

## Record of operational decision

**UPDATED March 2020: Decisions in relation Covid-19 should be published on the same day as the decision or at the very latest 24 hrs later.**

<b>Decision title:</b>	Pre Proceedings (the PLO process) is not to commence unless it involves an unborn child
<b>Date of decision:</b>	22 May 2020
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Director for children and families
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	Council constitution 3.7.9 all necessary decisions in the case of emergencies
<b>Ward:</b>	All Wards
<b>Consultation:</b>	Legal services.
<b>Decision made:</b>	<p>That we will NOT be initiating new Pre-Proceedings cases (APART FROM FOR UNBORN CHILDREN) unless the plan is to initiate immediate court action and seek removal of the child/ren.</p> <p>This shall be reviewed on a regular basis and in line with Government guidance regarding the restrictions as a result of COVID 19.</p>
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<p>Due to current circumstances and restrictions in place as a result of Covid-19, it would be very difficult, and in some cases not possible, to complete assessments outlined within PLO Agreements. This applies both to social work assessments and external assessments, for example by a psychologist or psychiatrist due to the inability to conduct face to face sessions with parents and carers.</p> <p>As a local authority we consider it would be unfair to families to inform them that they are entering PLO but we are not able to progress this work due to current circumstances. This could incite unnecessary anxiety in families who would not be able to demonstrate change.</p> <p>Furthermore, given current circumstances, the support that is offered to families as part of the PLO process would not be available and this would hinder the ability of families to make the changes that would be expected by the local authority, putting families at an unfair disadvantage.</p> <p>In cases where threshold to enter the PLO process is met, they will be placed on hold and ongoing risk management will be carried out including by way of robust safety plans, and frequent visits/contact with the child.</p> <p>PLO matters commencing prior to COVID 19 shall continue to run as they did prior to COVID 19 save for all reviews shall take place virtually. There may be some delay as a result of the pandemic i.e. in assessments, expert reports but the case will have oversight by Legal Services and Childrens Services to reduce where possible any delay.</p>
<b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b>	Risk associated with this decision could be the child/rens safety but this will be managed by the family having more regular visits and a robust safety plan.

<b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b>	There are no other options as PLO cannot operate effectively with the current restrictions.
<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	n/a

Signed

Date: 22 May 2020