



Appendix. Journey Maps



My name is Jasmine. I had two children go through court proceedings, a six year old daughter and a four year old son. I was a care leaver as a child. I have ADHD. I volunteer with PAUSE and Cafcass Family Forum.

My key message: "There needs to be a radical change in the system. To change the way young mothers are treated particularly with special needs. We must to treat people with kindness."



Claire's Journey Map



My name is Claire. I am 35 years old and I live in Greater London. I have been sober for several years and have successfully graduated from the PAUSE program. I have a wonderful son, whom I see regularly.

My key message: "I think it is all about support and just rethinking the ethos. It is about keeping families together right, so why can't we work with families and support them to get to a better place?"

	PRE-PROCEEDINGS	FIRST HEARING AND FURTHER CASE MANAGEMENT HEARINGS	ISSUES RESOLUTION HEARING	FINAL HEARING
What usually happens at this stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local authority gathers information to decide whether to make a care application. This involves a child and parent(s) meeting with multiple professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A first hearing is held, where the court makes plans for how decisions are going to be made for the child and what information is needed. More hearings may be required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A special hearing where the family court decides which issues need to be sorted out and listens to people's views about the child's safety and future plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The judge will listen to all the evidence and make a final decision.
My journey	I was hospitalised in 2019 and asked to sign a Section 20. I was not given the time to process what that meant especially as no one had explained the long-term impact of one. Until my first hearing in November 2020, I relied on Google to understand what was happening and what I could do to get better. No professional reached out to me or gave me any information, even when I asked repeatedly. I was in this state of limbo for nearly a year.	I was only given two weeks notice before my first hearing. No one explained the process to me – I was simply told that it was lockdown and no courts were available. During the hearings, I felt judged and belittled. The local authority even said, 'you cannot keep using the death of your mother as an excuse.' The court hearings were a horrible experience and I felt very lonely.	In April 2021, I met my PAUSE practitioner. She prepared me for what to expect and for the first time, I felt like I had a voice. PAUSE had become my lifeline. The proceedings dragged on, but I kept going, even though I had to visit my son at a contact centre. The hearings felt like a losing battle, and I felt what was being said didn't reflect who I was or the progress I had made.	Even after PAUSE's support ended, I felt more confident to represent myself at the final hearing regardless of the outcome. My practitioner had invested a lot in me, helping me stand on my own two feet. I felt more informed, prepared and self-assured. There was a real difference compared to 2019. At the end of the hearing, my social worker apologised, and for the first time, I felt a sense of closure. After the final hearing, I was still visiting my son at a contact centre. This period of limbo continued as the final judgement was only passed eight months later.
Emotions	<div> <div>✓</div> <div>Frustrated, helpless</div> <div>✗</div> </div>	<div> <div></div> <div>Judged, lonely</div> <div></div> </div>	<div> <div></div> <div>Angry</div> <div></div> </div>	<div> <div></div> <div>Neutral</div> <div></div> </div>
Quotes	"It was frustrating for me but what hurt more was that it was frustrating for my son, because of the constant limbo."	"No one contacted me or responded to me and I thought to myself, am I no longer worthy because I am not a parent anymore?"	"To be very honest, I felt angry. I am very precise with that word [anger], because I don't like to carry that emotion."	"After the order was passed, she [social worker] came in and apologised, and she said, I failed you and I failed your son."
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Key professionals such as social workers and doctors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Judge Solicitors Key professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Judge Solicitors PAUSE practitioner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Judge Solicitors Key professionals
Timeline	December 2019 – November 2020 (51 weeks)	November 2020 – April 2021 (20 weeks)	<div>26 weeks</div> April 2021 – October 2022 (78 weeks)	October 2022* *Judgement only reached in March 2023 because Judge was on long-term sick leave.
Pain points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of information or explanation. Extremely long waiting time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No support from social worker. I felt judged and belittled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extremely long waiting time. No acknowledgement of my progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even after final hearing, judgement was only reached eight months later.
Positives			I met my PAUSE practitioner.	My social worker apologised to me.



My name is Ava. I live in Birmingham and I have a seven year old son. I volunteer with the Cafcass Family Forum and have graduated from the PAUSE program.

My key message: "Throughout these things, it is important to speak with the families. To get everyone together and communicate. Just involve the families in the process because this is about families and this is about the child."



	PRE-PROCEEDINGS	FIRST HEARING AND FURTHER CASE MANAGEMENT HEARINGS	ISSUES RESOLUTION HEARING	FINAL HEARING
What usually happens at this stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local authority gathers information to decide whether to make a care application. This involves a child and parent(s) meeting with multiple professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A first hearing is held, where the court makes plans for how decisions are going to be made for the child and what information is needed. More hearings may be required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A special hearing where the family court decides which issues need to be sorted out and listens to people's views about the child's safety and future plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The judge will listen to all the evidence and make a final decision.
My journey	<p>I was visited by a health care professional. At the time, I was dealing with an abusive ex-partner and experiencing domestic violence. The health visitor informed the local authorities and the police about my situation. My baby was only ten weeks old. On a Friday at 5pm, I was notified of our first court hearing, which was scheduled for the following Tuesday. On such short notice, I was left with no time to find a solicitor and travelling far with a new born baby was impossible. I was frantically googling for more information and was left feeling incredibly confused and overwhelmed.</p>	<p>After the first court hearing, I was relocated to a mother and baby unit. It was a four-hour drive from my home town and far away from any friends and family. I had only an hour to pack and prepare for the move. I ended up staying in this mother and baby unit for 16 months, which was a ridiculously long time, especially since my baby has autism and significant speech and sound disorders. He struggled to sleep well in the unit and often had night terrors.</p> <p>Throughout this period, I had court meetings every other month but they were frequently rescheduled at the last-minute and there were constant delays.</p> <p>During this time, I also attended various parenting courses. Most of these were recommended by family centres but they were not forced on me, as they understood I had a lot on my plate.</p>	<p>Throughout this process, my son had a wonderful Cafcass guardian who was very supportive and knew how to cater to his specific needs. She would often get down on the ground to speak to him so he could feel more comfortable.</p> <p>However, my experience with social workers was mixed. Over this period, I had five different social workers – some were great, they understood my son needed routine and structure and would give us enough notice before meetings or let us know of any changes. Others unfortunately would show up at my door unannounced, not knowing my son's name or even on one case, falsely accuse me of failing drug tests. What they don't understand is that it is really detrimental to your case when accusations get thrown around like that.</p>	<p>The final court hearing was scary. You are in this big courtroom, and you don't know who to turn to because it is full of so many people. I was grateful I still ended up with my son, but the five-year process completely disrupted our lives.</p> <p>I am incredibly thankful I get to take him to school, something I feared would never happen and seeing him thrive means the world to me. The support from the good social workers and my son's Cafcass guardian was everything to us. They truly understood us, I felt validated and felt like I was given some of my power back.</p>
Emotions	<p>Helpless, confused</p> <p>🚫</p>	<p>Overwhelmed, lonely</p> <p>🧘</p>	<p>Frustrated</p> <p>👊</p>	<p>Mixed emotions</p> <p>😊</p>
Quotes	<p>"It's really difficult to remember things, but I just remember feeling so left in limbo and not knowing what's going on."</p> <p>"It was just too long, it could have been done in the first year. In the end, we were left with all this trauma."</p>	<p>"We were in the same room together with these random families and it was just like, we can't keep doing this."</p> <p>"There is no communication between anyone. It's just lots of change and people can't understand why I am getting frustrated. Suddenly, on that day, we need to have a meeting or go to court. Like that's not convenient especially when my son relies heavily on routine."</p>	<p>"I had a social worker who was brilliant and suddenly, I had a new one and no one had told me anything about it."</p> <p>"You are having to re-explain yourself all the time, they don't seem to read the entire case file and they just sort of vaguely understand your situation."</p> <p>"Having the right social workers was amazing, and it just changed my whole view on social care altogether. I was like, no, they are just here to help and support you through things."</p>	<p>"I sent in a little thing after the final hearing to say thank you to the social workers because I know obviously they get a lot of complaints and I was like I want to commend them for the good work they do because they really understood us, and that we were making a change."</p> <p>"obviously, the first five years of a child's life are the most important and for all those five years his life was disrupted. And now, I am trying to get him out of that, I am trying to teach him."</p>
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Key professionals such as social workers and doctors Health advisor Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Judge Solicitors Key professionals Cafcass guardian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Judge Solicitors Cafcass guardian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Judge Solicitors Key professionals Cafcass guardian
Timeline	<p>May 2018 – July 2018 (8 weeks)</p>	<p>July 2018 – August 2020 (104 weeks)</p>	<p>August 2020 – September 2022 (104 weeks)</p>	<p>September 2022 – October 2023 (52 weeks)</p>
Pain points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No information was provided. I was given short notices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was in two mother and baby units for excessive amounts of time. Frequent delays and last-minute rescheduling. Zero provisions for my son's autism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several different social workers throughout process. The process was far too long. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process was too long.
Positives		<p>I was not forced to go to parent assessments.</p>	<p>My son had a great Cafcass guardian.</p>	<p>The judge ruled my son and I could stay together.</p>



