

# Pre-birth assessment and intervention timeline

**Pre-birth timeline:** Outlines key dates within statutory guidance on which to base decisions and management oversight (MO). Awareness of an unborn child can take place at varying times, so MOs must clearly set out the timeline of work to be undertaken and the rationale.

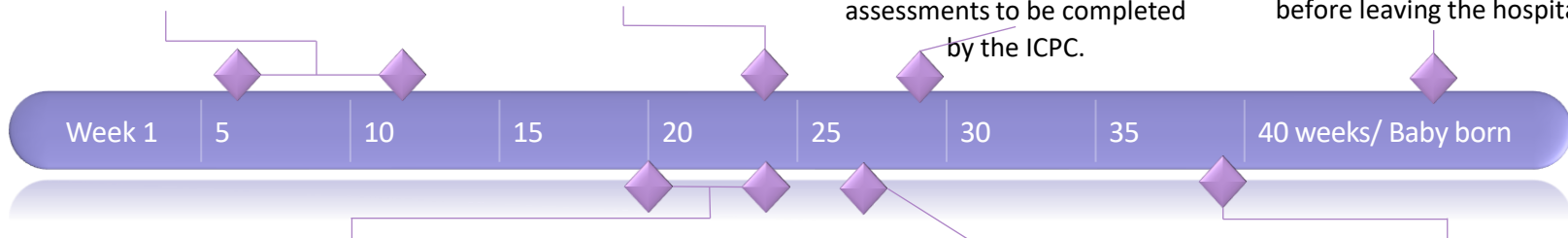
**Legal timeline:** When risks are very high and legal parallel planning is required, the timeline sets out key timescales to consider and plan. All parents will be assessed with a view to manage risk and keep families together but equally it is imperative that delay is avoided, particularly where significant vulnerabilities are present for the unborn child.

**6 to 12 weeks-** Booking appointments with Community Midwives. Referrals and contacts can be sent/received. Early Help assessments can also commence.

**24 weeks-** Pre-Birth Child and Family (C&F) assessment to be completed where sufficient notice has been given.

**28-30 weeks-** Unborn Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) to be held and/or linked to sibling. Any psychological assessments to be completed by the ICPC.

**40 weeks-** there must be a discharge planning meeting for an unborn child on a Child Protection Plan (and some Child in Need) before leaving the hospital.



**20 to 24 weeks-** (in situations where the legal framework may be required) Legal Gateway Meeting and PLO letters to be issued where possible. CP process to also be initiated parallel to legal process.

**25-27 weeks-** Strategy Discussions to be held for unborn children who require a Child Protection Plan. Pre-birth meeting to take place with Health to develop a Birth Plan. Peri-Natal Team to be present if mental health issues are a concern.

**39 weeks-** If care plan is to issue proceedings at birth, paperwork should be with legal 7 days before the estimated due date.

## Key considerations:

An unborn baby whose parents have previously had a child removed, in care proceedings, or on a child protection plan (**all within the last 2 years**) will be referred straight into the Family Safeguarding Team for a C&F assessment.

An unborn baby that is unknown to Children's Services will be referred to the Assessment team to undergo a C&F assessment. The timescale for this assessment is 45 days. This applies for unknown babies with extreme circumstances.

A robust C&F assessment must be started as soon as an unborn baby is referred.