**In the Family Court Case no: [*Case number*]**



**sitting at [*Court name*]**

**To [*names of parties*]**

**This order was made by [*name of judge/justices*] on [*date*]. It tells you what you must do and what will happen next. If you do not do what it says you could be sent to prison, fined or both. Also hearings may not be effective and you may have to pay costs as a result.**

**The next hearing will be at [*time*] on [*date*] at [*name and address of court*]. You need to get to court by [*time*]. The hearing should last for [time] (but it could last longer). The court will [*not*] expect to hear evidence at that hearing.**

**If for any reason you cannot do what the order says you should contact the court and the other party in writing or by email immediately and explain why. If you need more time, explain why and how much more time you need.**

**If you were not told about the hearing when this order was made you can ask the court to reconsider it (look at it again). To do that you should contact the court and the other party in writing or by email saying what you think the court should do instead.**

**If you think the court needs to take steps to make sure you are safe at court, or you need help to take part in a hearing, you should contact the court straightaway so the court can consider what steps might be needed. You should explain what you need and why.**

**The following things will be dealt with at the next hearing:**

* Things that need to be done so the court can consider what order would be best for the child[ren].
* Deciding factual matters that you disagree about.
* Arrangements for the child[ren] in the meantime.
* Final arrangements for the child[ren].

**Before the next hearing you [*name*] must do the following**:

1. By **4.00pm on [*date*]** send a statement to the court and to [name] [and to Cafcass] dealing with the following:
   1. allegations of abusive behaviour - say what happened and when, whether anybody else witnessed it (including the child[ren]) and whether it was reported to anybody else;
   2. what arrangements you say are in the best interests of the child[ren] (who they should live with and see and any issues about schooling) and why.

**See the notes below about making statements**.

1. By **4.00pm on [*date*]** send the court and [*name*] [and to Cafcass] a letter from your GP dealing with [*details*]. You can show your GP a copy of this order so they understand what the court needs.

**Before the next hearing you [*name*] must do the following:**

1. By **4.00pm on [*date*]** send a statement to the court and to [*name*] [and to Cafcass] dealing with the following:
   1. any allegations of abusive behaviour made - say whether you accept what is alleged and, if not, what you say happened;
   2. what arrangements you say are in the best interests of the child[ren] (who they should live with and see and any issues about schooling) and why.

**See the notes below about making statements**

1. By **4.00pm on [*date*]** send the court and [*name*] [and to Cafcass] a letter from your GP dealing with [details]. You can show your GP a copy of this order so they understand what the court needs.
2. Prepare written questions to ask [*name*] at the next hearing - do not send them to the court but do bring two copies of them to the next hearing with you.

**Cafcass report**

The court has asked Cafcass to report about what is in the best interests of the child[ren]. You must co-operate with Cafcass so they can report fully. The report from Cafcass will be sent to the court by [*date*] and considered at the next hearing.

**Arrangements for the children [in the meantime]**

1. [*Child[ren]’s name(s)*] will live with [*name*].
2. You [*name*] must make sure the children see or spend time with [*name*] as follows:
3. Do not change the child[ren]’s school or names or take them out of the country without agreement of the other parent or permission of the court.

**Important: you must comply with this order. If you do not you could be sent to prison, fined, made to do unpaid work or to pay compensation to the other parent.**

**Notes about making statements**

**Any statement (including a schedule) must state clearly your name, your address (unless the court has said you do not have to give it and the date. At the end you must state “The contents of this statement are true” and sign it.**

If you have documents or photographs that show what happened you should attach them. The court doesn’t make its own enquiries or gather evidence for you.

When you make a statement about what is in the child[ren]’s interests you might find it useful to use the witness statement template which you can find at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/687743/c120-eng.pdf> .

If you are asking the court to deal with allegations of abuse a schedule (table) of incidents can be helpful. Complete it and email it to the other party who can then use the same schedule to reply. The completed schedule can then be sent to the court.

Below is an example of a schedule:

**SCHEDULE EXAMPLE**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | The person making the allegation should fill in these parts. | | | | The person replying should fill in this part |
| Number | Date | Briefly, what do you say happened and where?  (Give more detail in your statement) | Who else was there? | If the incident was reported, give details. | Briefly, what do you say happened?  (Give more detail in your statement) |
| 1 | [*date*] | [*insert*] | [*name*] | [*insert*] | [*insert*] |
| 2 | [*etc.*] |  |  |  |  |

**Annex A**

**Preparation and use of bundles in private law cases - a summary of Practice Direction 27A for litigants in person**

**Why is a bundle of documents important?**

It is very important at court hearings that everybody has a bundle containing the documents that are needed to deal with the issues the court has to decide. It is also important that each bundle contains only the documents relevant at that hearing, in the same order and with the same page numbers. Otherwise much time can be wasted at hearings while parties and witnesses try to find documents that are being referred to. To this end Practice Direction 27A of the Family Procedure Rules sets out what must be done by the person preparing the bundle.

**Who prepares the bundle?**

Normally the applicant prepares the court bundle. If the applicant is not represented by lawyers but another party is, that party’s lawyers will prepare the bundle. If nobody is represented by lawyers the court will decide who should prepare the bundle.

