

Case Management Hearing (CMH)



This is usually the first hearing that takes place. The court will not make any final decisions, but it will look at what arrangements should be in place for your child until the final hearing takes place. This will include whether:

- There is agreement about where your child should live until then
- Your child can live with a family member until the final hearing (if they are not able to stay with you)
- There is agreement about who your child should see
- There is agreement about whether a court order is needed at the present time.

If there is disagreement about what the interim (temporary) arrangements for your child should be, then the court can either try to make a decision at the CMH or set a date for a longer hearing at which these things can be looked at and a decision made.

At the CMH the court will note down (in a **court order**) what the main issues in the case are. The court will decide what information it needs to make a final decision about your child's future at the final hearing. In its order, the court will usually state:

- What work social workers (or another professional) should do. For example, carry out a parenting assessment or arrange a **family group conference**
- Whether it is necessary for any experts (such as doctors, psychologists or an independent social worker) to do assessments and write reports
- What other information social workers, you and anyone else involved in the case should share (this will include a written statement explaining your views and what you would like to happen)
- Whether any family members should be assessed as potential carers for your child if your child cannot remain safely in your care in the long term.

A timetable will also be drawn up so that everyone knows when a final decision will be made and when different kinds of information should be shared. The court will usually want to conclude a case in 26 weeks but can allow more time if this is needed to make sure things are dealt with fairly.

It is very important that you go to the case management hearing and work with your solicitor in the run up to the hearing - see the [FAQs \(frequently asked questions\) about care proceedings](#) for more information.