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| (Recipient Name)  (Address1)  (Address2)  (Address3)  (Postcode) | **London Borough of Merton**  **Merton Civic Centre**  **London Road**  **Morden SM4 5DX**  ***Direct Line:***  ***My Ref:***  ***Date:*** |

Dear XXXX,

**Letter to issue proceedings**

I am writing to let you know that the Merton Children’s Services is going to issue care proceedings in respect of *[child’s/children’s name].* This means that we are going to make an application to court and ask a Judge make decisions about the care ofyour children. I accept that this will be a really difficult letter for you to receive. I wish to assure you that the intention of this letter is not to cause you undue distress but to ensure that you are fully aware of what steps the Local Authority is going to take and why.

We have made the decision to go to court because [*set out the reasons why/precipitating event/s in a brief paragraph- but using language that is compassionate and caring*]*.* The Local Authority proposes that *[child’s/children’s name]* are made subject to a *[Supervision/Interim Care Order/ No Order / CAO ]* and live *[with a foster carer/family member/live with you in a residential assessment centre/foster placement].* However, whether this happens is for a Judge to decide. The Judge will want to hear your views. They will also hear from a Child’s Guardian who will be independently appointed to represent *[child’s/children’s name]* best interests.

Whenever safe to do so, we would like to see children remain with their parents/*carers [delete as appropriate*]. The Local Authority will continue to work with you throughout proceedings with the aim of achieving this outcome.

If there is anything you wish to discuss further, please contact your social worker.

It is important for you to have your own independent legal advice and the support of a solicitor throughout proceedings. You can take this letter to a solicitor and they will be able to work with you and offer you legal advice, support and guidance free of charge. I have enclosed a list of solicitors which you can choose from. If you would prefer you can seek any alternative solicitor who accepts legal aid.

The details of our solicitor are XXX, Solicitor, Social Care and Education, South London Legal Partnership,. Email: [XXXXX@merton.gov.uk](mailto:XXXXX@merton.gov.uk) Direct: 020 8545 46XX, Fax: 020 8545 3244.

*[if you are concerned about their levels of understanding consider whether this letter should be shared by a legal rep or advocate].*

Yours sincerely

XXXX

Team Manager – Family Support and Safeguarding Team X

London Borough of Merton Children’s Social Care.

Enc. List of solicitors