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Name of child	Date of birth	M/F	Ethnic origin
Aurora Nisha DOBBIE	11/06/2001	Female	White British
Orion Nova DOBBIE	20/10/2006	Male	White British

Name of parties (and other important adults)	Relationship to child	Date of birth	M/F	Ethnic origin
Thomas William DOBBIE	Father	13/04/2001	Male	White British
Catherine Avril DOBBIE	Mother	08/04/1969	Female	White British

Summary of application(s) and any current Orders in force

1. The matter was first brought to the Court's attention by way of an application for Residence and Contact by the Applicant Thomas Dobbie, the Respondent being Catherine Dobbie, known as Avril Dobbie. On the 22nd September 2010 District Judge Smart ordered that whilst the children were in the care of their Mother, Avril Dobbie, they be made available for contact with their Father on alternate weekends, Cheshire West and Chester Council ordered to file a Section 7 report in relation to Residence and for the matter to be listed for an Issues Resolutions Hearing on 12th January 2011.
2. At the aforementioned Issues Resolutions Hearing, the Court ordered that the matter be listed for a Contested Hearing before District Judge Smart on the first available date in April, with contact continuing as per the Order dated 22nd September 2010. To date, Cafcass have not received the outcome of the Contested Hearing in April.
3. On 7th July 2011, a further application was made by Thomas Dobbie, the Respondent being Avril Dobbie, for a Prohibited Steps Order preventing Avril Dobbie from removing the children from his care. Mr Dobbie had not returned the children from weekend contact and sought the Court's permission for this.

Request from the court

4. On 14th July 2011 the matter was heard in Court by District Judge Smart, who ordered that a 16.4 Appointment be made to join the subject children to

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proceedings and requested that a Wishes and Feelings report be filed to address the issue of residence for the children. It was agreed between District Judge Smart and Cafcass Service Manager Michelle Evans that the Wishes and Feelings would be filed within a short period of time in order that the matter could be listed shortly thereafter. The matter is now listed for a Hearing to review the Wishes and Feelings and for the appointed Cafcass Guardian to attend.

Sources of information

5. In order to complete my enquiries, I have:
 - 5.1. Spoken by telephone with Mr Dobbie on 19th July 2011 to introduce myself and share the case plan.
 - 5.2. Written to Mrs Dobbie on 20th July 2011 to introduce myself and share the case plan.
 - 5.3. Met with the subject children Aurora and Orion Dobbie, in the company of their Father at their home address to introduce myself on 20th July 2011.
 - 5.4. Met with the subject children Aurora and Orion Dobbie, individually, by themselves at the Cafcass Office in Warrington on 21st July 2011.
 - 5.5. Spoken by telephone with Mrs Dobbie on 25th July 2011, as a result of the letter I sent out to her, to introduce myself and to share the case plan.

Diversity Information

6. Aurora Dobbie is a 10 year old girl, the first child of the union between Avril and Thomas Dobbie. Aurora is currently resident with her Father in the Great Sutton area, along with her brother, Orion. Aurora presents as intelligent and sensitive with no additional needs according to her Father. Aurora loves to read and took pride in showing me her capability with ascertaining prime numbers during our introductory visit. Aurora does however show signs of low self-esteem and recognises that she would like this to improve. She presents as a sad young lady in need of support.
7. Orion Dobbie is a 4 year old boy, resident currently with his Father in the Great Sutton area. Orion is the second born child of the union between Avril and

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Thomas Dobbie. Orion presents as bright and happy. He shows an enthusiasm for science and loves playing with his toys. I have not been informed of any additional needs that Orion has. He is however significantly younger than his sister and is less capable of understanding the concepts of wishes and feelings and the longer term implications of these within proceedings due to his developmental level at 4 years of age.

The child's story so far and their views (attach relevant documents agreed with the child)

8. Since the last Court hearing Aurora and Orion have been resident with their Father in the Great Sutton area of Ellesmere Port.