My name is Dahlia. I am 26 years old and I live in Chester. My daughter is 8 years old. I was a care leaver and I have Juvenile Arthritis. I regularly volunteer with Cafcass Family Forum.

My key message: "I would say to help and support young parents, even if they say they don't need it."

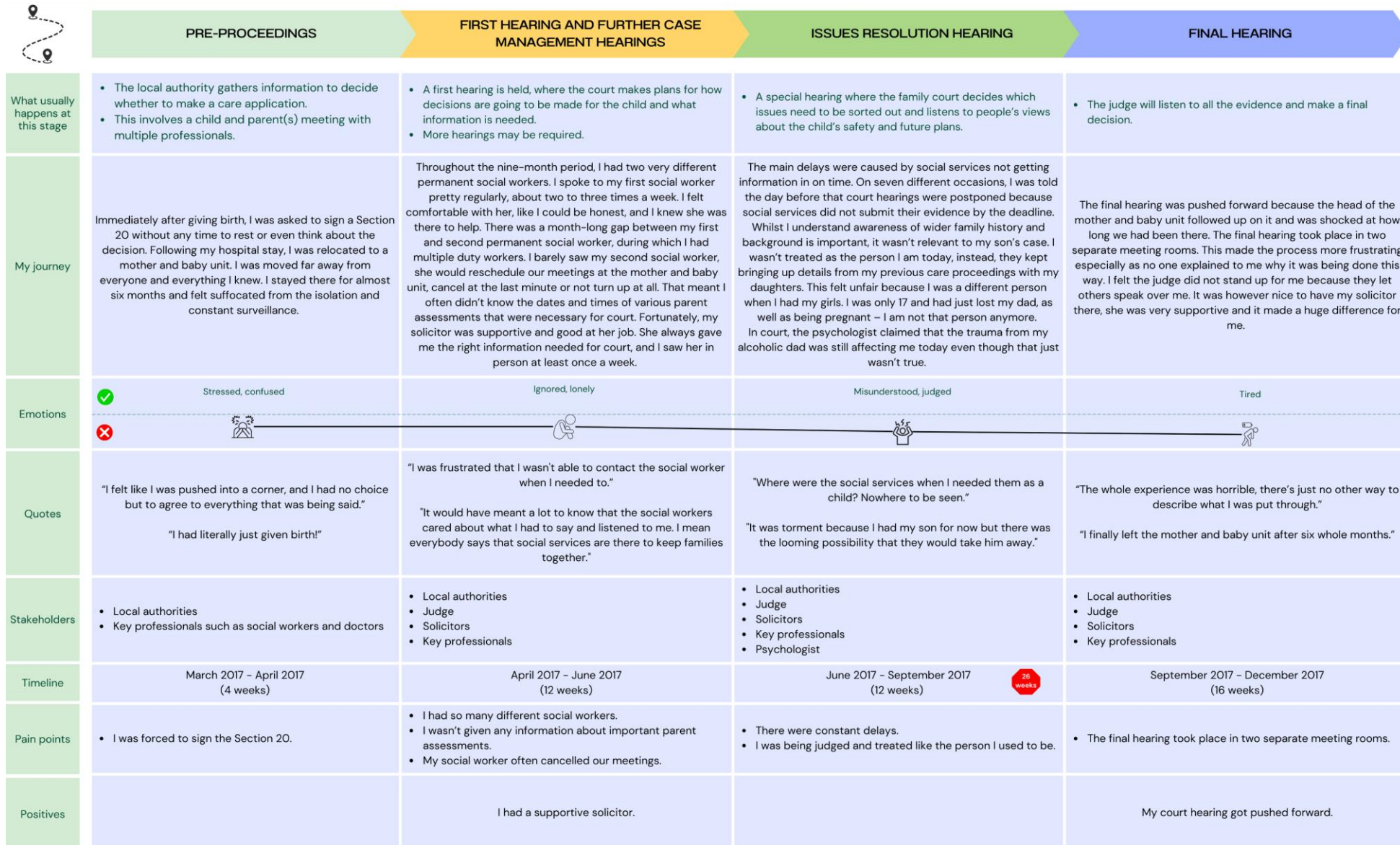


	PRE-PROCEEDINGS	FIRST HEARING AND FURTHER CASE MANAGEMENT HEARINGS	ISSUES RESOLUTION HEARING	FINAL HEARING
What usually happens at this stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local authority gathers information to decide whether to make a care application. This involves a child and parent(s) meeting with multiple professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A first hearing is held, where the court makes plans for how decisions are going to be made for the child and what information is needed. More hearings may be required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A special hearing where the family court decides which issues need to be sorted out and listens to people's views about the child's safety and future plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The judge will listen to all the evidence and make a final decision.
My journey	<p>I was 17 years old when I fell pregnant with my daughter. At the time, I was living in foster care. After giving birth, I spent a week in hospital before moving to a mother and baby foster placement. I spent about a year there even though I was told it would only be for 13 weeks. I didn't get to meet the foster family beforehand because it all happened so quickly.</p> <p>The court proceedings started due to concerns about my mental health. Throughout this period, I had a social worker until I was 18, and she explained everything to me. We didn't always get along, but she did her job really well. We had a good relationship over the five or six years she supported me and I wish that support had continued beyond my 18th birthday.</p>	<p>I had to go to several assessments throughout the process. They were staggered, and whilst some felt necessary, others I wasn't so sure I needed. I also had to go to court many times, but I was thankfully super well-informed about any upcoming court sessions. My solicitor always made sure I had the right letters and completed everything before each court date.</p> <p>Seeing the same judge a few times was comforting. It was nice to have a familiar face, and on a couple of occasions, the judge even spoke to me directly. She said that 'I was doing a great job and should be proud of myself.' This meant a lot to me especially because before my first court hearing, I thought the judge would be a really scary person and was going to tell me that I am doing everything wrong, and that I am a bad mum. To be told I was doing well made me feel comfortable. I realised the judge was just a really important decision maker.