

CARE AND PROTECTION ORDER under Youth Court

THE ESSENTIALS



Contents

01	Introduction
02	What is a CPO?
04	When is a Child or Young Person in Need of Care and Protection?
06	The CPO Application Process
07	What Orders can the Youth Court Make?
08	Enhanced Care and Protection Orders
09	What if Parents/Guardians Wish to Contest a CPO Application?
10	Useful Information
11	Quick Reference of Terms

Disclaimer

- This publication covers Care and Protection Orders and is produced for general information only. It is not intended as substitution for legal advice.
- If you require any legal advice, please consult a lawyer.
- The publishers disclaim any and all liabilities arising from and in connection with the contents of this publication.
- For more information, please access the website at www.familyjusticecourts.gov.sg (or QR code).



Introduction

If a child or young person below the age of 18 is in need of care or protection, the Director-General of Social Welfare (Director-General) or a child protection officer (Protector) from the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) may apply for a Care and Protection Order (CPO). This booklet will provide you with information on how an application for a CPO is made.

What is a CPO?

A CPO is a court order that serves to keep children and young persons (below the age of 18) in need of care or protection safe.

An application for a CPO is heard in the Youth Court, which handle cases involving children and young persons under the Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA).



Before applying for a CPO, the Director-General of Social Welfare (Director-General) or a child protection officer (Protector) from the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) may:

A remove the child or young person from their home to a place of temporary care and protection; or

B present the child or young person before a registered medical practitioner or approved welfare officer for an assessment of their health and any necessary treatment




When is a Child or Young Person in Need of Care and Protection?


A child/young person is in need of care or protection if he/she:



has no parent or guardian



has been abandoned by their parent/guardian, and no other suitable person is willing and able to care for him/her




has a parent/guardian who

- is unable or has neglected to provide adequate food, clothing, medical aid, housing, care or other life necessities for him/her
- is unfit or unable, or has neglected to properly supervise and control him/her, which causes him/her to fall into bad company and be exposed to danger



has been or is at risk of being ill-treated


- by his/her parent or guardian
- by any other person, whom the parent or the guardian has not protected him/her from




needs to be examined, investigated or treated for the purpose of protecting his/her health and well-being




suffers or is likely to suffer from emotional harm because of emotional or psychological abuse by his/her parent/guardian



has or is believed to have a relevant offence committed against him/her



is in danger of a relevant offence being committed against him/her by his/her parent/guardian or another member of the household



behaves in a manner that is, or is likely to be, harmful to himself/herself or to any person, and

- his/her parent/guardian is unable or unwilling to take necessary measures to remedy the situation
- or the remedial measures taken by the parent/guardian fail



is found to be

- homeless and unable to support himself/herself
- begging for money or/and food
- carrying out illegal lotteries, illegal hawking, gambling or other undesirable activities
- using or inhaling any intoxicating substance (as defined in the Intoxicating Substances Act)

The CPO Application Process

STEP 1

The Director-General or the Protector files a complaint on behalf of the child or young person in the Youth Court.



STEP 2

The Youth Court Judge will decide if there are sufficient grounds in the complaint to warrant an investigation. If so, the Youth Court Judge may call for a Social Report on the child or young person.

The Youth Court Judge may also order the child or young person be placed in the care of a fit person or a place of safety while the Social Report is being prepared.



STEP 3

A child protection officer will interview the child or young person as well as the parents/guardians and/or any significant others before submitting the Social Report to the Youth Court.



What Orders can the Youth Court Make?

The Youth Court Judge will consider the contents of the Social Report and discuss the case with two Panel Advisers (who are individuals in the community with vast work experience with children and youths and are appointed by the President of Singapore).

If the Youth Court Judge is satisfied that a child or young person is in need of care or protection, the Youth Court Judge may:



Order the parent/guardian of the child or young person to be bonded to exercise proper care and guardianship of the child or young person



Order the child or young person to be committed to the care of a fit person for a period of time specified by the Court



Order the child or young person to be committed to a place of safety or a place of temporary care and protection for a period of time specified by the Court



Place the child or young person under the supervision of the Director-General, a Protector, an approved welfare officer or any other person appointed by the Court for a period of time specified by the Court

Enhanced Care and Protection Orders

Enhanced Care and Protection Orders (ECPO) have been introduced under recent amendments to the CYPA to ensure stability and long-term care for children and young persons in need.

The Youth Court Judge may make an ECPO for a child or young person to be committed to the care of a fit person until the child or young person turns 21 years old or for a shorter period specified by the Court if:



The child or young person is under an existing CPO or in the care of a caregiver other than his/her parent/guardian under a voluntary care agreement for a specified period or longer



The parents/guardians are not fit to care for the child or young person



It is not appropriate to return the child/young person to the care of his/her parents/guardians

The Youth Court Judge may also make an order allowing the Director-General or a Protector or the caregiver of the child or young person to make decisions that affect the child or young person.

What if Parents/Guardians Wish to Contest a CPO Application?

If you are a parent/guardian who would like to contest the application for a CPO or an ECPO for your child, you may inform the Youth Court Judge. The Youth Court Judge will give necessary directions for parties to file supporting documents, before a hearing date is fixed.

At the hearing, the Youth Court Judge will hear from you and the Director-General or the Protector, or your legal representatives, before coming to a decision on the case.



Useful Information

Call the police at 999 immediately if a child's life is in danger

To report any suspected abuse or neglect case, contact:

Child Protection Services Helpline
1800-777-0000

For advice on child protection concerns, contact:

Big Love Child Protection Specialist Centre

Website: <http://www.biglove.org.sg/>
Operating hours:
Mon to Fri: 9.00am to 6.00pm



HEART@Fei Yue Child Protection Specialist Centre

Website: <https://www.fyccs.org/our-work/children/community-based-child-protection-specialist-centre/>
Operating hours:
Mon to Fri: 9.30am to 5.30pm



PAVE Integrated Services for Individual and Family Protection Specialist Centre (PAVE ISIFPSC)

Website: <https://www.pave.org.sg>
Operating hours:
Mon to Fri: 9.00am to 1.00pm;
2.00pm to 6.00pm



Family Service Centres (FSC)

<https://www.msf.gov.sg/dfcs/familyservice/default.aspx>



Social Service Agencies (SSA)

<https://www.ncss.gov.sg/navigator>



Legal Advice

If you need legal advice, you may approach the following:

- the Legal Aid Bureau,
- the Community Justice Centre, or the Community Legal Clinics at the State Courts

Quick Reference of Terms

Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA): A key legislation that safeguards the welfare, care, protection and rehabilitation of children and young persons.



Social Report: A report containing information such as the child's family background, conduct, school records, medical history and state of development.

Welfare Officer: An officer appointed by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) to carry out investigation, assessment and supervision of the child.

This page is intentionally left blank



FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS
S I N G A P O R E