Aurora Dobbie

9. I asked Aurora where she lived and who lived with her. Aurora said that she lived in her Dad's house with him and her brother Orion. She said that sometimes her older half-sibling Graham stayed over and occasionally two of his friends; Jez and Sam.

10. I asked Aurora if there was anyone she did not live with but who meant a lot to her. Aurora said that there were a few people who did not live with her but would be shortly, being Debbie, Aaron and Zack. She also said that her big brother Graham "may be coming to live with us". I asked her if there was anyone else. Aurora said "Mum. But I just don't want to see her when she's telling all these lies and being so dishonest because in the night when I was having a nightmare I asked if I could sleep with her and she said no. I heard him in there". I asked who "him" was. Aurora said "Ken". She went on to say "I heard them in the night". I asked what she meant by this. She said "Having sex". I asked how this had made her feel. Aurora said "I literally screamed in my head". She went on to say "I put my pillows over my head. She [Mum] said she was looking at pictures of poor children and crying but she's never sponsored a child like Dad. She went on to say "In the morning I heard Ken's voice and it creeped me out. Me and Orion knew they were going out", indicating that her Mother was in a relationship with Ken. She said "If I found out Mum and Ken were doing that" and shook her head. She added "He introduced himself to Mum and Dad by saying 'I've moved

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here and I stalk women". I asked if she had heard this. She said "Dad told me and I believe him. He said that Mum said she hated him". I asked why she felt that her Mum and Dad had not liked Ken. Aurora said "Ken looked through the landing window and saw Mum naked and she closed the blinds". I asked Aurora who had told her about that. Aurora said "No one, I was there. You couldn't see him. I think Mum told me". She went on to say "I don't know. I can't remember. I doubt everything I say because I have a bad memory. I think Mum has told so much lies she doesn't know how to tell the truth anymore".

11. She went on to say "When Mum was telling all these lies I asked Mum if I could stay at Dad's until Wednesday. She kept changing her mind. Mum phoned the Police and they came to try and pick me up. I screamed. Dad was appalled.
12. She added "Mum said in Court Dad's always taking us for takeaways". I asked Aurora who had told her that. Aurora said "Dad". I asked how it made her feel when her Dad told her things like that. Aurora said "I just don't want to hear anymore".
13. Aurora then went on to say "That Vivien [indicating a Social Worker involved in the case] was the worst of them. Every time she'd say 50 50 which was one weekend a fortnight at Dad's. She took me up to my bedroom and I was about to scream at her that I wanted to live at Dad's but then she had to go".
14. Aurora and I went on to talk about what she liked about herself. Aurora hesitated and thought about it for a moment. She said that there was nothing she liked about herself. I asked if she was sure. Aurora said "Basically I have a really special family. Dad's going to help me sort the rest out". I asked how her Father was going to help her sort things out, to which she replied "I want to get slimmer and have longer hair. Mum cut it". She went on to explain that "this girl called Grace said I'm fat and her and this girl are dead skinny". I asked if her parents knew about this. Aurora replied "yes sometimes I get really upset about it. I'm different". Aurora's eyes filled with tears. I asked if she was ok and she nodded. I asked if there was anything she liked about her life at the moment. She nodded and said "my new Grandparents". She explained that these were Debbie's parents. When I asked what upsets Aurora about her life at the moment Aurora

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said "The bullying. And I collapsed in a running race. I get pains in my ankles and stuff because I'm fat". I asked if Dad knew about this. Aurora said that he did not as she had not told him. I asked Aurora if she would tell her Dad as soon as possible because it was important that he knew about this. I asked her if there was anything else that upset her about her life. She said "Mum. It upsets me when I'm not seeing her, it's a bit uncomfortable. I'm not comfortable at the moment. But I will get comfortable with her. When I do see her I'm uncomfortable. Like when she's with Ken". I asked Aurora how she felt about Ken. She said "frightened". I asked her to clarify if she was frightened of Ken. Aurora said "Yes. He knocked on the door and screamed into my window that I'd woken him up and that he was going to have a word with me tomorrow". I asked Aurora to clarify this. She explained that she had been asleep, had a nightmare and woken up crying. She said that her crying must have woken up Ken next door and he came out shouting which she felt must have woken more people up than her crying. This incident has left her feeling frightened of Ken according to Aurora.