</p>	<p>The biggest issue with court was that the locations were scattered all over England. My juvenile arthritis made all the travelling extremely challenging. I explained to my solicitor that I was struggling with the travel but was told nothing could be done and was due to the availability of the courts. My solicitor helped me plan the most efficient public transport routes, but it was still difficult to get on and off trains and use the stairs because lifts were not always available.</p> <p>There was a great Cafcass guardian who truly understood me and listened to me. She didn't put me down or patronise me or judge me. I felt comfortable talking with her and could honestly discuss things like how much I was spending on baby milk. She really built a bond with me, in fact, she introduced herself just before the court proceedings started which was something I hadn't experienced with any other social worker or professional.</p>	<p>A different social worker was assigned to me for the proceedings and she was not supportive. After the final hearing, she left immediately without any consideration of how I felt – I had just lost my child and she didn't offer any comforting words, there were no 'how are you' or 'get home safe'. I didn't get along with my social worker, she never took me seriously as my daughter's mother.</p> <p>Leading up to the final hearing, I was particularly scared and stressed. The hearing lasted three days and I felt so deflated afterwards – I was on fight or flight for most of it. There was nothing to support or help you after it – I felt so physically and mentally drained. The ending was very rushed, and I wasn't expecting things to be passed off so quickly. I guess the only good thing from the two and a half years was that I was with my daughter right till the very end. After the final hearing, the Cafcass guardian came over and spoke to me, even though her decision was for my child to be adopted, I still felt comfortable talking with her and I didn't hold it against her. I completely understood what the courts were saying. It was nice of her to come over and wish me well in the future, even though the circumstances were hard. It was nice for us to finish on a positive note.</p>
Emotions	Uncomfortable, scared 	Supported 	Frustrated 	Drained, deflated
