



**To be opened by the Addressee Only**

Stephen Young  
Chief Executive

Amanda Lewis  
Interim Executive Director  
Children's Services Directorate  
Municipal Building  
Kingsway  
Widnes  
WA8 7QF

Our Ref

If you telephone  
please ask for

Your ref

Date

E-mail address

Dear

**Re: Halton Borough Council Children's Services concerns about (insert child/ren names)  
Letter before Proceedings**

I am [name of social worker]'s team manager and I am writing to tell you how worried I am about the care of (Name of chid/ren). [Name of social worker] has discussed their worries with me and I am also worried. We are now so worried about (Name of chid/ren)that if things do not get better at home, we will have to think about applying to the Court so that a judge can help decide what is best for (Name of chid/ren).

This is known as issuing Care Proceedings and the court could decide that it is best for (Name of chid/ren)to live away from you and be looked after by someone else or by us. This is also called being taken into care.

I have attached to this letter, a document explaining the worries that we have for (Name of chid/ren) and how we would like to see these change so that (Name of chid/ren) can stay living with you and hopefully we can avoid the need to go to court.

**It's all happening IN HALTON**

**People Directorate, Children and Families Service**  
Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2ES



### **An important meeting about what will happen next**

I would like to invite you to a meeting where we can talk about these worries and how we can work together to help your family. We always want children to stay with their families where it is safe to do so and that is what we would like to do for (Name of child/ren), but to do so changes need to be made.

### **This meeting will take place on (Date & time) at the (insert name & office or if by Teams)**

At this meeting we will discuss with you what needs to happen to make (Name of child/ren) safe at home. We will also talk about how we will support you to do this and make it clear what steps we would take if we continued to be worried about (Name of child/ren).

This meeting is called a Pre-Proceedings meeting because this is the time, we aim to work with you to avoid the need to go to court. I must tell you that I will have a legal representative at the meeting, so you are encouraged to bring your solicitor too. You will not need to pay for your solicitor as you will be entitled to something called “free legal aid”.

### **Please bring a Solicitor to the meeting on (Date and time)**

It will be really helpful for you to have some free legal advice. Please take this letter to a Solicitor and they can attend the meeting with you. You do not have to bring a Solicitor to the meeting, but it would be really helpful if you do.

I have included with this letter, a list of independent local Solicitors who work with children and families to help you make contact with a Solicitor to support you.

As well as having a Solicitor, you can also bring a family member, a close friend, or a support worker to the meeting, although you need to be aware that they will also hear sensitive things talked about you and your family

Your Solicitor will need to know the details of the Local Authority legal representative who will also attend this meeting. Their details are;

Local Authority Legal Contact:    Insert name and email address  
Address:                                    Legal Services, ...  
Telephone:                                 Insert extension number

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### **What will happen if you choose to do nothing?**

If you do not come to the meeting and decide to do nothing about the worries, we will have to go to court as this will then be the only way that we can make sure that (Name of child/ren) are safe.

If you cannot attend the meeting on this date and time, then just let me know and we will try and work together to find a day and time that suits us all

### **Your Wider Family**

Our worries about (Name of child/ren) are very serious. It would help them, if you could think about who might support you to look after them or might be able to look after them if we get to the stage where the Court decides they cannot stay at home. We can discuss this with you at the meeting.

I know that this will be a very difficult letter to read, and I know that this meeting will feel frightening, but I would really like to see you there and I will support you to attend however I can. If you need some help with childcare, or transport to the meeting, do let me know and I will try to help.

Also, if there is anything in this letter that you do not understand or just wish to talk it through with me then please contact me (providing best contact details for this parent).

Yours sincerely

(Name)  
Principal Manager

Enc: Map of office (if needed)  
List of Law Society Children Panel Solicitors  
Summary of Concerns and Plan

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