**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.