**Date:** \*\*

**Contact:** \*\*

**Telephone:** \*\*

**Email:** \*\*.\*\*@n-somerset.gov.uk

Mr/Mrs/Ms [Insert]

By Hand Delivery



|  |
| --- |
| Family Support and Safeguarding    North Somerset Council  Town Hall  Weston-super-Mare  BS23 1UJ |

Dear [First name or Mr/Mrs/Ms etc depending on your relationship with the parent/carer]

**Your child(ren): [Names(s) of child(ren)]**

I am writing to let you know that North Somerset Council has serious worries about the care of your child(ren).

A Head of Service for Children’s Services made the decision on [insert date] that we go into the pre-proceedings process. During this process, we want to work closely with you and offer help and support to you while we complete assessments. This process will last up to 16 weeks, although it could go on for longer if the Head of Service agrees to this. During this time, if you are able to make the changes needed to be able to look after your child(ren) safely, we will not go to court.

This letter is called a **Letter before Proceedings**.

We would like to ask you to come to a meeting with us to talk about these worries.

**Before the meeting is held, we would like to get an assessment of your capacity to take part in the pre-proceedings process, to give instructions and take part in any court proceedings and to give evidence to the court if required. This assessment will be completed by an independent external expert. We would also like this expert to complete an assessment about your cognitive functioning.**

If the expert finds that you to have capacity then we will arrange the pre-proceedings meeting for you to attend with your solicitor.

At the meeting we will:

* look at what is working well;
* look at what we are worried about;
* agree what you will need to do to make [names(s) of child(ren)] safe;
* let you know how we will help you to do this;
* talk about who in your family could support or look after [names(s) of child(ren)] if you are not able to;
* explain what steps we will take if we continue to be worried about [names(s) of child(ren)].

It is important that you speak to a solicitor as soon as possible. They will help you to understand the worries we have and let you know about your rights and options. Your solicitor will attend the pre-proceedings meeting with you once it has been arranged. If you give this letter to your solicitor, you will not have to pay them. A list of local solicitors who work with children and families is attached to this letter. These solicitors are all separate from Children’s Services.

**Information your solicitor will need:**

|  |
| --- |
| Local Authority Legal Contact:  [Insert name], [Insert title]  Childcare Legal Team  North Somerset Council  Telephone:[Insert] Email: \*\*.\*\*[@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:lorraine.sherman@n-somerset.gov.uk) |

In terms of Paragraph 4.1 of the *2013 Protocol and Good Practice Model,* the local authority will send an Annex D form to the police, requesting police disclosure in relation to you.

If you do not understand any part of this letter, please contact \*\*\*\*, Social Worker, on \*\*\*\*. Please let the Social Worker know if you need help with child care or transport arrangements in order to come to the meeting, and they will try to help.

Yours sincerely

**\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Team Manager**

Enc: List of Solicitors

Parents’ Pack

s20 Leaflet (if required)

Draft Parenting Assessment Plan

**WHAT IS WORKING WELL:**

DELETE THIS NOTE: Insert what is working well or delete paragraph if nothing is working well.

\*\*\*

**WHAT WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT:**

DELETE THIS NOTE: **MAIN** concerns and relevant dates. This should capture ongoing concerns as well as specific concerns. Should link with existing danger statements and safety goals.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Dates** | **Worries** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**WHAT WE WILL DO TO HELP:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Who** | **What** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**WHAT WE NEED YOU TO DO TO CREATE MORE SAFETY FOR YOUR CHILDREN:**

1. Work with the social worker, allow announced and unannounced visits to the home address, be available for all arranged appointments with Social Care and other professionals and work openly and honestly with them.

1. Agree that any information received during the pre-proceedings process will be shared with other people involved in this process, namely: [insert names of other parent/carer].

DELETE THIS NOTE AND OTHER PURPLE FONT: Delete the points **not relevant** to the family and number the remaining ones. Group relevant points together to shorten the letter and tasks. The resulting list should only include **priority** requirements that, if not adhered to, will result in you bringing the matter back to LPM to consider options.

General

Take part in a parenting assessment – a draft parenting assessment plan has been given to you with this letter. Dates for the meetings will be agreed with you before the assessment starts.

Agree to a [insert type of assessment, eg psychological / psychiatric etc] assessment of yourself and for your medical records to be sent to the expert direct.

Agree to your GP sending a report to us with information about your health, including your mental health, and details of any prescribed medication.

Ensure that [insert child(ren)'s name(s)] attend/s all medical and any other appointments made for them by yourself or professionals.

Allow [insert child(ren)'s name(s)] to be assessed by CAMHS and to attend any appointments or service identified as being suitable for them.

Agree to your GP sending a report to us about [insert child(ren)'s name(s)] with information about their health and details of any prescribed medication.

Allow a Family Group Conference and/or Family Network Meeting to take place. This involves giving the social worker details of family and friends so they can speak to them about what care and/or help they can give and we will know who is in your family/network.

Let the social worker know about any changes in your family i.e. relationship, domestic abuse, housing, levels of family support within 24 hours of any change.

Not allow [insert child(ren)'s name(s)] to have any contact with [insert name(s)] unless agreed with the social worker.

Agree to the social worker contacting the father of [insert child(ren)'s name(s)] to discuss our worries and set up a pre-proceedings meeting with him.

Agree to the social worker contacting [insert name] to arrange a DNA test so we can find out whether he is the father. If he is, we will set up a pre-proceedings meeting with him.

Agree to the social worker getting consent for full police checks on your partner [insert name], to gather further information.

Agree to [insert child(ren)'s name(s)] being cared for by [insert name(s)] OR in a foster placement under s.20 Children Act 1989 (which means that they can stay there with your agreement) until [insert time-frame or until further notice].

Attend supervised contact [insert terms, eg twice a week etc] with [insert child(ren)'s name(s)].

Neglect examples

Accept support to help you ensure the home is:

* clean and tidy
* the children have clean clothing which fit;
* the home is heated;
* your children have enough food and that there is food in the cupboards and a fridge/freezer to store food in;
* you are able to provide age appropriate boundaries and routines, for example bedtimes, bath times, going to school and nursery.

Learning Disabilities

Agree to an up to date assessment by a psychologist of your learning difficulties to see how you can best be helped to care for [insert child(ren)'s name(s)].

Domestic Violence

Ensure that [insert child(ren)'s name(s)] is/are not upset by seeing and hearing arguments or any physical assaults, which may take place.

Work with Next Link and agree that they can send a report to us.

Complete the perpetrator course that is identified by the social worker.

Drugs and Alcohol

Attend and accept advice from We Are With You and agree that they can send a report to us.

Agree to hair strand testing (and blood for alcohol) in relation to levels of possible drug / drug and alcohol usage.

Agree to wear a SCRAM bracelet (an alcohol testing system), which must be worn every hour of every day for a period of [insert time-frame].

Mental Health

Treatment and support from mental health services – insert details of expectations.

Unborn Babies

Go to all appointments with your midwife, health visitor, hospital and other medical professionals to agree plans for your baby’s birth, including attending a pre-birth meeting.

Work with the Family Support Worker, who will support you with basic parenting skills and preparation work for the arrival of your baby

Work with the social worker and other professionals to agree a pre-birth plan.

Agree that when your baby is born you will stay at a mother and baby foster placement / residential unit with the baby.

Give the social worker the names of men you think maybe the father of your unborn child so that DNA tests can be carried out.