Quotes	"I was very scared of the unknown and what was to come next. I had only just given birth and was very hormonal, none of my feelings were taken into consideration."	"The foster carers could see me feed my child, they could see me bathing her and putting her to bed but I was still forced to go to regular parenting assessments because it would make my case look better."	"Court for me was like life or death – I had to get to court. I had to show up. I had to be present and I had to look put together. But when I struggle to get out of my front door or put my tights on and travel so far – it just becomes too much."	"It taking 2.5 years was really frustrating, just not knowing which way the courts would decide and also those were the most important years of my daughter's life. And for myself too, I was going from a teenager to a young adult and then to a mother, and it was all happening during a time I had so much stress from the courts."
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Key professionals such as social workers and doctors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Judge Solicitors Key professionals Cafcass guardian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Judge Solicitors Key professionals Cafcass guardian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Judge Solicitors Key professionals Cafcass guardian
Timeline	February 2015 – April 2015 (8 weeks)	April 2015 – May 2016 (52 weeks)	May 2016 – June 2017 (52 weeks)	June 2017 – September 2017 (10 weeks)
Pain points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was not introduced to my foster family beforehand. I stopped having a social worker after I turned 18. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I had several different unnecessary assessments. The process took too long. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No accommodations were made for my juvenile arthritis. My court sessions were far away. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My social worker was not supportive. The process took too long.
Positives		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The judge was nice to me. The process was clear and easy to understand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My Cafcass guardian was supportive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I got to see my daughter till the very end.



My name is Sylvia. I am 31 years old and live in Telford. I have two daughters and a seven year old son. I am both a PAUSE graduate and a volunteer for the Cafcass Family Forum.

My key message: "I don't want to feel judged or seen as the person I used to be. I want social workers to actually listen, to help and support the parents as well as kids."





My name is Charlotte. I am 27 years old and I live with my four year old daughter. I have been sober for several years and I volunteer with the Cafcass Family Forum.

My key message: "I would say everyone needs to be trauma-informed. I don't think anyone should be involved in care proceedings, whether it be a social worker, Cafcass guardian or judge that does not have a clear understanding of mental health, trauma and their impacts."

