



An Bord Um
Chúnamh Dlíthiúil
Legal Aid Board
Providing access to justice since 1979



Barnardos
Because childhood lasts a lifetime

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR CARE ORDER COURT DATE: A CHECKLIST

Barnardos Parental Advocacy & Information Service

It is recommended that you seek legal representation before your Care Order Hearing.

This can be a private solicitor, or you can apply for Legal Aid.

More information on Legal Aid and how to apply for it can be found on their website at
<https://www.legalaidboard.ie/en/>.

For advice and guidance, you can contact the Legal Aid Board helpline on 0818 615 200 or the Parental Advocacy freephone on 1800 333 355.

Getting Through Court:

- ☐ I have packed some drinks and snacks for the day.
- ☐ Courts can be loud and busy; I have packed some headphones in case I get overwhelmed.
- ☐ I have practiced some exercises to help me breathe, keep calm, and remain regulated during court.*

*These can be found on the Barnardos website, at
<https://www.barnardos.ie/resources/heart-body-and-mind/>

Getting Ready for Court:

- ☐ My solicitor has gone through all documents with me, and I have signed any paperwork and/or consent forms that my solicitor needs me to.
- ☐ I have told my solicitor about my family history and given them background on my family's concerns.
- ☐ I have shared all relevant information with my solicitor, including if there have been previous care orders for my children.

Getting to Court:

- ☐ I know where my hearing will be and how to get there, and I have arranged suitable transport.
- ☐ I have decided to attend the hearing and have made myself available to attend; this can include taking time off work and arranging childcare where needed.
- ☐ I have decided not to attend the hearing and have spoken to my solicitor about this.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I bring my phone with me?

Yes, you can bring your phone. However, you are not allowed to take any recordings, photos, or videos. It is also recommended that you keep your phone on silent or on Airplane Mode.

Can I bring food or drink with me?

Food is usually not allowed in the courtroom. You may be allowed to bring a bottle of water with you.

Outside the courtroom, you can have snacks and drinks. You may be waiting a while for your hearing, so you may want to bring some food with you during this time.

What do I do if I have additional needs with accessibility?

The courts have facilities for a range of needs. You can reach out and express any additional needs you may have to accessofficer@courts.ie. This can include wheelchair ramps, accessible toilets, and assistive hearing technologies, to name a few.

What do I do if English is not my first language?

Interpreters can be provided where needed. Sometimes, the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) will hire the interpreter. Other times, you will need to get in touch with the court office or your own legal counsel to arrange for this.

When should I arrive to court and when will my case be heard?

The arrival time for court is usually 10.30am. Your solicitor will meet you there. When you arrive, you will see a call list – this is a list of all of the cases being heard that day. The court will announce over an intercom speaker when it is your turn for your case to be heard.

Where do I go if I need help on the day of court?

The Courts Service have an on-site office at every courthouse, should you need help with anything on the day of your hearing.

Who can I contact if I need help preparing for court?

If you need help understanding the care order process or if you have any questions, you can call the Barnardos Parental Advocacy and Information Service freephone on 1800 333 355, or the Legal Aid Board's helpline on 0818 615 200. You can also get in touch via the email addresses below or find out more by scanning the QR codes.

To seek assistance understanding processes:



parent.advocacy@barnardos.ie



1800 333 355

To receive legal assistance:



info@legalaidboard.ie



0818 615 200