(Insert your address here)

[Insert date here]

Dear (Name of your local MP),

I am writing to ask you to support the Women’s Aid **Child First: Safe Child Contact Saves Lives** campaign to prevent avoidable child deaths at the hands of a known perpetrator of domestic abuse in circumstances related to unsafe child contact. You can find out more about the campaign on the Women’s Aid website [www.womensaid.org.uk/childfirst](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/childfirst).

As part of the campaign, Women’s Aid has published the report *Nineteen Child Homicides* which tells the stories of nineteen children, all intentionally killed by a parent who was also a known perpetrator of domestic abuse, over a ten year period. These killings were made possible by unsafe formal and informal child contact arrangements. The report found that in twelve families:

* 19 children were killed
* Two women were killed
* Two children were seriously harmed through attempted murder
* Seven men are dead by suicide after committing child homicide

This needs to stop. The family courts must change to keep children and survivors of domestic abuse safe.

*“No parent should have to hold their children and comfort them as they die or be told that their child has been harmed in an act of revenge or rage.  There are often many facets to one family’s breakdown and all too often children’s voices are not heard or acted upon.  Attending court is an emotional, frightening and at times a traumatic experience which no one decides to initiate lightly but do so to protect their children’s physical and emotional wellbeing.*” (Claire Throssell, mother of Jack and Paul who were killed in October 2014 by their father after he was granted unsupervised contact with them by the family court).

The **Child First** campaign is calling on the Government to ensure there are no further avoidable child deaths as a result of unsafe child contact with a perpetrator of domestic abuse. In order for this to happen the family courts must be a safe place for all the children and survivors of domestic abuse that are relying on them to protect them from further harm.

The campaign is asking the Government to:

* End avoidable child deaths through unsafe child contact.
* Make the legal presumption that contact with a perpetrator of domestic violence is not always in the best interests of the child a reality by the effective implementation of Practice Direction 12J.
* Make the family courts fit for purpose through the introduction of protection measures for survivors of domestic abuse.

I would appreciate your support for the campaign so that children and survivors of domestic abuse can be better protected from unsafe contact arrangements. You can support the campaign in a number of different ways including:

* **Writing** to the Secretary of State for Justice, RT Hon Michael Gove MP asking him to consider the campaign aims.
* **Tweeting** your support, suggested tweet: I am supporting the @womensaid Child First campaign for safe child contact #ChildFirst.
* **Tabling** a Parliamentary Question about the issues raised.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your commitment on this.

Yours sincerely,

(Your Name)