



Loreto Martin

The Voice of the Child Consultant

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Section 32 'Voice of the Child' Report

Referral Form April 2022

Date of next Court date:

Name

Phone number:

Email address:

Address:

Your Solicitor's Name:

Phone number

Email address:

Are you the **Applicant** or the **Respondent**?

Are you in receipt of Legal aid?

Your child/children's Name and DOB?

Name of the parent your Child/Children reside with:

Name of the child/children's other parent:

Contact details if known:

Once the referral email comes in from the Solicitors we will contact the family and arrange the meetings as outlined below.

Aim of the Section 32 'Voice of the Child' Report

Our role is to meet with parents and the child to gain an understanding of the situation your child is in and to hear their voice. Research shows that children do better in life when they have a relationship with both their parents. Therefore it's important to encourage/support (where appropriate) your child/parent relationship as long as it is in your child's best interest, safety and well being to do so.

Meetings will take place either in the (1) Kells Family Resource Centre (KFRC), Old Carrick, School, Lord Edward's Street, Townparks, Kells, Co Meath. **Or** (2) An Tobar Retreat Centre, Ardbracken, Navan, Co Meath.

Note 1: Mrs Martin can travel to different counties on request to prevent children and their families travelling to Kells. The cost of the hotel and room hire will be divided equally between the different families who avail of this service.

Note 2: If there is no other staff present during these meetings Mrs Martin will record the meetings, ask her colleague to type them up and then the recording will be deleted.

The Section 32 Voice of the Child process is as follows

1. Meet with the parent where the child resides Via Zoom.
2. Meet with the other parent Via Zoom. (Steps 1 & 2 depends on which parent is able to make the first meeting).

3. Meet with your child/children at the above addresses. *Another professional will also be present at this meeting to record the meeting.*
4. Meet child/children and one parent.
5. Meet with child/children and their other parent.
6. We will provide a factual report for court, based on our findings from everyone's perspective with special emphasis on how your child view their situation and what they would like to happen for the future (Age appropriate). We will also make recommendations to the court on how best to move forward in the best interest, safety and well being of your child/children.

Terms and Conditions for parents during the section 32 process

- Parents will be expected to arrive on time for their meetings.
- During meetings there will be no aggressive or intimidating behaviour from either parent towards their child or any adult. If a parent doesn't act respectfully and follow guidance the meeting will be cancelled. We will write to that parent's solicitor letting them know why the meeting was cancelled and another appointment will be made.
- Parents are asked not to involve their child in adult issues **for example** (1) giving out about the other parent (2) asking questions about the other parent and what the other parent is doing or saying etc. (3) If there is more than one child in the family and another child doesn't attend a meeting with their parent, the child attending the meeting is not to be asked why the other child didn't attend etc. (4) The parent meeting their child is not to be asked leading questions/suggestions about why they are in this situation or to make suggestions/promises about future plans.
- Parents do not meet during this process. The parent bringing the child to the meeting with their other parent is asked not to arrive early and just to arrive at the correct time. The parent attending the meeting is asked to be in the building 10 minutes prior to the meeting. If either parent is running late for their meeting they need to contact us and let us know they are running late.
- When the parent is meeting with their child it's important to have quality time between parent/child without distractions. Therefore parents are asked during meetings to keep their phones (all technology) turned off. Also as this is a process to get your child's view on their life situation it wouldn't be appropriate for the parent coming to see their child to bring presents.
- Our focus is to carry out a Section 32 Voice of the Child report. Therefore we will not get involved in he said/ she said issues as this can distract from the focus of our role. If a parent needs support we will give them details of appropriate services that can help to support them through their issues.
- The Section 32 report will be dropped/posted into the court house for the attention of the Judge and Solicitors prior to the court date.

I am aware that

- All of my information will be password protected, is kept in a secure place and will be confidential to each individual and any agency we may need to contact in the course of our work. There are two exceptions
 - 1. If it came to our attention that a child is at risk then we are required to report this concern to Tusla and both parents will be informed (if appropriate) of this referral.

- 2. If we become aware of a parent being a risk of harm to themselves or someone else we will need to inform the appropriate services and supports.
- We will work with your family in a respectful, professional and child centred manner. Given the very nature of this service there may be times that parents are not happy (from their perspective) with the service they are provided with especially when their child is our focus and some parents may not be happy with the outcome. However it's essential that parents/children let us know the areas that we can improve our service through giving us constructive positive/negative feedback.
- Any feedback will be gladly accepted and will **not** impact or reflect on the focus of the work or the interaction that is taking place with the family.

Fee Structure

- The fee per parent is €800 however if either or both parties have a LA certificate which includes a provision for payment for a section 32 report the fee is covered by this certificate.
- For a parent who isn't covered by LA they can pay €400 at the first meeting via Zoom. The second €400 needs to be paid before a meeting is agreed for their child.
- The fee for attending court is €500 and payment is the responsibility of the parent summoning us to court. This fee needs to be paid when the summons is issued. However if a parent is in receipt of LA then their LA cert will cover this cost.

I agree to allow Loreto Martin to proceed with the Section 32 Voice of the Child report and agree to the conditions outlined above.

Signed by Parent:

Date: