalising the agenda has also been changed (see below).
2. Your submission should be sent as attachments via email to the admin team mailbox and not to individual members of staff. This ensures that your submission is received and collated in the appropriate folders for the ADM. Any papers sent to individuals will not be available for the ADM to read so it is vital to send your submission to: [CentralAdoptionBusinessSupport@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:CentralAdoptionBusinessSupport@lancashire.gov.uk)
3. To attach your CPR to an email you have to convert it to PDF first. This is done via the print option on the LCS document.
4. You can copy individuals into the above email to alert them to your submission as long as you have sent it to the mailbox above. You can copy the panel advisor in at this point so that they can start to QA your submission at the earliest availability.
5. Ensure you submit the full cohort of documents required (see the list provided above) by the submission deadline. Partial submissions cannot be QA'd and the procedure in such cases is to now automatically move incomplete submissions to the next available SHOPA date.

**WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU HAVE SUBMITTED**

1. The advisor will complete an audit of your submission. This is called a QA and is used to ensure that the submission meets the requirements of the following:

* The ADM - all the relevant information they need in order to make a SHOPA decision should be included within the CPR report (although relevant reports also need to be attached).
* The adult child – the information should be presented in an adult-child friendly style and recognise the need to provide the adopted person with the narrative, the detail and the analysis of their early life so that they can make sense of it.

1. The completed QA will indicate what has already been completed and what is still required. For ease, in order to quickly identify what is missing, this information is completed in RED type (if you object to the use of red you can request that this be completed in any other easily distinguished colour).
2. You should receive a completed audit via email within 4 working days of submission. If you have followed all the guidance provided and your PM or TM has read and verified your submission any amendments that are identified on the QA as required to achieve your SHOPA decision, should be minimal.
3. Once you receive the completed QA you will be notified of the cut-off date for any final amendments. This will usually be a short timescale of one or two working days only. This is because there is just one week between your submission date and the date the ADM needs the agenda finalising ready for SHOPA. It is therefore necessary to make sure your PM is aware so that you can be available to complete the amendments as required.
4. When you have completed the amendments in full make sure you send the documents to the team mailbox and not just to individuals, do not send any documents that have not been amended, just your updated ones otherwise it causes confusion in the collation process and the ADM may not receive the correct versions of each document, remember they are working with many children and many different dates so when you send your email with your updates to [CentralAdoptionBusinessSupport@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:CentralAdoptionBusinessSupport@lancashire.gov.uk) make sure you state clearly:

* The name of the child
* Which SHOPA date your amendments are for

1. Please copy the following into your above email:

* Your practice manager and team manager
* The panel advisor

1. The advisor will then complete a final QA to advise the ADM if all amendments have been completed or if any are still outstanding. To make it easier for the ADM to distinguish between what was initially requested (highlighted in red type) and what is still missing the notes for this final QA will be completed in PURPLE type.
2. Please note that there is no scope for any further amendments following this final QA. It will be completed on the day the agenda is closed and finalised which is 4 working days prior to the decision date. Therefore, if your decision date is a Friday, the agenda will be finalised the end of the Monday before. This is so that the ADM can plan to make sure decisions are reached on time.
3. No paperwork will be collated by admin or the panel advisor following the deadline above and the finalising of the agenda, so you cannot submit amendments after this.
4. You will be sent a copy of the final QA so that you are aware of the comments made and whether the recommendation is to hear the item or defer it.
5. The advisor may recommend an item is heard but the ADM may still defer it if they have any additional queries. You will be notified if the ADM requires further amendments before reaching a decision.
6. Any items deferred either by the panel advisor or the ADM will be moved to the next SHOPA date. Please make sure you liaise with SHOPA admin so that you are aware of any new deadlines or if you need to arrange a different SHOPA date.
7. You will receive a decision sheet from SHOPA admin once the ADM has reached a decision. The ADM will also offer feedback on the quality of the reports. It is possible to gain a verbal judgement prior to the receipt of the decision sheet but only once the ADM has considered the submission in full by the scheduled date.

**GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING CPRs**

1. Remember that your primary audience for this report is the adult child and the ADM not the Court. Every effort should be made to use a writing style that reflects this. It helps if you:

* Use plain and simple language that is easy to read
* Don’t use any social work jargon. If you do need to use social work terms, explain what they mean i.e. section 47, CAF.
* Explain what different assessments and meetings are for, who attended/conducted them and what the outcome was.
* Explain who people are in relation to the child, what their contact has been with them (if any)
* Explain all the attempts you have made to get any missing information
* Acknowledge any significant attachments and any positives and identify how or why the parents childhoods or circumstances may have impacted on their ability to care for the child. This helps to balance the report.

