IN THE FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

[2026] SGYC 2

YOUTH COURT APPEAL
YA-0002-2026-01
CASE NO. CPO 000156-2025

Child Protector

v

Father of XZM and Mother of XZM

GROUNDS OF DECISION

[Care and protection]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FACTS **2**

BACKGROUND 2

INCIDENTS 2

S'S MEDICAL CONDITION 5

MY DECISION **5**

WHETHER THE CHILD IS IN NEED OF PROTECTION 6

Ill-treatment *6*

Emotional harm *8*

Medical neglect *10*

MOST APPROPRIATE ORDER FOR THE CHILD 11

Submissions *11*

Analysis *13*

CONCLUSION **20**

Child Protector
v
Father of XZM and Mother of XZM

[2026] SGYC 2

YOUTH COURT APPEAL
YA-0002-2026-01
CASE NO. CPO 000156-2025

District Judge Chua Wei Yuan
8 May 2026

22 June 2026

District Judge Chua Wei Yuan:

1 This was an application by the Child Protector—contested by both parents—to place their son ("S"), XZM, a male infant who was 9 months old at the time of the hearing, in the care of foster parents for 12 months, with a court review in 6 months.

2 I ordered that S be placed under the supervision of an Approved Welfare Officer ("AWO"), under the care of his natural mother ("NM"), with S's contact with his natural father ("NF") being subject to the AWO's approval.

3 My detailed orders and reasons follow.

Facts

Background

4 NM and NF have had a long and tumultuous history. From the outset, their relationship was marked by occasional recurring physical altercations. After their marriage, NM became pregnant with S. During this time, it was alleged that NF's violence against NM escalated (although NF disputes these allegations). After S's birth in August 2025, a number of incidents led the Protective Service ("PSV") to remove S from the home.

Incidents

5 There was an incident where NF left the matrimonial home stating his intention to go to East Coast Park to kill himself, and did not return for several days. During NF's absence, NM took a knife and stood in front of the closed circuit television camera in an attempt to prompt NF's return. PSV dates this event in August 2025, but the timing of this incident is disputed. NM says that this incident occurred during pregnancy, and did not involve harm to anyone. On the other hand, NF says that this incident occurred on 5 September 2025 (and not in August), and that he was locked out rather than having left willingly. At any rate, there were reportedly further altercations in August 2025 where NF allegedly slapped NM, punched the television, and blamed NM for S's congenital club foot condition (I elaborate more on this condition below).

6 On 18 September 2025, a physical altercation occurred between NF and NM. NF accused NM of conspiring with others to take S away from him. NM pulled NF's shirt and, when NF picked S up, punched NF's shoulder and slapped his face while S was in NF's arms. NF expressed suicidal and homicidal ideations, stating "I want to kill myself", "might as well kill everyone", and "I

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

will kill you and the baby." NM called the police. Before the police arrived, NF allegedly covered NM's mouth while pinning her against the couch and choked her, causing her to lose consciousness; S was asleep in the bassinet. NF categorically denies choking NM, maintaining that these are merely allegations taken from NM's application for a Personal Protection Order ("PPO").

7 On 23 September 2025, a further incident of family violence occurred in S's presence, involving NF, NM, S's paternal grandfather ("PGF"), paternal grandmother ("PGM") and maternal grandmother ("MGM"). It was reported that, NF was playing music loudly in the kitchen. After NF ignored NM's repeated requests to lower the volume, NM threw the speaker outside. NF then attempted to take S from MGM, who refused on the basis that NF had consumed alcohol, and NF left the home. NF returned accompanied by PGF and PGM, and a physical altercation ensued. PGM attempted to grab S by the arm while MGM was holding him; PGF grabbed MGM's face; and NF took S from MGM. NM sustained injuries to her face and arms while attempting to de-escalate the situation. During the altercation, S was directly handled by multiple parties. NM says that her—and MGM's—involvement in this incident was protective, and reactive to NF's escalating conduct. Following this incident, NF voluntarily left the matrimonial home.

8 Around the same time, the parties started filing PPO applications. On 25 September 2025, NM filed a PPO against NF, with an expedited order ("EO") being granted on the same day. On 15 October 2025, NF filed PPO applications against NM and MGM, and obtained EOs against them.

9 NF returned to the matrimonial home unannounced on 6 October 2025 to stay, and during an unannounced visit by PSV on 9 October 2025 he

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

disagreed with a proposed safety plan that required him to move out; instead, he took the position that NM ought to move out.

