**Appendix 2 - *Template Letter of Issue***

***(Annex B, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Court Orders and Pre-Proceedings (2014))***

**Letter of Issue**

**IMPORTANT!**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Our Ref:** | Telephone No: |
| **Your Ref:** |
| **Date:** |

SENT BY [HAND/ RECORDED DELIVERY]

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

**RE: [NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY] CONCERNS ABOUT [INSERT NAME(S) OF CHILD(REN)]**

I am writing to you on behalf of [name of LA] Children’s Services. The reason I am writing to you is that [Insert name of Local Authority] is extremely worried about your care of [name(s) of child/(ren)]. We set out our concerns in [reference to the Letter before Proceedings/pre-proceedings meeting/child protection case conference/any social work meetings] – a copy is attached. We have tried to work with you to help you to improve your care of [name(s) of child/ren] but things have not changed sufficiently.

I am therefore writing to let you know that ***we are going to Court to try to make sure [name of child(ren)] is/are safe***. This could mean that [name of child(ren)] will be removed from your care. You will soon receive a copy of our application to the Court and other important documents, which set out the key issues.

**WHAT YOU MUST DO NOW:**

**1. 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 understand the situation and advise you about your rights and your options. If you give them this letter you will not have to pay.

In case you do not have a solicitor, we have sent with this letter a list of local solicitors who work with children and families. They are all independent from Children’s Services.

Information your Solicitor will need is:

Local Authority Legal Contact: Name, Address & Telephone:

**2. Get your wider family involved:** Our concerns about [name(s) of child(ren)] are very serious. If the Court decides you cannot care for your child(ren), we will first try and place them with one of your relatives or a person or persons close to your child(ren), if it is best for your child(ren) to do this. You should therefore let us know immediately who in your family might be able to care for your child(ren). Please also ask them to get in touch with us directly.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Team Manager Local office/service

cc Social Worker [name]

Local Authority in house Legal Team

Enc: List of solicitor firms who have members of the Law Society’s Children Law

Accreditation Scheme