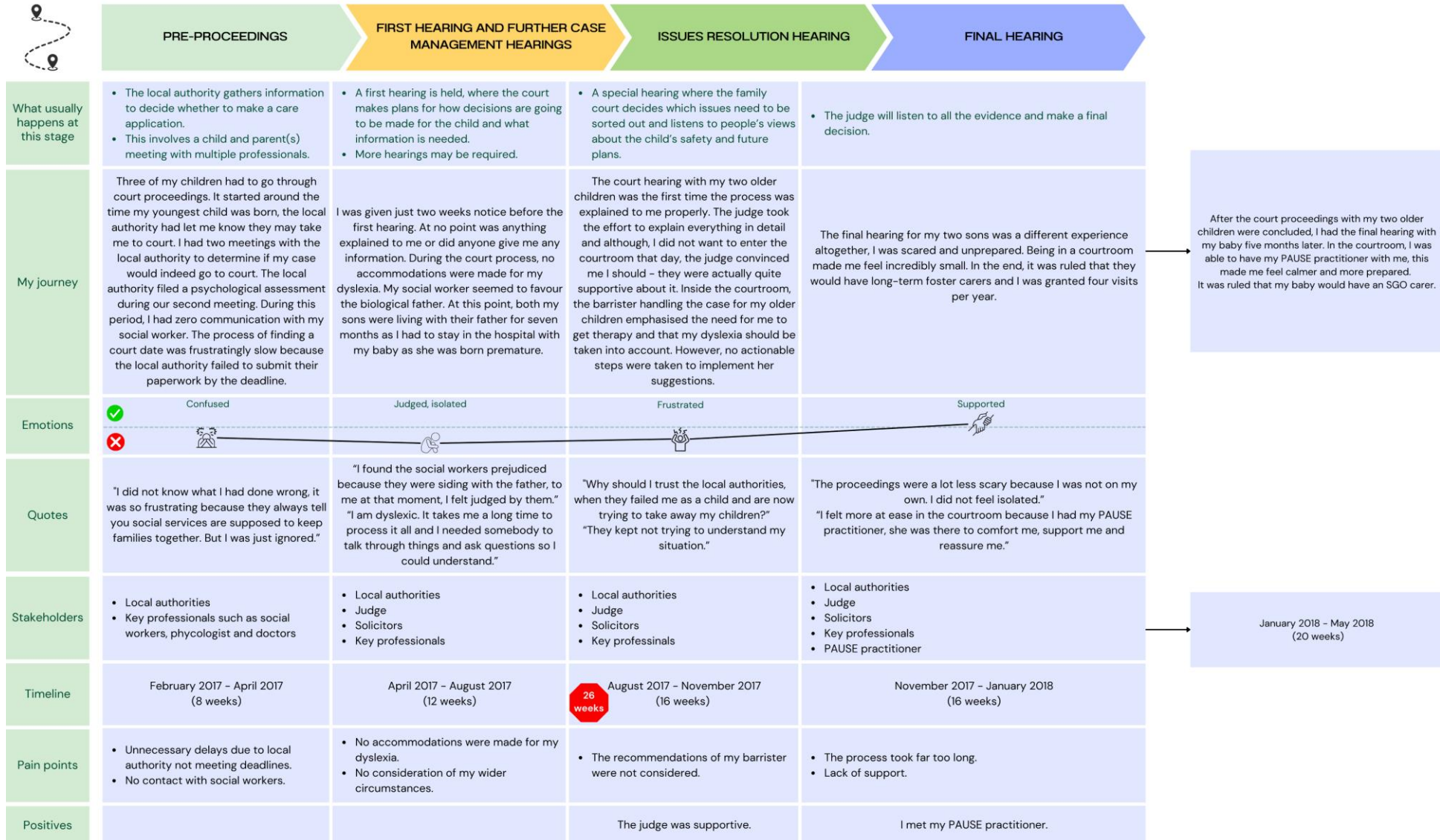


Hannah's Journey Map



My name is Hannah. I am 28 years old and I live in West Sussex*. I was a care leaver as a child. I have dyslexia and I am a proud PAUSE graduate. I had three children go through court proceedings, two sons aged 5 and 6 and a baby daughter.