15. I asked Aurora what made her feel good. Aurora said "comfort eating but I want to get out of that habit". I asked her what made her feel angry. Aurora said "Being teased about my size and everyone says and thinks they are more attractive than me". When asked what made her feel bad Aurora said "When I'm teased and I retaliate" and documented a story of this. Aurora went on to say without prompting "Mum used to tell me off for no reason. One time she left a big mark and it was her that did it. Dad said that in the Court Mum said 'Err what disgusting hands' about the Judge who had funny hands and that's what Dad said. If Mum sees like dirty ears or an infected cut she chases after it to clean it as in like non-twisted hands". Aurora further explained that her Dad had said her Mum had been "disgusted" by someone at the Court who had "twisted hands". This made her feel sad. When I asked Aurora what made her feel happy she said "Nothing really. I'm usually depressed, the only time I'm happy is at Dad's other than when I get told off. It's only little [being told off at her Father's house] and doesn't hurt". I asked if it hurt when she got told off at her Mother's house. Aurora nodded.

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16. Aurora and I went on to talk about where she feels safe. Aurora said "Being at Dad's" made her feel safe. I asked if there was anywhere she did not feel safe. Aurora said "Being at Avril's, Mum's". I asked Aurora whether she called her Mum Avril. Aurora said "I just don't want her to be my Mum because I don't want Ken to be my Step-Dad. If Avril said that Ken was going to be my Step-Dad I'd get a kitchen knife and slit my throat, kill myself. Or I'd pack up my and Orion's things and run away to Dad's house".
17. I asked Aurora if there was a big decision that the Judge could make for her. Aurora said "I want to live at Dad's because he's a much better parent. Loads of people have said he's the bad one but he's the best". I asked Aurora who had said that he Dad was "the bad one". Aurora said "Dad. But I'm not sure I'm supposed to tell you that. But I know because I was with Mum and Mum told me, she told everyone at school that Dad was mean and that this young boy and girl needed to be saved". I asked if that meant her and her brother. Aurora nodded. I asked her if there was anything else she wanted to tell me. Aurora shook her head. I asked if she wanted any contact with her Mum. Aurora said "I do. But I want to see her when she has improved her behaviour and when she's not lying and without Ken". I asked if there was anything else she wanted to say. She replied, "Just so you know Orion lies sometimes. So he might give the wrong answers". I asked if she felt there were right answers to my questions and she nodded. I asked who she felt would know what the right answers were and she shrugged. I asked if she did see her Mum where would it be. Aurora said "Dad said I could see her in a park and I want someone to be there in case she tries to take me back home". I asked who that would be and she said "Dad, I don't know, someone, the childminder, no, not the childminder, Dad". I asked if there was anything else she felt I needed to know. Aurora said "there is but I'm not sure I'm supposed to tell you. Mum will never marry Ken. Daddy and Mummy are cousins. I don't think they'll get married because Ken and Daddy don't want to be related". She went on to say "Every time Mum hit me, Dad was very defensive of me and Orion. One time when Mum was giving Orion a punishment she was stopping Dad getting in and she told me to F off. One time she held me to the floor and spat in my face. It's like she's got a mental problem". I asked who thought that her Mother had a mental problem to which Aurora responded "me".

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18. I asked Aurora if she felt that she had told me everything I needed to know. Aurora said yes. I asked her if she was going to talk to her Dad about falling in the race from having pains in her legs. Aurora agreed.