1. Don’t leave any sections blank. If it's not relevant put N/A so that we know it hasn’t been missed.
2. Make sure you don’t include confidential addresses on the first page.
3. Check that all your dates correspond and are consistent i.e. dates of orders
4. Make sure all the assessments you list as having been completed are attached to your submission.
5. When you write the child's history section use this to tell the child's story. Start with a brief outline of any historical involvements and concerns as this provides the backdrop to your current concerns. Then give examples of the current concerns. Once you have provided all relevant information finish with an analysis of what the evidence means for this child, what is the impact on them.
6. Make sure you always cite the source of your information and the date in every instance. For example, the name, title, type of report and the date in bold when you discuss the contents of a specialist report from an ISW, a medical advisor, a foster carer or a psychologist.
7. Any medical assessments of the parents (including PAMS, psychology, psychiatric) should have a summary and conclusion of their content in the health section of the report. This is because the health section has to include any predisposed genetic conditions that could impact on the child in the future. Its information that may of use to them in later life. The medical advisors summary should be added in its entirety to the health section of the CPR.
8. The identity section has a great significance for the adult child. It should contain all relevant details about who their siblings and half siblings are and an assessment of their relationship (if there is no relationship this needs to be clear). The outcome of all your sibling assessments needs to be here. Identify any attachments that have been of significance to the child and analyse the impact of loss. For example, if you have no birth father details or the child's family are all resident in another country. Make clear what life story work has already been done not just what you intend to do. For example, have photographs been gathered from contact, have parents contributed anything for a memory box. Think about 'why ' the child may have been given their name does it have any particular meaning to their parents i.e. are they named after a relative if so who.
9. The chronology of actions and decisions should give details of all the processes and procedures that have been conducted such as, assessments, meetings, court attendances, reviews anything that has informed the decision making process. Include an explanation of what it means, who was present and what the outcome was.
10. When completing the contact section make sure you specify what factors you have considered in deciding on what form the contact should take e.g. why is there no direct contact? If its mailbox contact are photos allowed if not why? Don’t forget to make sure any other significant family or friends are included as it may be they have a strong attachment to a particular sibling or aunt. This needs considering here along with the plan for reducing contact.
11. The parent's chronologies should always start with their birth. It should include all the significant dates throughout their childhood. Remember this information may be contained in other reports such as a psychology assessment even if it hasn’t been given to you in your assessment so make sure you locate it and add it. If there are gaps and you can't get the required information you need to explain why you can't get it and what attempts have been made to try to get it. Finish off this chronology with an analysis of what this all means in terms of the parents ability to care for the child. This helps to offer a balanced report to the adult child when they read this in later life.
12. Make sure you include good quality photos of the child and the parents and give the date it was taken or provided. Check that the photograph you have is clearly a photograph of the right person, especially if you are using photographs taken from Facebook profiles as there is no guarantee that they have used a picture of themselves.
13. Make sure you describe the parents accurately. Don’t under estimate the value of this type of information for the adopted person in later life.
14. Section A4 of the CPR is of particular significance and often causes issues leading to submissions being deferred. Without this section being fully completed a SHOPA decision cannot be made as it is this section that the ADM uses to ensure that all known family and friends have been properly ruled out. Please ensure when you complete this section that:

* Every living family member on the genogram has been specifically ruled out. Use a separate line in the table for each family member.
* If you have ruled out a couple make sure you state both their names so that it is clear the partner doesn’t still need to be ruled out.
* Every sibling and cousin on the genogram must also be ruled out in this section unless you have identified them as a minor on the genogram.
* The carers of any siblings and half siblings also must be ruled out in this section (they should also be on the genogram)
* Any family identified anywhere in any of the reports or on the child's LCS record must be on the genogram AND ruled out in A4 section.
* You must give a clear reason for ruling each person out. If we don’t have contact details, state what has been done to try to get them. Consider if another family member can give you that information. If they failed a viability assessment state why.
* Even if you think it's obvious why someone has been ruled out as you have stated this in another section of the report, you still have to add them to the A4 table.

1. The summary has several elements to it, it is a summing up of everything you have provided up to this point. Please don’t include any new information however please do use this section to offer a full analysis of what you have gathered and make sure you include all of the following:

* Summary of historical concerns
* Summary of current concerns
* Summary of the support that has been offered/utilised to assist the parents to care for the child (this will be of importance to the adult child)
* Outcome of specialist assessments
* Outcome of attempts to place the child with a family member or friend
* Your RE BS section looking at the advantages and disadvantages of each type of order.
* Your professional opinion and conclusion
* The adoption support plan: this means identify what the parent's specific wishes are, whether you want or intend to place the child with a sibling and what sort of placement they would benefit from. Such as, do they love animals, are they used to a male carer or a single carer. What would suit this child best.

1. Part C of the CPR should pull information through from LCS however to do this, you have to have completed the relationships tab. This is the section where you give the adult child all the known information about the people that you have considered to be the most significant to them up to this point. It is information that could be of great value to them in later life.
2. When you are completing the sibling section (Part D) try to get photographs, if you can't explain why. Include all the siblings and half siblings and provide as much information as you can.
3. Part E is the wishes and feelings of the child. If you are writing this for a baby you will need to gather the views of the carers. If you are writing this for an older child it is useful to add details of the direct work that has taken place/that will take place.
4. When you are gathering the views of the parents for Parts F & G please consider if a referral to the adoption support team would assist them and if they have engaged in counselling or are wanting to. It is also important to indicate what you have done to share the report with them. The ADM needs to know the dates and what has been tried to make contact with them if they have disengaged. For example, have we tried calling, visiting, emailing. Add the detail rather than just stating that you intend to share it with them at some point.

**TO CONCLUDE**

There are short and strict deadlines now in place for the submissions to SHOPA and an expectation that all paperwork will be of a good standard. There is also the following support available to assist in adhering to this.

* This guidance and procedure will be circulated to CSC and the APs
* Workshops are available on the intranet from the Advanced Practitioners on the twin tracking process and the completion of CPRs
* There are advanced practitioners in each locality who can provide practical support to complete a submission to SHOPA
* There is a good practice guidance template that has been completed by the advanced practitioners that is sent out to social workers when they book onto SHOPA. It is also available from the advanced practitioner in their locality.
* Social workers can contact the panel advisor for further support ( details below)
* The mailboxes for admin support have been provided in the above report

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