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| http://intranet.bradford.gov.uk/docs/Documents/banner%20colour.jpg |  |

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|  | Contact: (Name of Social Worker)  Tel: (01274)  Fax: (01274)  Email: @bradford.gov.uk  Minicom: (01274)  Date: |

Dear [Insert parent/carer first name]

**Bradford Council Children’s Services concerns about [name(s) of child(ren)] - Letter Before Proceedings**

**How to avoid going to Court**

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| I am writing to you on behalf of Bradford Council.  As you know, **[insert name of social worker]** is very concerned about your care of **[insert name(s) of child(ren)]**. Things have not improved enough and the situation for your child(ren) has become so serious that we may need to apply to Court  There are things that you can do to stop this from happening and we are writing to you now to give you a last chance to make the changes needed to make sure **[insert name(s) of child(ren)]** is/are safe. Otherwise we will go to Court to ask for them to be removed from your care, if the Court decides that is best for them.  We have set out in this letter the concerns we have about **[name(s) of child(ren)]** and the things that have been done to try to help your family.  Also in this letter we will tell you what you need to do so that we will not go to Court. |

**Here are our main concerns:**

*[Outline the bottom line concerns that we have and give examples of when this happened. This should capture ongoing concerns as well as specific concerns]* ***Delete this guidance in italics***

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| **What we are concerned about** | **Examples of when this happened** | **Date of when it happened** |
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**This is what Children’s Services have done to try to help your family**

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| **Who has helped** | **What help has been given** | **Dates of when we provided it** |
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**What you must do so that we will not go to Court:**

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| **Please come to a meeting with us to talk about these concerns**  This meeting will be on **[date]** and at **[time]** at **[name of office].** The address of the meeting is **[address].** There is a map with this letter to help you find it.  **At the meeting we will:**   * Discuss with you what the local authority believes you will need to do to make **[name(s) of child(ren)]** safe. * Discuss with you how we will support you to keep ***[name(s) of child(ren)]*** safe; * Discuss with you what you believe you need to do the **make [name(s) of child(ren)]** safe; * Discuss with you who in your family could look after ***[name(s) of child(ren)]*** if you re not able to; and * Explain what steps we will take if we continue to be worried **about [name(s) of child(ren)]**.   **The local authority is proposing:**  *(Please put in here the outline of the plan whilst in PLO, e.g. father has to move out, contact arrangements, DNA testing, FGC, psychological assessment, working with IFST, hair strand testing, keeping appointments etc.*  ***Delete this guidance in italics when you have put in the outline of the plan***   1. To provide you with a written assessment plan at the meeting on **[Insert date].** The plan will tell you how you need to work with us and other services whilst we complete an assessment. The assessment will help us to make a decision about whether you can keep **[name(s) of child(ren)]** safe and if we will apply to court. We are aiming to complete the assessment by **[Insert Date].** 2. To complete viability assessments of any family or friends identified as alternative carers for the **[name(s) of child(ren)]** should they be required**,** by **[Insert Date].**   Please contact **[name(s) of child(ren)]** Social Worker **[name]** on **[tel. no:]** to tell us if you will come to the meeting. |
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| **Get a Solicitor**  It is really important that you get advice from a Solicitor who specialises in family law as soon as possible.  They will help you to understand the situation and advise you about your rights and your options.  You will also have a right to bring your solicitor with you to the meeting. You will not have to pay. Please give your solicitor a copy of this letter.  If you don’t already have a Solicitor, with this letter we have provided a list of local Solicitors who work with Children and Families. They are separate from Bradford Children’s Services.  You do not have to bring a Solicitor to the meeting, but it will be very helpful if you do.  **Information your solicitor will need is:**  Local Authority Legal Contact: **[name, address and telephone]** |

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| **Get your wider family involved**  Our concerns about **[name(s) of child(ren)]** are very serious.  If we do have to go to Court and the Court decides you cannot care for **[name(s) of child(ren)]** we will first try to place them with one of your relatives or someone close to **them** if it is in their best interests.  At the meeting we will discuss with you and your Solicitor which family members we will contact to complete viability assessments. This is in case the Court decides it is no longer safe for you to care for **[name(s) of child(ren)]**. |

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| **What will happen if you do nothing?**  If you do nothing, we will have to go to Court.  If you do not answer this letter or come to the meeting, we will go to court as soon as we can to make sure **[name(s) of child(ren)]** are safe. |

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting and with your Solicitor on **[date]**.

If you do not understand any part of this letter, please contact your child’s social worker **[name]** on **[tel. no:].**

Please tell your child’s social worker if you need any help with child care or transport arrangements so that you can come to the meeting, and we will try to help.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Team Manager [name of team or local office]

Copies of the letter have been sent to:

* Social Worker [name] and the Local Authority In-house Legal Team

Enclosed with this letter are:

* A map and directions to where the meeting will take place
* A list of Solicitors who are members of the Law Society’s Children Law Accreditation Scheme