

5. THE TIMETABLE FOR THE CHILD AND THE TIMETABLE FOR PROCEEDINGS

5.1 The timetable for the proceedings:

- (1) The court will draw up a timetable for the proceedings with a view disposing of the application—
 - (a) without delay; and
 - (b) in any event with the aim of doing so within 26 weeks beginning with the day on which the application was issued.
- (2) The court, when drawing up or revising a timetable under paragraph (1), will in particular have regard to:
 - (a) the impact which the timetable or any revised timetable would have on the welfare of the child to whom the application relates; and
 - (b) the impact which the timetable or any revised timetable would have on the duration and conduct of the proceedings.

5.2 The impact which the timetable for the proceedings, any revision or extension of that timetable would have on the welfare of the child to whom the application relates are matters to which the court is to have particular regard. The court will use the Timetable for the Child to assess the impact of these matters on the welfare of the child and to draw up and revise the timetable for the proceedings.

5.3 The “Timetable for the Child” is the timetable set by the court which takes into account dates which are important to the child’s welfare and development.

5.4 The timetable for the proceedings is set having particular regard to the Timetable for the Child and the Timetable for the Child needs to be reviewed regularly. Where adjustments are made to the Timetable for the Child, the timetable for the proceedings will have to be reviewed consistently with the aim of resolving the proceedings within 26 weeks or the period for the time being specified by the court.

5.5 Examples of the dates the court will record and take into account when setting the Timetable for the Child are the dates of—

- (1) any formal review by the Local Authority of the case of a looked after child (within the meaning of section 22(1) of the 1989 Act);
- (2) any significant educational steps, including the child taking up a place at a new school and, where applicable, any review by the Local Authority of a statement of the child’s special educational needs;
- (3) any health care steps, including assessment by a paediatrician or other specialist;
- (4) any review of Local Authority plans for the child, including any plans for permanence through adoption, Special Guardianship or placement with parents or relatives;
- (5) any change or proposed change of the child’s placement; or
- (6) any significant change in the child’s social or family circumstances.

5.6 To identify the Timetable for the Child, the applicant is required to provide the information needed about the significant steps in the child’s life in the Application Form and the social work statement and to update this information regularly taking into account information received from others involved in the child’s life such as the parties, members of the child’s

family, the person who is caring for the child, the children's guardian and the child's key social worker.

- 5.7** Where more than one child is the subject of the proceedings, the court should consider and will set a Timetable for the Child for each child. The children may not all have the same timetable, and the court will consider the appropriate progress of the proceedings in relation to each child.
- 5.8** Where there are parallel care proceedings and criminal proceedings against a person connected with the child for a serious offence against the child, linked directions hearings should where practicable take place as the case progresses. The timing of the proceedings in a linked care and criminal case should appear in the Timetable for the Child. The aim of resolving the proceedings within 26 weeks applies unless a longer timetable has been set by the court in order to resolve the proceedings justly. In these proceedings, early disclosure and listing of hearings is necessary.