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| --- | --- |
| Mr/Mrs | Date: |
| Address Line 1 | Our Ref: |
| Address Line 2  Town | Contact:  Email: |
| Postcode | Tel: |

**PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE THIS LETTER TAKE IT TO A SOLICITOR NOW**

Dear [parent and/or full name(s) of all people with parental responsibility]

**RE: BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL’S CONCERNS ABOUT [insert name(s) of child(ren)] –**

**LETTER BEFORE PROCEEDINGS**

**[HOW TO AVOID] GOING TO COURT (amend as appropriate if immediate issue)**

I am writing to let you know how concerned Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council have become about your care of your child(ren). I am writing to tell you that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council is thinking about starting/has decided to start Care Proceedings in respect of [name(s) of child(ren)]. This means that we may/will apply to Court and [name(s) of child(ren)] could, if the Court decides that this is best for him/her/them, be taken into care.

We are so worried about your child/ren that we will go to court unless you are able to improve things/ We are so worried about your child/ren that we will be going to court. There are things you can do which could stop this happening (delete if immediate issue). We have set out in this letter the concerns that we have about [name(s) of child(ren)] and the things that have been done to try to help your family.

**AN IMPORTANT MEETING ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT**

Please come to a meeting with us to talk about these concerns on [date and time] at the [insert name of office]. The address is [address] and there is a map with this letter to help you find it. Please contact your social worker on [tel.no] to tell us if you will come to the meeting.

At the meeting we will discuss with you and tell you what you will need to do to make your child safe. We will also talk to you about how we will support you to do this. We will also make clear what steps we will take if we continue to be worried about [name(s) of child(ren)]. OR

At the meeting we will talk to you about our worries and why we don’t believe the child/ren are being kept safe. We will also explain what will happen when we go to court.

**PLEASE BRING A QUALIFIED SOLICITOR TO THE MEETING ON [insert date]**

**Take this letter to a solicitor and ask them to come to the meeting with you. The solicitor will advise you about getting legal aid (free legal advice). We have sent with this letter a list of local solicitors who work with children and families. They are all separate from children’s services. You do not have to bring a solicitor to the meeting but it will benefit you if you do.**

*Information your solicitor will need is:*

Local authority legal contact

Name,

Legal Services

Town Hall

Bourne Avenue

Bournemouth

BH2 6DY

Tel: 01202 45????

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DO NOTHING**

If you do nothing we will (still) 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.

**YOUR WIDER FAMILY**

Our concerns about [name(s) of child(ren)] are very serious. If we do have to/ When we do go to Court and the Court decides you cannot care for your children, we will first try and place them with one of your relatives, if it is best for your child to do this. At the meeting we will want to talk to you and your solicitor about who might look after your child if the court decides that it is no longer safe for you to do so. **It would be helpful if you could bring a list of names and contact details of friends/family you would like to be considered.**

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting with your solicitor on [date]. If you do not understand any part of this letter, please contact your social worker [name] on [tel. no]. Please tell you social worker if you need any help with child care or transport arrangements in order to come to the meeting and we will try to help.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Team Manager

[local office/service]

Cc Social worker [name]

Local Authority Legal Services Team

Enc. Map of office

List of Children Panel Solicitors

List of things we are worried about

**­­**

**PLEASE SHOW/TAKE THIS TO YOUR SOLICITOR**

**WHAT WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT: (use whichever headings are relevant)**

(\*it is envisaged that we will have been working with the family under signs of safety. Clearly any plan will not have been working if we are drafting this letter, so any danger statements will need to be revised to reflect the current situation)

1. **NEGLECT**

*Set out the revised danger statement re neglect and give 2 or 3 examples (with dates) evidencing the danger statement*

1. **PHYSICAL HARM (INCLUDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE)**

*Set out the revised danger statement re physical harm and give 2 or 3 examples (with dates) to evidence the danger statement*

1. **EMOTIONAL HARM**

*Set out the revised danger statement re emotional harm and give 2 or 3 examples (with dates) to evidence the danger statement*

1. **SEXUAL HARM**

*Set out the revised danger statement re sexual harm and give 2 or 3 examples (with dates) to evidence the danger statement*

1. **DRUG AND/OR ALCOHOL MISUSE**

*Set out the revised danger statement re drug/alc misuse and give 2 or 2 examples (with dates) to evidence the danger statement*

**WHAT ARE YOU DOING WELL TO KEEP THE CHILD/REN SAFE?**

*Set out the positive outcomes for the children (i.e what have the parents been doing under the agreed safety plan that has kept the children safe?)*

**WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN SO THAT WE WILL NOT GO TO COURT (amend appropriately if immediate issue):**

*Set out what the parent(s) need to do to keep the children safe and lessen our worries, and set out what the LA are going to do to support this, including (but not restricted to) the following:*

1. Confirm that you will come to a meeting to talk about these concerns. Please try to bring a solicitor with you.
2. Continue to see and work with your social worker [insert name] and allow him/her to see [name(s) of child(ren)].
3. At the meeting you will be asked to talk about how you will keep the children safe, with our help.
4. *Add additional paragraphs e.g if you want a contract of expectations to be signed, if you expect engagement with services such as BAT, anything else you want the parent(s) to do (i.e the bottom lines)*