My key message: "I think the support a parent should get throughout care proceedings is just someone to be their friend, to sit with them and not to judge."



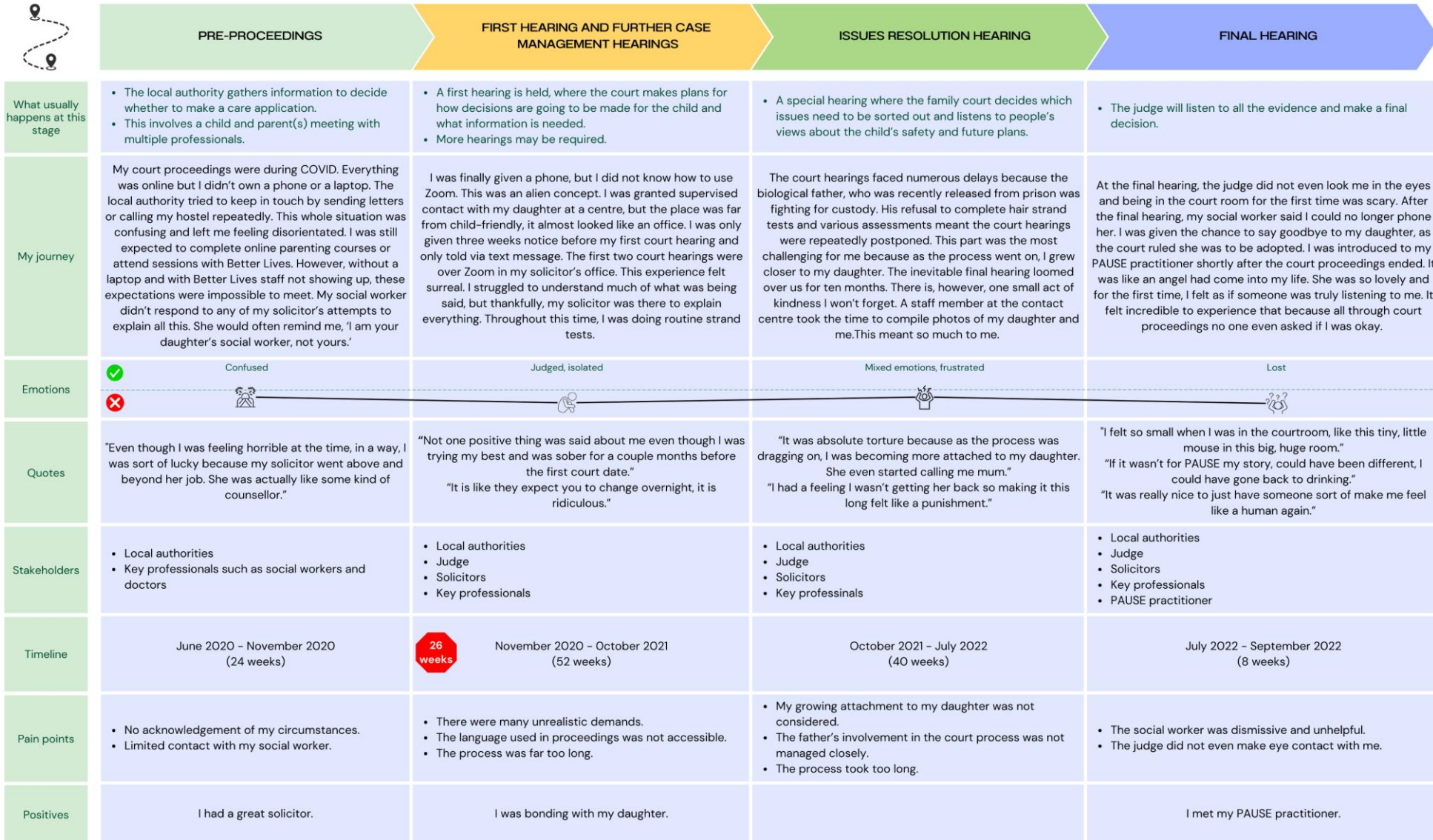
Vanessa's Journey Map












My name is Vanessa. I am 38 years old and I live in Stockport. I have been sober for five years and I am a graduate of the PAUSE program. My little girl was a newborn when proceedings started.

