

# child and parent law



## Care Proceedings



This is where the Local Authority contacts the parents or carers to let them know they are concerned about the child. The parents will receive a letter outlining the local authority's concerns and will be invited to a meeting with the Local Authority to discuss what can be done.



### PLO review meeting

A PLO review meeting will be arranged to review what progress has been made since the initial meeting. If the Local Authority are happy with the progress, they will step out and the PLO process will be ended with no further involvement of the Local Authority. Parents can bring a solicitor to the meeting and legal aid may be available.

If the Local Authority is not satisfied with the progress and feels that the child remains at risk, they may issue court proceedings.



If the Local Authority decides to issue court proceedings, they will send letters to the parents informing them that they have issued proceedings and advise them to speak to a solicitor. Legal aid is available to all parents, regardless of their financial circumstances.



The parties will file their evidence, which may include Position Statements, parenting assessments and assessments of any potential alternate carers. Drug and alcohol tests and medical reports may also be ordered.



### Case management hearing

This hearing is mostly administrative. The court and the parties will decide what further evidence is needed and when this evidence needs to be filed by.

The court will also timetable a date and time for the next hearing, known as an Issues Resolution Hearing. No final decisions are made at Case Management Hearings.



### First hearing

This is the initial hearing that takes place to decide whether the court should make Interim Care Order for the child.

The Local Authority will have to show that the child is at risk of suffering significant harm.



### Issues Resolution Hearing

As the name suggests, this is where the parties identify the remaining issues in dispute and try to resolve them.

If all parties are agreed about the way forward, the court can make final decisions and end the proceedings at the Issues Resolution Hearing.

If even one party does not agree about the way forward, the court will list the matter for a Final Hearing.



Parties will file any updated evidence that was ordered at the Issues Resolution Hearing.



### Final Hearing

This is where the court will hear evidence from relevant parties, such as parents. After hearing all the evidence – which can take a number of days depending on the complexity of the case – the court will decide whether to make a Final Order and if so, what the terms of that Order should be, based on what will be in the child's best interests.

These orders can include Care Orders, Supervision Orders, Child Arrangements Orders, and Placement Orders (which can allow the Local Authority to find prospective adoptive families for a young child).