Dear x

I am writing to you as the local authority in undertaking a review of the contact we are arranging for some of our looked after children. Please do not be worried this is a letter that is being sent out to a number of parents.

Under [**section 34(1) Children Act 1989**](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/34), the Local Authority (i.e. Children’s Services) must allow the child **reasonable contact** with:

* his parents;
* any guardian;
* any person who held a Residence Order or Child Arrangements Order for residence immediately before the Care Order was made; and
* any person who had care of the child under wardship immediately before the Care Order was made.

In this case we consider reasonable contact at the moment is

We think this because …

If you do not agree with us please tell us what level of contact you think is reasonable on the attached form. If you wish to discuss this further you can contact your child’s social worker, #####

Every child who is looked after by the local authority has an Independent Reviewing Officer. Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) are social workers, who are also experienced social work managers whose duty it is to ensure the care plans for children in care are legally compliant and in the child’s best interest. All local authorities have a duty to appoint an IRO to every child in care or child who is subject to a Child Protection plan.  IROs are required to oversee the child’s care plan and ensure everyone contributing to the care plan fulfils their legal obligations to the child. I enclose a copy of the most recent LAC review,

You may wish to contact the IRO in this case who is #######

**What will happen next?**

If we cannot agree what is reasonable contact we will invite you to meet with us to talk about the case. If do not agree we may issue an application so the court can decide any dispute about contact.

**When can contact be refused?**

The court has the power to make an order allowing us (Children’s Services) to refuse contact of a child in care with a named person. The court can make this order in any court proceedings concerning the child, including private proceedings.

We can also refuse contact urgently if it is necessary to safeguard or promote the child’s welfare but this can only last for a maximum of 7 days. Children’s Services must explain their reasons in writing. To refuse contact for more than 7 days, we must obtain a court order. The court can make an order authorising the refusal of contact for as long as it considers it to be for the child’s welfare, but we will regularly review this, to allow contact to resume as soon as it is safe and appropriate.

**How do I apply for an order for contact with a child in care?**

If you are unhappy with the level of contact that Children’s Services are allowing, you can apply for contact under [**section 34 Children’s Act 1989**](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/34). **Note: this is a different application to an application for contact under a Child Arrangements Order (**[**section 8 Children’s Act 1989**](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/8)**).**

To apply for this order:

* You need to complete a [**C1 form**](http://formfinder.hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/c1-eng.pdf) (or a [**C2 form**](http://formfinder.hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/c2-eng.pdf) if in existing court proceedings) and the supplement [**form C15**](http://formfinder.hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/c15-eng.pdf).
* If you are the child in care’s parent, guardian or special guardian, or if you held a Residence Order or Child Arrangements Order for residence immediately before the Care Order was made, you will not need the court’s permission to make the application.
* If you are any other person (e.g. sibling or grandparent), you will need to seek the court’s permission. To grant leave, the court must be satisfied that there is a real prospect of success.
* You need to give notice to the Local Authority, any person who is caring for the child when you make the application and any person with Parental Responsibility for the child

Legal advice

You may wish to take this letter to a solicitor where you can get some independent legal advice. We attach a list of solicitors in Herefordshire and its surrounds who specialise in this type of work. You can also find names of solicitors on line at

You can find advice on line at <https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/contact-with-a-child-in-care/>.

What we would like you to do next

Can you return the attached form to us in the envelope provided. If you change address or telephone number can you make sure you let the social worker know.

Thank you for your help.

I confirm I have received attached letter about contact.

My views on contact are

My latest contact details are

I confirm I will keep children’s services up to date with my contact details.

Signed …………………………………..

Dated ………………………………………………