

## PUBLIC LAW OUTLINE & PRE-PROCEEDINGS. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

If a social worker thinks a child is in danger at home, they might apply to Court for an order to keep the child safe. Before they apply to Court, they might start the Public Law Outline process (PLO) and begin what is called Pre-Proceedings.

### THE LETTER

- TELLS YOU WHAT WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT
- TELLS YOU WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO STOP GOING TO COURT
- ASKS YOU TO GET LEGAL ADVICE (A SOLICITOR)
- INVITES YOU TO A MEETING TO AGREE A PLAN

Pre-Proceedings should not last any longer than 16 weeks. It includes both social workers and parents. The aim is to try to stop the Local Authority going to Court to ask the judge to think about placing them in the care of the Local Authority by finding a plan of support to look at and help stop the risks to the child/children.

Pre-Proceedings runs at the same time as Child Protection Planning. This means that core groups and review conferences still happen.

### THE FIRST MEETING

**Who will be there?** The social worker and their manager. The Local Authority's solicitor. You and your solicitor(s).

**What will happen?** A clear plan to keep the child(ren) safe will be discussed with everyone and agreed. This will include what needs to be done, who needs to do it and when it needs to be done by. You will also be asked again to identify any family members or close friends who might be able to look after the child(ren) if you are not able to.

### REVIEW MEETINGS (MONTHLY)

**Who will be there?** The social worker and their manager and solicitor. You and your solicitor(s) if that was agreed at the first meeting.

**What will happen?** The progress of the plan and the impact on the child(ren)'s lived experience (in terms of reducing the risks) will be discussed and reviewed. After a maximum of 3 review meetings the Local Authority will be able to decide on whether the risk of harm to the children has been reduced enough to prevent making an application to Court.

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A MAXIMUM OF 16 WEEKS?

- If the risks to the child(ren) have reduced enough, the Local Authority will not go to Court. Child Protection Planning will continue.
- If the risks have not gone down, and the Local Authority is still worried about the child(ren) they will speak to you, and they will apply to the Court to keep the child(ren) safe. This might mean asking the Court to think about taking the child(ren) from your care, placing them with family or other carers.

**\*\* IF AT ANY POINT DURING PRE-PROCEEDINGS WORRIES/RISKS GET WORSE THEN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY WILL CONSIDER GOING TO COURT IMMEDIATELY TO KEEP THE CHILD(REN) SAFE.**

