**Children’s Services**

Enter Address

London

Direct 020 7974

E:

[www.camden.gov.uk](http://www.camden.gov.uk)

Date:

Your Reference:

Our Reference:

Enquiries to:

**Private and Confidential: Letter Before Proceedings.**

To be hand delivered and talked through with you.

**This is an important letter before court proceedings. Please take this letter to a solicitor.**

Dear

As you know, we have met to talk about how we have been concerned about your children, [Name, D.O.B] for some time, which is why X continues to have a Child Protection Plan.

I am writing to you now as we have had a legal meeting and decided we are now entering a formal legal process with you called ‘pre-proceedings’.

Pre-Proceedings means that we are going to work with you to see if we either need to go to a family court and ask a Judge to make decisions about the care of your children, or if you make changes in your parenting so that we do not go to court. I will talk to you about this process and what it means for you. You can also find more information about it on the Family Rights Group, and their pre proceedings information. A link to the website is here: www.frg.org.uk

 [Pre-proceedings - Family Rights Group (frg.org.uk)](https://frg.org.uk/get-help-and-advice/what/pre-proceedings/)

I have arranged a pre-proceedings meeting for:

Date:

Time:

Venue:

This is a formal meeting where we will agree how we will work together, what assessments we will do of your parenting, what support we will offer you, and when we will make a decision about if we are going to court or not.

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**These are the worries we have about how you are looking after the children:**

1. I am worried about ***[set out the issues and put in dates and evidence such as: that the children are seeing violence in the home, and the police were called on X and you had bruising to your face on that day, and this is causing the children to be worried and scared.]***

 ***[set out support provided, such as]:*** I have supported you by helping you to move away from X and with linking you with Camden Safety Net. However, you moved back and have decided not to meet with Camden Safety Net.

2. I am worried you have been using cocaine for a long time, and you have had a positive urine test on x, x and X, and that this has meant you have struggled to pay your rent and have food for X,

I have tried to help you access support from your GP and CGL, but you have said you do not want that support.

1. I am worried that X is missing school, and their school attendance is now X% and when they do attend they are tired and hungry.

‘Special People’ have come to your home to help you get a good routine for X, but you have not always let them in or you have been upset with them and made them leave.

**What you need to do now:**

1. **Get a solicitor**

It is really important that you get advice from a solicitor who is qualified in family law as soon as possible. They will help you to understand the situation and advise you about your rights and your options. You do not need to pay for a solicitor. When you show this letter to a solicitor, they will apply for legal aid for you as you are entitled to it. Your solicitor will attend the appointment with you and support you through this process.

A list of solicitors is attached to this letter. These are all separate from Camden Children Services.

You do not need to have a solicitor if you don’t want to, but it will be helpful to you if you do.

Your solicitor will need to know who to contact in our legal department and the person is:

Local Authority Legal Contact: X (rX@camden.gov.uk)

When your solicitor contacts our legal, they will send your solicitor a copy of the last child protection minutes.

1. **Get your wider family involved.**

My worries about your children are very serious. If we do have to go to Court and the Court decides you cannot care for your children, we will first try and see if one of your relatives or a friend of yours is able to look after them, if it is best for your children to do this.

**The Court expects parents to provide contact details for up to 3 family or friends at this meeting, who we can assess during this pre-proceedings stage.** It will be important that you have spoken with your family members and friends about this before the meeting.

1. **Come to the pre-proceedings meeting at the time set in this letter**

The people at this meeting will be: you and your solicitor, myself, my manager, our solicitor, a minute taker.

We will:

* talk with you about what you will need to do to make your children safe;
* talk with you how we will support you to do this;
* talk with you who in your family could look after your children if you are not able to; and
* talk with you about how we will assess your parenting, and how we will assess any family members
* explain what steps we will take if we continue to be worried about X.

We will also ask you to sign a written agreement, which is attached to this letter.

**Please let me know if you are coming to the meeting.**

If you do not understand any part of this letter, please let me know and we can talk about it.

Please tell me if you need any help with childcare so that you can attend the meeting, and we will try to help.

Yours faithfully,

Cc: Social Worker – X

 Legal X

Enc: List of solicitors firms who are members of the Law Society’s Children Law Accreditation Scheme

Enc: written agreement and any LOI