My key message: "I would say the key message is to treat the parents as human beings, no matter what it says on paper just wait till you meet the real person. Let the person show you they have changed and what to do better."

To mothers: "You never heal, you never forget but it does get better. You still think about your child or children but each day gets easier."



Sarah's Journey Map

		 PRE-PROCEEDINGS	 FIRST HEARING AND FURTHER CASE MANAGEMENT HEARINGS	 ISSUES RESOLUTION HEARING	 FINAL HEARING
 <p>MY BIO</p> <p>My name is Sarah and I am nine years old. I have a big sister named Grace who is fourteen years old.</p> <p>We used to live with our mum in Middlesbrough, but now we live our grandparents.</p> <p>I get to see my mum four times a year, which makes me really happy!</p>	WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS AT THIS STAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local authority gathers information to decide whether to make a care application. This involves a child and parent(s) meeting with multiple professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A first hearing is held, where the court makes plans for how decisions are going to be made for the child and what information is needed. More hearings may be required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A special hearing where the family court decides which issues need to be sorted out and listens to people's views about the child's safety and future plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The judge will listen to all the evidence and make a final decision.
	MY JOURNEY	I had to go to meetings with my mum and lots of other grown-ups. These meetings seemed really important and were a bit scary. Sometimes, my grandparents came with us.	My mum went to court meetings without us but nothing ever happened. I felt worried because no one would give us any proper answers. At this point, I was staying with my grandparents and we only saw our mum with our Cafcass guardian.	We had lots of meetings with lots of different people. They would ask us questions about our mum, what our home was like and our friends. Our guardian told us that it would all be over soon but that we would probably be staying with our grandparents.	We had to go to the last court meeting. I felt super nervous because it was an important day and also our first time meeting the judge. She wasn't as scary as I had thought she would be. I felt so relieved that it went okay in the end.
	QUOTES	"I was asked lots of questions, but it was all too much and no one was actually listening to me. I was told I was too young to understand."	"Things were really dragging on at this point and I was beginning to get frustrated."	"We were told we were going to court in two weeks and had no time to actually consider what that meant for us but at least it would finally be over soon."	"I am glad I don't have to go to lots of meetings anymore but I still don't know how I feel living with my grandparents."
	EXPERIENCE/ EMOTIONS	Confused, overwhelmed 	Irritated 	Tired 	Mixed emotions 
	IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I missed lots of days of school. I didn't see my friends for a while. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I found supervised contact with my mum unfamiliar and weird. This made it difficult for us to connect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was beginning to feel anxious all the time even outside of meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grace and I started arguing a lot. Moving in with my grandparents was a huge transition.
	STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Family members key professionals including social workers and experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Family members Solicitors Judge Cafcass guardian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Family members Solicitors Judge Cafcass guardian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities Family members Solicitors Judge Cafcass guardian
	TIMELINE	March 2022-June 2022 (16 weeks)	July 2022-December 2022 (24 weeks)	<div>26 weeks</div> January 2023-May 2023 (20 weeks)	June 2023-September 2023 (16 weeks)
	PAIN POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was given no information. Everything happened suddenly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No one was assuring us everything would be okay. I could only see my mum with supervision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I knew meetings were happening but no one would tell me what was said or the outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final hearing felt abrupt and I wasn't given time to process the decision.
	POSITIVES	My social workers made me feel safe.	I met my Cafcass guardian.	My Cafcass guardian was reassuring.	It was decided I could see my mum four times a year.