

# Application sent to court and 'issued'

When children's services make an application to the Family Court to start care proceedings, they must complete a form to tell the court about the child they are worried about, about the child's parents and why they are making the application.

At the same time (or very soon afterwards), children's services must also let the court have:

- A chronology and supporting statement from your child's social worker (or another social worker who knows the case well). This should be quite detailed and explain:
  - what order they're seeking
  - the main things that have happened which show why an order should be made
  - your child's needs
  - your ability to meet your child's needs
  - information about the pros and cons of all possible options for your child's care, including whether your child can be cared for by other family members
- A record of the assessments they have already done of family or friends who may be able to care for your child if you are not able to
- A 'threshold statement' – this is a statement telling the court why children's services believe your child is suffering harm or may be at risk of suffering harm
- A care plan for your child that children's services say they will follow to keep your child well cared for and safe until a final hearing can take place
- A list of other records that children's services hold, such as notes from meetings with you or discussions with family members. (At this stage, this only needs to be a list, not the notes or records themselves.)

Children's services must tell the court if they think there will be agreement about where your child lives and who your child sees between now and when the final hearing takes place. If it looks like there won't be an agreement, the court will set a date to make a decision about what is best for your child.

Once the court has checked that all of the right papers have been provided, the court will formally start the care proceedings. This is known as 'issuing' the proceedings.