19. Aurora also said that she was not sure whether she should tell me that her Dad was on anti-depressants.

20. In summary, Aurora is a girl who is capable of expressing her wishes and feelings in proceedings. She presents as being greatly influenced by both adults in her life and has been able to document examples of both parents telling her things in connection with the adult issues in this case. Aurora is clearly expressing the wish to remain in the care of her Father and, I believe, that she is missing her Mother. She is also stating that she feels her Father will allow supervised contact at a park, which may help her and her Mother to heal this relationship. Sensitive handling of this contact would be vital for Aurora because of her awareness of the adult issues.

Orion Dobbie

21. In his wishes and feelings meeting, Orion asked his Dad to come up to the room with him. I had prepared a sheet with the Orion constellation on. Tom explained that Orion recognised the nebulas as opposed to the constellation. Tom Dobbie walked up the corridor, left Orion in the room and returned to reception to talk to Aurora, saying to Orion that he had to make a phone call but would be right outside.

22. Using the prepared sheets, I asked Orion to tell me about the things he likes. Orion said "Playing in boxes, pumpkins and kippers on toast".

23. I showed Orion a picture of a house and asked him what he thought about his Mummy's house. Orion said "I want to live next to Dad's house". I asked if this meant he wanted to live at his Mum's house but see his Dad. Orion said "No, Dad's house. In Daddy's house". He played for a moment and then added "I want to live in Daddy's house and Mummy's house".

24. I asked showed Orion another picture of a house and asked what he thought of Daddy's house. Orion said "it's fine".

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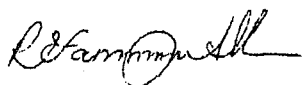
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25. I then showed Orion a picture of two houses, one labelled Mum and one labelled Dad. I asked Orion where he should live. Orion said "Both at Mummy's and Daddy's."

26. The final sheet I showed Orion depicted the constellation of Orion with surrounding stars. I asked Orion if this group of stars was him which other stars could be around him that he could see. Orion said "Mummy, Dad, Aurora and Daddy". Orion went on to say "Not Ken because I don't like him". I asked Orion why he did not like Ken. Orion shrugged and said "I just don't".

27. In summary, Orion is potentially too young to understand wishes and feelings, however is stating that he wishes to live between his Mum's house and his Dad's house. It is not clear whether he understands why he is now resident at his Father's house and not having contact with his Mother and he is perhaps too young to understand this.

Signed:

