

MIND YOUR LANGUAGE...

write in respectful and
kind language that the
parents / parties can
understand

- Write about “spending family time” not “the parent’s contact with the child”.
- Avoid or explain acronyms (e.g. Team around the Family not TAF, Care and Support Plan not CASP).
- Avoid inflammatory language - remember that one day the child might read the report.
- Check with parents and child how they want to be referred to in your report.

WRITE A REPORT THAT IS PROPORTIONATE...

and make proportionate
enquiries to the issues in
the case

- Your role is to present the voice of the child and the impact of the issues / application on them, not to present lengthy narrative statements on behalf of the adults.
- You don’t need to address every bullet point prompt in the CIR template, only what is relevant to this child in this light of this application – you are free to ignore prompts that don’t apply.

CONSIDER WHAT AGENCY INFORMATION TO INCLUDE...

it needs to be necessary
and relevant to the case

- Agency information should always be summarised and only include the level of detail that is relevant to your analysis of the risks and issues in the case.
- Consider and apply the detailed guidance in the [Safeguarding Enquiries Disclosure Principles](#) – this outlines the legal basis, purpose and parameters of disclosing sensitive/ personal information.
- Less is more – unnecessary or repetitive detail can make it harder for the reader to take on board the key facts and messages.
- Review your report before filing – if you have included information that you have not analysed, does it need to be there?

CONSIDER THE PRESUMPTION OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT...

and how it relates to PD
12J and your assessment
of risk

- CA 1989 section 1(2A) says that the court is to presume, unless the contrary is shown, that involvement of the parent in the life of the child concerned will further the child's welfare, if that parent can be involved in a way that does not put the child at risk of suffering harm.

- The presumption applies unless there is evidence before the court to suggest that involvement of that parent in the child's life would put the child at risk of suffering harm whatever the form of the involvement.
- The presumption of parental involvement does **not** override safety and the principle that the child's welfare is paramount, nor is it our role to promote parental involvement where it is not beneficial – this also applies to indirect contact, which in the context of domestic abuse, the FJYPB tells us can be unwelcome and feel threatening and intrusive.
- If there is evidence to suggest domestic abuse you must consider [Practice Direction 12J](#) paragraphs 35 to 37 which set out the factors that the court should consider, including past harm as well as future risk, to ensure that any order is physically **and** emotionally safe.

FOCUS YOUR REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS...

on what is safe for the child
and in their best interests
in the here and now

- Start with the child, their safety and current needs and respect their wishes and feelings.
- If your recommendations are not in line with the child's wishes, carefully think about why not - is your recommendation serving the best interests of the child or adult interests?
- Avoid making long term / stepped in recommendations that are dependent on something that hasn't yet happened / might never happen (e.g. parent detoxing from alcohol or producing a negative drugs test after the proceedings have ended).
- Any recommendation for a stepped in arrangement should be for the child's benefit and achievable in a short timeframe e.g. a reintroduction and increases of family time with a parent over a few weeks.
- The courts have told us that they want to see robust recommendations that allow them to make decisions in the here and now – recognising it is not our role to extend cases in the hope of 'fixing' everything for the family or trying to fulfil the adults' wishes.

DISCLOSING THE REPORT

- Your CIR should be sent to all parties so that the court can proceed as transparently as possible with the case.
- If there is sensitive information that cannot be shared with one or both parties this should be filed in a separate 16A risk assessment report.