

Care Proceedings Programme Newsletter

Issue 11

24 January 2008

Reform draws closer...

Key changes to the care proceedings system are less than 3 months away.

Statutory guidance for local authorities will be published as follows:

- In England** – available from the DCSF website today – see page 3
– available to buy from The Stationary Office - February 08
- In Wales** – February 08

Public Law Outline will be published February 08

April 2008 – Implementation of statutory guidance and PLO.

Care Proceedings Programme Website

Get all the latest news along with links to current versions of both statutory guidance and PLO, as well as information on how to book training with Children Law UK.

www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/careproceedings.htm

e-NEWS

- ◆ **Inter-Agency Training Programme**
- ◆ **Public Law Outline update**
- ◆ **Planning for Implementation**
- ◆ **Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities**

Inside

Don't Forget ... The Newsletter is now available in an MS: Word text only version. If you want the text only version, email us:

careproceedings@hmcourts-service.gsi.gov.uk

Training ...

The first of 25 inter-agency training events got underway in London on 21st January 2008. The one day seminars are being run on our behalf by Children Law UK, part of Tact and continue until 18th March 2008 across England and Wales.

There are 100 places available at each event and places at the seminars are offered free to representatives from groups including local authorities, HMCS, Cafcass and Cafcass Cymru. Interested individuals are encouraged to register their interest now to guarantee a place. A number of places are also available to book for a fee which will attract CPD accreditation from the Law Society, Bar Council and Institute of Legal Executives.

Places are still available – so book early to avoid disappointment. For a course programme and details of how to book your place on a training seminar please email: plo@tactcare.org.uk or visit the Tact website at:

http://www.tactcare.org.uk/pages/en/public_law_outline_training.html

Public Law Outline

The Judicial Review Team have finalised the text of the Public Law Outline. This, together with the accompanying Practice Direction, was circulated in December to members of the Family Procedure Rule Committee for comment.

Following the agreement of the President of the Family Division and concurrence of the Lord Chancellor to the final version of the Practice Direction and PLO, the documents are being prepared for publication.

The PLO will be published in mid February 2008. 10,000 hard copies will be distributed to a wide range of family justice agencies and members of the judiciary.

- ◆ Around 60% of children subject to statutory intervention are aged under 5 years old and around a third were under 12 months.
- ◆ 61% of care cases involve parents who were themselves the subject of care proceedings as children.

Did you know?

Implementation Planning

It is recognised that the changes in practice required by the Public Law Outline and the revised statutory guidance are significant and it will be easier for some than others to adapt to the new procedures. It has been agreed that a period of transition will be required to ensure that the new procedures are fully embedded across all family justice agencies.

The implementation Steering Group who are co-ordinating national implementation are currently developing a work plan for 2008/09 to support transition to the new arrangements. If you have any ideas about what support might help, please email us at:

Careproceedings@hmcourts-service.gsi.gov.uk

Statutory Guidance

In England

The revised statutory guidance to local authorities "The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations: Volume 1 'Court Orders'" is available to download from the Department for Children, Schools and Families website: www.dfes.gov.uk/localauthorities/index.cfm?action=content&contentID=12386&categoryID=75&subcategoryID=106

This will enable it to be used in the Children Law UK inter-agency training events. It will also be published later this month, by means of the weekly local authority e-bulletin and, a little later, in hard copy form by The Stationery Office (as a priced publication). It will also be placed on the DCSF website, from which it will be available (without charge) for download. The guidance also includes, as annexes, the Practice Direction and Public Law Outline, together with flow charts showing both the pre-proceedings and post-application processes that are to be followed.

In Wales

The guidance is currently being adapted for use in Wales. The text is now being finalised, and a translation is being prepared. References to the various documents and legislation are being checked to ensure that where documents have been issued under devolved responsibilities, that they are properly referred to in the guidance. The same is true of any web links. Once that has been completed, an English version will be placed on the Welsh Assembly Government website and the guidance will be sent for translation and printing. The Welsh version of the guidance will be placed on the website as soon as translation is complete – anticipated February 2008.

- ◆ Around 40% of parents subject to care proceedings have mental health difficulties.
- ◆ About 70% of children in residential care leave school with no GCSE qualifications.

Did you know?

How can we help?

Contact the Programme

Care Proceedings Programme Office

4.22 Selborne House
Ministry of Justice
54-60 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6QW

DX 11700 Selborne House

Email: careproceedings@hmcourts-service.gsi.gov.uk

Tele: 020 7210 0603

Are you organising an event locally or regionally to promote the reforms?

Do you know of any events or conferences coming up between now and April where the reforms are likely to be on the agenda?

Are there any publications, including trade or professional papers, that we should be submitting articles to?

If so – we would like to hear from you! ...

The Programme Office is keen to support events and publicity at all levels to support the reforms.

For small events, we can provide literature, including specially tailored editions of this Newsletter. For larger events, we may be able to provide a stand and staff to field questions, or possibly a speaker to address your meeting.