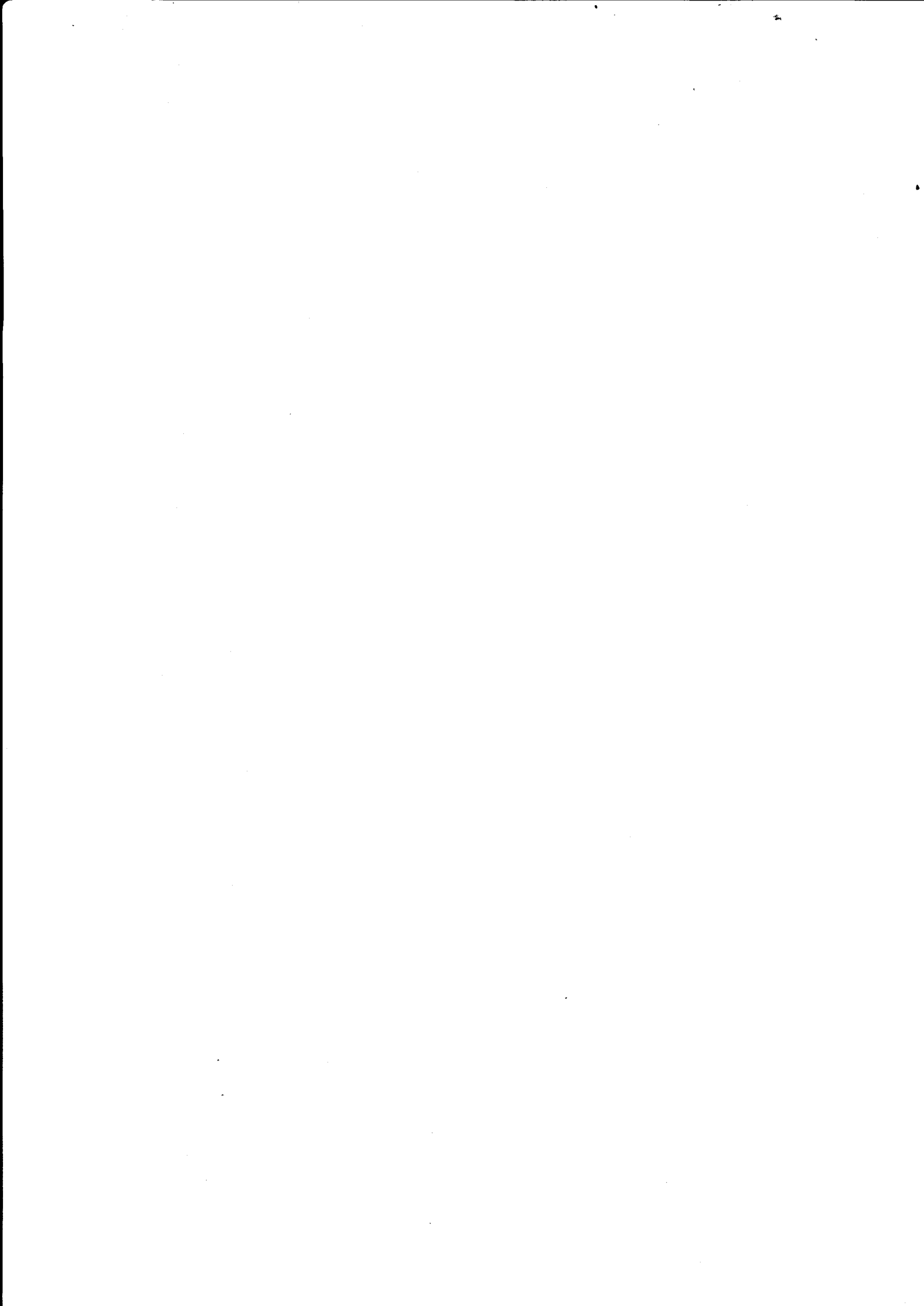


Name: Rachel Farrington-Allen

Cafcass Role: Family Support Worker

Date: 27/07/2011

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Guardian's Analysis and Recommendations

28. The current Guardian, Carole Hobson, was appointed on 29.07.11. I have had the opportunity to read the Wishes and Feelings report and peruse the bundle.
29. It would seem that Aurora may have suffered significant issues which may in part stem from the parenting she describes receiving from her mother. Her low body image, self-esteem, low mood and thoughts of self-harm in a child so young are extremely worrying, particularly in a child so young. Aurora's presenting emotional problems are significant and she may require professional support at the earliest opportunity.
30. Further exploration is required of the impact of Mrs Dobbie's parenting on Orion which is unclear at present.
31. The children are very young and it would seem that contact should be promoted safely where possible. Aurora only wants contact if her mother stops telling lies and this, again, requires further exploration with regard to what steps can be taken and by whom to reassure her and help her feel safer. However, in the event that Mr Dobbie can safely supervise contact safely, contact should proceed on a limited basis.
32. Further exploration of the children's relationship with mother's new partner is required and any possible risk of emotional distress to the children. The nature and source of their concerns needs to be identified and addressed.

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Recommendations

1. I would respectfully propose that the children continue to reside with their father as it would appear to correspond with their best interests in relation to emotional harm and their expressed wishes (Aurora).
2. I would further propose that contact continues at a weekly rate and is supervised by Mr Dobbie. If it is neither feasible or possible for Mr Dobbie to supervise contact, a Contact centre which can provide supervised contact should be considered.
3. Further, that a psychological assessment of Aurora is undertaken in relation to her presenting emotional problems and the underlying cause.
4. The court may wish to consider a psychological assessment of Mrs Dobbie with regards to her presenting behaviour and the impact upon the children.

Signed:

Name: Carole Hobson
Cafcass Role: Children's Guardian
Date: 01/08//2011

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