10 On 11 October 2025, NF returned to the matrimonial home and, upon finding that NM had changed the locks on the door/gate, jammed the locks of the door/gate such that NM and S were prevented from leaving the home. NF disputes that he had jammed the locks deliberately, claiming instead that NM had held the internal latch which trapped the key, and he broke the key only to remove himself from the situation. On 16 October 2025, NF again returned to the matrimonial home (this time with PGF), and switched off the electrical supply (while NM and S were inside) in an attempt to get NM to allow him back into the house. After this incident. NF left the matrimonial home for good.

11 On 12 November 2025, NF returned to the matrimonial home again and changed the house lock. When NM and MGM returned home with S, NF attempted to take S from his pram. MGM intervened, pulling NF's hair, and a physical altercation ensued between NF and MGM while S was in NF's arms. MGM states NF elbowed her and punched her twice over her left eye, with the result that MGM suffered a left lower eyelid laceration and a nasal bone fracture. NF characterises his actions as defensive, taken to shield himself and S from MGM's aggression. Essentially, NF barricaded himself and S inside the house. As a result of NF changing the locks, NM was locked outside the house, where she remained overnight despite PSV's advice to disengage herself. (NM claims that she remained outside out of concern for S's safety.) NF claims that NM had also cut off the electrical and water supply for about 1 hour and played loud noises outside during this time. At 7.15am the next morning, NF and NM were both arrested for breaching their respective EOs. According to NF, S was safely asleep throughout the overnight confrontation.

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

S's medical condition

12 Separately, S was diagnosed with a clubbed left foot at birth. Doctors at KK Women's and Children's Hospital ("KKH") prescribed a leg brace, to be worn for 23 hours per day until S turns 4 years old. KKH warned that non-compliance would cause recurrence and a "permanent deformity" with a "poorly functioning foot requiring corrective surgery".

13 S's first leg brace was fitted on 4 September 2025 but was worn for only 4 days before being removed, and S was without a brace for approximately 2 weeks prior to his follow-up appointment, at which doctors noted a recurrence of his condition.

14 The parties blame each other for this: NM says NF distrusted KKH's diagnosis, refused to believe S had a clubbed foot, and demanded KKH stop the prescribed treatment. On the other hand, NF denies disregarding medical advice and says it was NM who removed the brace, possibly out of caregiver stress or fatigue. PSV has since accepted that NM faced legitimate constraints during this period — between the time NF left the matrimonial home, and MGM arriving to assist NM, the leg brace slipped off constantly such that NM managed only about 12 hours of compliance. PSV's case on medical neglect is accordingly directed at NF alone.

My decision

15 The Court's powers to make a care and protection order under s 54 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1993 (2020 Rev Ed) ("CYPA") arise upon a finding that the child/young person is in need of care or protection.

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

Whether the child is in need of protection

16 A child is in need of care or protection if the criteria in s 5 CYPA are established. PSV relies on three grounds: ill-treatment under s 5(1)(*d*)(i) read with s 6(3)(*b*); emotional harm under s 5(1)(*g*) read with s 5(2)(*f*); and medical neglect under s 5(1)(*c*)(i). I address each in turn.

Ill-treatment

17 PSV takes the view that the parents have ill-treated S, based on the definition in s 6(3)(*b*) CYPA:

> **When child or young person in need of care or protection**
>
> **5.**—(1) For the purposes of this Act, a child or young person is in need of care or protection if —
>
> …
>
> (*d*) the child or young person has been, is being or is at risk of being ill-treated —
>
> (i) by his or her parent or guardian; or
>
> …
>
> **Ill-treatment of child or young person**
>
> **6.**—…
>
> (3) For the purposes of this Act, a person ill-treats a child or young person if that person, being a person who has the custody, charge or care of the child or young person —
>
> …
>
> (*b*) wilfully or unreasonably does, or causes the child or young person to do, any act which endangers or is likely to endanger the safety of the child or young person or which causes or is likely to cause the child or young person —
>
> (i) any unnecessary physical pain, suffering or injury;
>
> (ii) any emotional harm; or

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

(iii) any injury to his or her health or development; or

18 I note that NF has taken pains to emphasise that S was not injured or directly affected. For example, he states that:

(a) During the alleged choking incident on 18 September, S was sleeping in the bassinet.

(b) During the incident on 23 September, NF appears to take the position that S was not injured.

(c) During the 12 November incident, apart from the earlier part of the incident where NF handled S, NF says that S was asleep throughout the overnight confrontation.

