**Child’s Birth Name: DOB:**

**Step 1: The Purpose of contact**

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| **What is the purpose of contact?*** Build or maintain relationships
* Assure a child they are loved and remembered.
* Ease the pain of separation and loss.
* Give permission to settle in a new family.
* Support reparation and recovery after abuse.
* Provide a reality check.
* Reassure that birth relatives are alive and well.
* Help children to understand their history and identity (particularly for black and ethnic minority children).
* Support life story work and allow children to ask questions about why they do not live with birth parents.
 |
| **The purpose of contact for (Name of child)?****Notes:** |
| **If direct contact is not safe how else can you meet these needs?****Notes:** |

**Step 2: What are the risks and strengths?**

**For the child**

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| **STRENGTHS** | **RISKS** |
| **Factors in the child associated with a positive contact:** | **Factors in the child associated with a difficult or disruptive contact:** |
| **Child placed in infancy****Notes:** | **Older child with troubled/traumatic relationship with birth relative.** **Notes:** |
| **No pre-placement relationship with birth relative** **Notes:** | **Rejected child, lived with several birth relatives. Child witnessed violence/imitates violence.****Notes:** |
| **Positive/neutral pre-placement relationship.** **Notes:** | **Major behavioural/mental health problems.****Notes:** |
| **Absence of major behavioural/mental health problems.** **Notes:** | **Insecure attachment/placement with current carers.****Notes:** |
| **Secure attachment and placement with current carers.****Notes:** | **Child freely does not want contact, is afraid.****Notes:** |
| **Healthy psycho-social development.****Notes:** | **Child is fearful on return to placement/ trust in carers undermined.****Notes:** |
| **Child freely wants contact, is not afraid.****Notes:** | **Child has negative memories.****Notes:** |
| **Child has positive memories.** **Notes:** | **Child is re-traumatised/overwhelmed by contact.****Notes:** |
| **Child has not witnessed/does not imitate violence.****Notes:** | **Child witnessed violence/imitates violence.****Notes:** |

**For the Carers:**

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| **STRENGTHS** | **RISKS** |
| **Factors in the carers associated with positive contact:** | **Factors in the carers associated with difficult or disruptive contact:** |
| **Not afraid or at risk from birth relatives****Notes:** | **Afraid/at risk from birth relatives****Notes:** |
| **Recognise benefits of contact****Notes:** | **Does not want or is anxious about contact.****Notes:** |
| **Involved in contact planning.****Notes:** | **Excluded from planning and from contact.****Notes:** |
| **Trained and prepared to support contact.****Notes:** | **Unsupported, unprepared, untrained****Notes:** |
| **Positive attitude to birth family,****acknowledge reasons for placement.****Notes:** | **Critical/unaccepting of birth family****Notes:** |
| **Resolved states of mind in relation to****own loss/abuse****Notes:** | **Unresolved states of mind regarding****own loss/attachment/abuse****Notes:** |
| **Constructive, collaborative approach****Notes:** | **Unwilling to work collaboratively.****Notes:** |
| **Sensitivity, empathy, reflective capacity****Notes:** | **Lack of sensitivity, empathy, reflective****Notes:** |
| **Communicative openness****Notes:** |  |

**For the Birth Relatives:**

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| **STRENGTHS** | **RISKS** |
| **Factors in the adult birth relative associated with positive contact:** | **Factors in the adult birth relative associated with difficult or detrimental contact:** |
| **Has never been child’s primary carer.****Notes:** | **Does not accept or undermines the Placement.****Notes:** |
| **Accepts and supports placement, affirms new carers.****Notes:** | **Insists on maintaining role as main carer, discourages child from loving new family****Notes:** |
| **Constructive and collaborative approach****Notes:** | **Seriously maltreated or traumatised child in past (including exposure to****domestic violence)****Notes:** |
| **Relinquishes parenting role.****Notes:** | **Neglectful/abusive/rejecting during visits.****Notes:** |
| **Relates to child in positive, non-abusive way.****Notes:** | **Unreliable, persistently late****Notes:** |
| **Relatively free of significant personal****difficulties (for example substance misuse)****Notes:** | **Denies causing harm/shows no remorse or regret.****Notes:** |
| **Reliable, punctual****Notes:** | **Exposes child to values at odds with placement (for example drug use)****Notes:** |
| **Accepts harm caused to child.****Notes:**  | **Significant personal difficulties (for example substance misuse)****Notes:** |
| **Expresses regret/remorse.****Notes:** | **Uses contact to undermine/threaten/cause conflict with carers.****Notes:** |
| **Does not use contact to undermine/threaten.****or cause conflict with carers****Notes:**  | **Risk to carers/threats of abduction****Notes:**  |

**For Sibling Contact:**

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| **STRENGTHS** | **RISKS** |
| **Factors associated with positive sibling contact:** | **Factors associated with difficult or detrimental sibling contact:** |
| **Activity-based, chance to build up good memories.****Notes:**  | **Child is re-traumatised or recovery impaired by contact.****Notes:**  |
| **Carers from similar backgrounds, with similar values****Notes:**  | **Siblings discourage child from loving/ settling in with new family.****Notes:**  |
| **Placements are geographically close.****Notes:**  | **Chains of contact present a risk.****Notes:**  |
|  | **Negative patterns re-emerge (for example sexualised behaviour/scapegoating) despite intervention.****Notes:**  |
|  | **Sibling cannot relinquish parental role.****Notes:**  |

**Step 3: Provisional Plan for Contact**

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| **Consider all types of contact, including:*** Supervised professionally or by carers/extended family.
* Supported/actively facilitated to improve relationships/allow child to ask questions.
* Community-based/activity-based.
* Telephone/letter/Skype/social media.

**Frequency of contact should allow the child to regain equilibrium between visits and enjoy family life.** |
| **The provisional plan for contact for (Insert Name of Child).**Notes: |

**Step 4: Contact Support Plan**

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| **Contact Support Plan this could include:*** Supervision, facilitation, mediation.
* Emotional and practical support before and after visits.
* Involving children and families in drawing up written agreements.
* Establishing role clarity (Who is Mummy? Who tells the child off?)
* Financial help with travel/trips.
* Help to take part in special family events (for example weddings).
* Access to quality venues. Links to support groups.
* Clarity about decision-making process.
* Life story work.

**Don’t assume that kinship carers can manage contact without support.** |
| **Contact Support Plan for (Insert Name of child).**Notes: |

**Step 5: Review**

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| **The Review of contact:****This should consider everybody’s point of view, paying particular attention to children’s response before and after visits and their demeanour during contact as well as their verbally expressed wishes.** * Does the pattern of contact need to change?
* Does the support to contact need to change? What is the purpose of contact?
 |
| **Plan for review of contact for (Insert Name of Child):**Notes: |

\*This risk assessment is based on Contact: Making good decisions for children in public law – Contact planning tool developed by Elsbeth Neil at UEA – Dartington/www.rip.org.uk/frontline.