**PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE THIS LETTER**

**TAKE IT TO A SOLICITOR NOW**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of addressee Address details  | Date: enter today’s date Enquiries to enter your name Tel: 01454 86 enter your ext e-mail: enter your email address  |

Dear **XXXX**

**SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL’S CONCERNS ABOUT Name of child/children**

**LETTER BEFORE PROCEEDINGS**

**HOW TO AVOID GOING TO COURT**

I am writing to let you know how concerned South Gloucestershire Council have become about the current situation for your child. Social workers have very high concerns regarding **Name of child/children**

I am writing to inform you that South Gloucestershire Council are considering starting Care Proceedings in respect of **Name of child/children**. This means we may apply to Court and **name of child/children**, if the Court decides this is best for him/her/them, may be taken into the care of the Local Authority. There are things which you can do to avoid this happening and the attached document sets out the concerns we have and how we have tried to support you to make positive changes.

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

Please come to a meeting to talk with us about these concerns on **Date at Venue**

**PLEASE BRING A SOLICITOR TO THIS MEETING**

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). It would be very helpful for you to bring a solicitor to this meeting.

Information your solicitor will need is:

**Enter the name of our Solicitor**

Childcare Solicitor

South Gloucestershire Council

Legal Services, CE&CR, PO Box 1955, Bristol, BS37 0DB

Telephone 01454 86 **Ext number of Solicitor**

Email: **Name of Solicitor** @southglos.gov.uk

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DO NOTHING**

If you do nothing, we will be looking at going to Court to initiate Care Proceedings in respect of **name of child/children**

**YOUR WIDER FAMILY**

Our concerns about **name of child/children** being in your care under the current circumstances are serious. If we do go to Court and the Court grants us a Care Order in respect of name of **child/children**, we will first try to place **him/her** with one of your friends or relatives, if it is seen in his/her best interests. At the meeting we will want to talk to you and your solicitor about who might look after name of child/children if the Court decides that it is no longer safe for you to do so.

**INFORMATION SHARING**

In order to ensure that the pre-proceedings process is effective, the local authority will be sharing the following documents with all parents who are involved in the pre-proceedings:

* Case conference minutes
* Assessments of all parents- for example psychological assessments, parenting assessments
* Information received from the police- for example PNC print outs.

In addition, the local authority will be contacting all relatives and friends known to the local authority who may need to be assessed as potential carers for **name of** **child/children** and the local authority will be undertaking viability assessments of these connected people.

In order to properly inform any viability assessments of family members, the single assessment and any other social work documents concerning your circumstances and reasons for the LA’s concerns, will be shared with those family members being assessed.

If you do not agree to this information being shared, can you please discuss this with your legal representative before the first pre-proceedings meeting so that she/he can inform the local authority of your objections and your reasons?

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting with your solicitor on **Date at Time at Venue**, if you do not understand any part of this letter, please contact your social worker, **Name of Social Worker.** Please tell your 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

**Your name**

**Your job title**

Cc: Social worker

Legal Team

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

**HERE ARE THE MAIN THINGS THAT WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT:**

1. Concern

**[Outline the concern simply and in plain English. For instance if the concern is excessive alcohol misuse you could state “you drink too much” Then give examples of when this happened. This should capture chronic ongoing concerns as well as acute episodes/incidents]**

For Example

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dates  | Incident/Episode |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

2. Concern:

For Example

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dates  | Incident/Episode |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

3. Concern:

For Example

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dates  | Incident/Episode |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

 **(Continue to list concerns as appropriate)**

**WHAT CHILDREN’S SERVICES HAVE DONE TO TRY TO HELP**

**Who, What help has been given and When**

**WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO SO THAT WE WILL NOT GO TO COURT:**

* Confirm that you will come to a meeting to talk about these concerns. Please try to bring a solicitor with you.
* During this meeting we will agree to a schedule of expectations. Among the steps we will ask you to make and agree to will be:

**List here, ie hair strand test, disclosure of medical records etc**

* Continue to see and work with your social worker **[insert name]** and allow **him/her** to see [**name(s) of child/ren],** alone.