

SECTION 32 1 (a) 'VOICE OF THE CHILD' REFERRAL FORM

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Date of next Court date:

Your name:

Your phone number:

Your email address:

Your postal 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/ren's name and DOB:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Name of the parent your child/ren resides with:

Name of the child/ren's other parent:

Their contact details, if known:

Introduction:

My name is Loreto Martin and, as a Social Care practitioner, I have been carrying out Section 32 'Voice of the Child' reports since July 2020. I worked directly with children and families from 2008-2020 and for 10 of those years I was a Children's Access Support Coordinator. This involved listening to children's voices and worries around access and trying to create a safe, supportive, fun space where the child and parent could meet and spend time together. In 2007 I graduated with an Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree in Applied Social Studies (Disabilities) (Level 8).

This combination of experience and education means that I meet (1) the 'relevant period' to be working with children and (2) the recognised qualifications deemed necessary to be a Child's Views Expert as set out by S.I.No.587/2018-Guardianship and Infants Act 1964 (Child's Views Expert) Regulations 2018.

The 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. The report is carried out to see how things are going from the children's perspective and to suggest recommendations to help make the children's relationship and contact easier with both parents.

Meetings will take place in the Kells or Navan, Co Meath area. (Please see note 1 below).

Note 1: Mrs. Martin can travel to different counties on request, to meet children in their homes, which prevents children and their families travelling. The cost of travel, hotel and room hire etc., will be divided equally between the parents who avail of this service.

Note 2: Mrs. Martin will record meetings with all family members with whom she speaks. This ensures an accurate report highlighting the voice of the child. They will be transcribed within a week of the meeting, and the recording is then deleted.

The Section 32 1 (a) 'Voice of the Child' report process is as follows:

1. A questionnaire will be emailed to both parents to try and get a picture of their story, where they are now at and how/why - from their individual perspectives - their present difficulties arose.
2. Meet with both parents separately, via zoom, to discuss and explore their answers on the questionnaire.
3. Meet with your child/ren in their own home which would be easier on them.
4. Meet with child/ren with their resident parent if required.
5. Meet with child/ren and their non-resident parent in the non-resident parents' home or another venue, all depending on what the child/ren feel comfortable with.
6. There may be some unannounced visits to the child/ren in their parents' homes.
7. We will provide a factual report for court, based on our findings from everyone's perspective with special emphasis on how your child/ren view their situation and what they would like to happen for the future (age appropriate). Based on the findings, we will also make recommendations to the court on how best to move forward in the best interest, safety, and wellbeing of your child/ren.

Terms and Conditions for parents during the Section 32 process:

1. Parents will be expected to arrive on time for their meetings.
2. During meetings there will be no aggressive or intimidating behaviour from either parent towards their child or any adult. If a parent does not 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 may be made.
3. As this is a child led process, parents should not ask their children for a hug when they meet. It is up to the child to offer whichever forms of affection they are comfortable with.
4. Parents are asked not to involve their child in adult issues, for example, **(a)** giving out about the other parent, **(b)** asking questions about the other parent and what the other parent is doing or saying etc. **(c)** 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. **(d)** The parent meeting their child will not ask leading questions/make suggestions about why they are in this situation or make suggestions/promises about future plans.

Parents do not meet during this process.

1. The parent bringing the child/ren to the meeting with their other parent is asked not to arrive early and to only arrive at the agreed time. The parent attending the meeting is asked to be in the building 10 minutes prior to the agreed meeting time.
If either parent is running late for their meeting they need to contact us and let us know they are running late.
2. When the parent is meeting with their child/ren, it is important to have quality time between parent and child without distractions. Therefore, parents are asked to keep their phones and all other technology turned off during the meeting.
3. As this is a process to get your child/ren's view on their life situation, it would not be appropriate for the parent coming to see their child/ren to bring presents.

Our Focus and commitment:

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 not be able to support them, however, we will give them details of appropriate services that can help to support them through their issues.

We commit to 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/ren is our focus, and some parents may not be happy with the outcome. However, it's essential that parents/child/ren let us know the areas where they feel we can improve our service by providing constructive/positive/negative feedback to us. **Note 3:** 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.

Report:

The Section 32 report will be emailed to the courthouse usually a week before the court date and an email will be sent to both solicitors letting them know the report is in the court.

I am aware that:

All meetings with all family members will be recorded. These recordings are used for accuracy in communicating the voice of the child and are transcribed within a week of the meeting and then deleted. Recordings are not stored by The Voice of The Child after transcription.

All of my information will be password protected, kept in a secure place, and will be confidential to each individual and any agency The Voice of the Child may need to contact in the course of their 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.

Fee Structure:

The fee per parent is €1,353.00 (vat included). However, if either or both parties have a Legal Aid (LA) certificate which includes a provision for payment for a Section 32 review report, the fee is covered by this certificate.

For a parent who isn't covered by LA, the 1st payment of €676.50 needs to be paid prior to Mrs. Martin meeting the children. The remaining €676.50 needs to be paid before the report is completed.

Note 4: Payment via instalments can be arranged on request, however, the full fee amount must be paid prior to the report being released to the Court. Therefore, if you will be paying in instalments, you will need to let us know at the outset of the process to ensure payments are manageable for you and paid in full, on time.

Court attendance:

The fee for Mrs. Martin attending court is €1,353.00 (vat included) and the payment is the responsibility of the parent summoning her to court. This fee must be paid when the summons is issued. However, if a parent is in receipt of LA, then their LA cert will cover this cost.

Please use your name as the reference when lodging payment to allow correct allocation and avoid misunderstandings.

Please lodge fees to the following account:

Account name: Loreto Martin
Bank: Permanent TSB
BIC: IPBSIE2D
IBAN: IE61IPBS99061529852391

I have read in full and understand the contents of the Section 32 'Voice of the Child' information including recording of meetings.

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

I will make any concerns I have known to Mrs. Martin.

Signed by Parent:

Name of parent, printed:

Date: