

APPENDIX E/2:

The Family Proceedings Court Plan

Objective

To implement the protocol (without modification) on a local basis and to ensure that in each Family Proceedings Court (FPC) and administrative centre resources are deployed in order to achieve the highest practical level of continuity of case management and the earliest possible resolution of cases

1 Responsibility for the Preparation and Operation of the FPCP: The Justices' Chief Executive (JCE) for each Magistrates Courts Committee (MCC) area shall be responsible for arranging for the preparation and administrative operation of the Family Proceedings Court Plan (FPCP).

2 Consultees: When preparing the FPCP the JCE should consult fully with each of the Chairs of the Family Panels, the District Judges (Magistrates Courts) nominated to do Public Law cases in the MCC area and the Justices Clerk(s) as well as with:

- The Court Service
- CAFCASS
- All relevant Local Authorities
- Other local professional bodies.

3 Contents of the FPCP: The FPCP shall provide for the following:

- a) The arrangements for transfer and retransfer of cases between the FPCs and between FPCs and the Care Centre and the job title and contact particulars of the court officers responsible for administering transfers at each court
- b) The local arrangements with the Care Centre as to the directions to be given by FPCs on the transfer of cases to the Care Centre
- c) The best practical arrangements to maximise effective and continuous case management. Where practicable within existing resources, this could include allocation to no more than 2 legal advisers and to no more than 6 identified magistrates (or 2 DJs(MC)); or to a team of specialist family legal advisers. If possible, however, the objective of continuous case management by allocation of each case to a single legal adviser and to a single bench for case management and Final Hearing should be pursued.
- d) Arrangements for active liaison between the FPCs and the Care Centre.

4 Authorisation of the FPC Plan: The FPCP for each MCC shall be subject to the final approval of the JCE after consultation with the relevant Designated Family Judge(s) (DFJ) and the Family Division Liaison Judge (FDLJ) of the relevant Circuit before implementation.

5 Timetable for Preparation and Lodging of the FPCP: The first FPCP for each MCC area should be returned to the FDLJ by the JCE by the 1st October 2003. The FPCP should be lodged at the office of the President of the Family Division by the 31st October 2003.

6 Review and Amendment of the FPCP: Not later than the 1st April 2004 the first FPCP shall be reviewed in the same way as it was prepared. Thereafter the FPCP shall be reviewed in the same way every year unless the JCE determines that it is necessary to do so earlier (in consultation with the FDLJ). Revised or updated plans shall be lodged at the President's office within 28 days of their submission to the FDLJ.
