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|  | Date:  Our ref: Protocol ID  Ask for:  Telephone:01254 666400 |  |
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**PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE THIS LETTER - TAKE IT TO A SOLICITOR NOW**

*Top Tips*

*Please use parent’s names the same throughout. E.g. Ms Smith – Maria / Steve.*

***Don’t refer to them as mother/father.***

Dear PARENT,

**BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN BOROUGH COUNCIL CONCERNS ABOUT**

**CHILD/REN’S NAMES.**

**LETTER TO BEGIN PRE-PROCEEDINGS**

I am writing to let you know how worried Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has become about the care of your unborn child/child/children. I am writing to tell you that a decision has been made at our legal gateway panel (DATE) to enter into pre-proceedings in respect of **child/ren’s name(s) to be used.**

It is now so important that you engage in key expectations to support bringing about change which is becoming critical. There are certain expectations set out by the local authority which are absolutely non-negotiable. If things don’t improve, this means that we may apply to Court and **child/ren’s name(s) to be used** could, if the Court decides that this is best for him/her/them, be taken into care.

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

Please come to a meeting with us to talk about these concerns on **DATE/TIME via conference call.**  Please contact your child/ren’s social worker on phone line 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/ren 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 **child/ren’s names.**

**PLEASE BRING A SOLICITOR TO THE MEETING ON TIME AND DATE via conference call.** 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). You do not have to bring a Solicitor to the meeting, but it will be helpful if you do.

Information your Solicitor will need is:

Local Authority Legal Contact: Solicitors name

Legal and Democratic Services

Town Hall, Blackburn BB1 7DY.

01254 585047

**HISTORY OF INVOLVEMENT**

As you are aware parents name the Local Authority have had no/previous involvement with child/ren’s names. Within this letter I want to set out the Local Authority’s understanding of your journey so far including your strengths and areas of improvement.

Talk to the parent.

Talk in chronological order.

Include other agency support.

What have we achieved so far? Any agency they work best with/ any conversations that show good insight? Any observations with the child/ren?

What positives can you highlight?

Think about when improvements have been seen - consider why this was.

**CURRENT WORRIES**

* Continue to journey in chronological order.
* Talk about what the meeting with cover.
* Use headers for the worries to keep it simple and flowing – *i.e.; domestic abuse / mental health / neglect / poor home conditions / substance misuse / alcohol misuse / sexual harm / physical harm – summaries in a short paragraph.*
* Think about the purpose of the plan and what it has been trying to achieve – *top tip – if the case has been at CIN or CP what has been on the plan so this plan mirrors the expectations in pre-proceedings – keep it to no more than 3 / 5 actions / none negotiables* - What is the end goal?
* What is the children’s lived experiences?
* Show that we are on the journey with them – so what has been offered and the response to this.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DO NOTHING**

If you do not answer this letter or come to the meeting, we will seek to place the matter before the Courts as soon as we can to make surechild/children’s namesis/are safe.

**YOUR WIDER FAMILY**

Our concerns about child/children’s names are very serious. If we do have to go to Court and the Court decides you cannot care for your child/ren, we may first try and place them with one of your relatives, if it is best for your child/ren to do this. At the meeting, we will want to talk to you about who might look after your child/ren if the Court decides that it is no longer safe for you to do so.

In the meeting we will share who the Local Authority know about and ask if there are any additional friends or family members you would also like us to contact. We will also review your option of a Family Group Conference. Within this letter I have included information about the purpose of a Family Group Conference for your consideration. There is also attached a pre-proceedings shared expectations agreement which you should share with your solicitor prior to the first meeting.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Team Manager

Children’s Services