**Contents of the bundle**

If the court has told you to prepare the bundle then you will need to get together into a ring binder or lever arch file (only) the documents that are relevant to the issues the court has to decide at that hearing. You should agree these with any other party. Send them a list of the documents you suggest should be included (an index). If you cannot agree, ask the court whether a document should go into the bundle or not.

Do not include correspondence, medical records, financial records, notes of contact visits, social services files or police disclosure. If you think any documents of these types are relevant and should go in the bundle you should ask the court for permission to include it. You will need to explain why you think it is relevant.

The bundle should be divided into sections A to E. The sections should be as follows:

**A** **Preliminary documents**These are:

* An up to date summary of the background to the hearing confined to the matters relevant for that hearing and the management of the case (called a case summary) - this should not be longer than 4 pages.
* A statement of the issues to be decided at this hearing and at the final hearing (you should agree this with any other party).
* A position statement by each party setting out what they say should happen and the orders they would like made at this hearing and at the final hearing.
* An up-to-date chronology (setting out in date order relevant events).
* Any written submissions to the court about the issues to be decided at the hearing.  
  *[Note: all these documents should be cross-referenced to pages in the bundle. See the note below]*
* A list of the documents you and any other party think the judge really needs to read before this hearing.
* How long you think the hearing should last (the court probably will not expect this from you as a litigant in person).

**B** **Applications and orders**That is, any applications made to the court and orders made by the court that are relevant to the issues to be decided at the hearing.

**C** **Statements and affidavits**But again only those that are relevant to the issues to be decided at the hearing.

**D** **Experts’ reports**(If there are any.)

**E** **Any other documents**   
That you agree are relevant for the hearing or the court directs should be included.

Each page in the bundle must be numbered in the bottom right hand corner. So the preliminary documents will start at A1, A2 and so on. The applications and orders section will start with B1, B2 and so on.

Try to cross-reference the preliminary documents with the pages in the bundle. For example, if the case summary mentions something dealt with in a statement at page C28, insert in the case summary at that point [C28].

The bundle should not exceed 350 pages. Ask permission from the court before exceeding this limit.

Print on one side of the page only.

Once you have completed the bundle make an index of each of the documents and their pages numbers. That goes at the start of the bundle, before everything else.

Make sure the outside of the bundle is clearly labelled with the name and number of the case, where it is to be heard, the hearing date and time (and the name of the judge if you know).

**What do I do with the bundle?**

First, send a copy of the index to any other party. They may ask for a copy of the complete bundle. If so, you should provide a copy, although they should pay any reasonable copying charges that you incur.

Next, make sure you deliver the bundle to arrive at the court no later than 2 working days before the hearing. If anybody is going to give evidence at the hearing, deliver two bundles - one for the judge and one for the witnesses.

If the hearing is before magistrates you will need to deliver four copies of the bundle (plus an extra one for any witnesses).

If the preliminary documents are not ready, deliver the bundle to the court anyway. Make sure any preliminary documents are delivered to the court by 11.00am on the working day before the hearing at the latest.

Make sure you bring your bundle to the court for the hearing.

**Annex B**

**Information about appeals for litigants in person**

**The court has made an order. The order is effective immediately and you must comply with it.**

**If you wish to challenge the order you will need to ask for permission to appeal.**

**How long have I got to appeal?**

You must file with the court an Appellant’s Notice within 21 days from the date the order was made. If the order was a case management order or an interim care or supervision order the time limit is 7 days. For an Appellant’s Notice and further information about how to appeal go to the HMCTS Form Finder at <http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/HMCTS/FormFinder.do> and enter ‘Appellant’s Notice’ in the ‘Words from Title’ field.

**Where do I send the Appellant’s Notice?**

If you are appealing an order made by magistrates or a district judge the Appellant’s Notice must be filed with the family court where the order was made.

If you want to appeal a decision of a circuit judge or recorder in a private law case the Appellant’s Notice must be sent to the High Court Family Appeals Office (Royal Courts of Justice, Family Division Appeals, Queens Building, Strand, London WC2A 2LL; email: [appeals.familydivision@justice.gov.uk](mailto:appeals.familydivision@justice.gov.uk)).

If the appeal is from an order made by a circuit judge or recorder in a public law case (including adoption) the Appellant’s Notice must be sent to the Court of Appeal Civil Appeals Office (Royal Courts of Justice, Room E307, Strand, London WC2A 2LL; email: [civilappeals.registry@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:civilappeals.registry@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk%20)).

**When will permission to appeal be given?**

Only if the appeal court thinks an appeal has a real prospect of success or there is some other compelling reason why the appeal should be heard.

**When might the court allow an appeal?**

Only if the appeal court considers the decision was (a) wrong or (b) unjust because of a serious procedural or other irregularity. The appeal court will not allow the appeal just because it would have reached a different decision, but only if the decision was wrong or unjust.

**Do I have to comply with the order if I appeal?**

You must comply with the order unless it is stayed or set aside. You can ask the judge who made the order to stay it while you seek permission to appeal. If the judge is not prepared to stay the order you can apply to the appeal court for a stay.