Dear x

I am writing to you as the local authority is undertaking a review of the contact you have with your child/children. We refer to contact throughout this letter as “family time”.

Please do not be worried, by this letter as it is being sent out to a number of parents.

At the conclusion of care proceedings regarding your child/ren a final care plan would have been filed with the court. The Local Authority must follow this care plan and as part of the Looked After Child Process we review family time arrangements at a minimum of every 6 months. Should we seek to change the level of family time so that it is different to the arrangements contained within the final care plan, a contact assessment will be undertaken. This will inform us what level of family time we believe is in your child/ren’s best interests.

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 family time** 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.

Your child’s/ren’s final care plan sets out the following:-

At the moment, your family time arrangements are as follows:-

We consider that inyour child/children’s reasonable family time should be…

We think this because …

**What will happen next?**

If you do not agree with our proposal please tell us what level of family time 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 #######

**When can family time be refused?**

The court has the power to make an order allowing us (Children’s Services) to refuse family time 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 family time 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 family time for more than 7 days, we must obtain a court order. The court can make an order authorising the refusal of family time for as long as it considers it to be for the child’s welfare, but we will regularly review this, to allow family time to resume as soon as it is safe and appropriate.

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

If you are unhappy with the level of family time that Children’s Services are allowing, you can apply for family time 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 family time 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 [**C100 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. Alternatively, please respond by email providing your up to date contact details and your views on family time to [social worker#####].

Thank you for your help.

I confirm I have received attached letter about family time.

My views on family time are

My latest contact details are

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

Signed …………………………………..

Dated ………………………………………………