19 Generally, each parent claims that their actions—where it might have affected S—were intended to protect S from the other parent.

20 However, "ill-treatment" under the CYPA is framed broadly. It requires only that S be at *risk* of being ill-treated, *ie*, at risk of a parent *wilfully or unreasonably* doing something which *actually does, or is likely to*:

(a) endanger S's safety; or

(b) cause S any unnecessary physical pain, suffering, injury, emotional harm, or injury to health/development.

21 I am satisfied, in particular to the incidents described above, that S was at least placed at risk of physical pain/suffering/injury or that S's safety was likely to be endangered. Considering that the paternal grandparents were involved, and that MGM emerged with significant injuries, this is not a simple

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

scuffle. (In this regard, I note that NF appeared to try to disclaim responsibility for MGM's injuries, attempting to attribute it to an earlier accident. However, I am not persuaded that this was likely to be the case.) It is, in my judgment, entirely possible that either parent could have struck S or caused S to fall from height during the times when the adults were hurting each other or taking possession of S. It is fortuitous that, in these incidents, S was not hurt.

Emotional harm

22 PSV takes the view that the parents have inflicted emotional harm on S, based on the definition in s 5(1)(*g*) and 5(2)(*f*) CYPA:

> **When child or young person in need of care or protection**
>
> **5.**—(1) For the purposes of this Act, a child or young person is in need of care or protection if —
>
> …
>
> (*g*) the child or young person suffers or is likely to suffer from emotional harm because the child or young person has been or is subject to emotional or psychological abuse by his or her parent or guardian;
>
> …
>
> (2) Without limiting subsection (1)(*g*), the circumstances in which a child or young person may be regarded as being subject to emotional or psychological abuse by his or her parent or guardian under that subsection include any of the following:
>
> …
>
> (*f*) the parent or guardian exposes the child or young person to, or places the child or young person at any risk of exposure to, any violence against a related person of the child or young person.

23 PSV argues that the parents, by exposing S to family violence and placing him at continued risk of exposure to family violence and their marital

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

conflict, have subjected him to emotional or psychological abuse, which renders S likely to suffer from emotional harm.

24 The emotional harm limb would be established so long as the Court is satisfied that S was at risk of being exposed to or was exposed to any violence against a "related person", which is defined to be another person about whose safety or wellbeing the child would reasonably be expected to be seriously concerned (s 5(3) CYPA). PSV submits that each parent falls squarely within the definition of a "related person" given the natural bond between infants and their natural parents. This is consistent with the High Court's approach in *Father of XQD and XQE v Child Protector* [2025] SGHCF 59 ("*XQD*"), where the Court affirmed the care and protection order under s 5(1)(*g*) read with s 5(2)(*f*) CYPA, noting that "it is clear… that the children have been exposed to the father's violence against the mother."

25 I accept PSV's submission that exposing a child to violence between his parents may cause serious long-term impairment of that child's socio-emotional, cognitive, and neurological development, including greater risk of suffering from post-traumatic symptoms and disorders, higher levels of distress, and delays in developmental milestones. Even though the harmful consequences—or at least risks—of such exposure may only fully manifest themselves in a child sometime later, I accept that this conduct can place a child in need of care and protection.

26 In this case, I find that, no matter the characterisation of events, it cannot be seriously argued that S was not exposed to violence between his parents.

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

Medical neglect

27 S was diagnosed with a clubbed foot at birth. The parents were advised that S had to wear a leg brace until he turned 4 years old. However, according to the doctors at KKH, the leg brace was only utilised for 4 days before it was removed. As a result, S's foot condition recurred. The doctors at KKH warned that continued non-compliance "will lead to recurrence and a permanent deformity with a poorly functioning foot requiring corrective surgery."

28 Although PSV initially took the position that both parents neglected to provide adequate medical care for S in this regard, it has since revised its assessment in light of NM's evidence as to the constraints she faced (*ie*, when unassisted, S's leg brace slipped off frequently, such that NM managed to keep it on for only about 12 hours a day), and that presently, NM's full compliance with the treatment regimen has led to observed improvement in S's condition.

29 As regards NF, short of a bare assertion that he denies disregarding medical advice, NF has not provided any proof to rebut PSV's assessment, nor NM's claim that he had doubted KKH's diagnosis and refused to believe that S had clubbed foot (in fact, in court, when I asked both parents if they accepted the diagnosis, NM readily agreed whereas NF expressed a desire for a second opinion), or that NF demanded that KKH stop the prescribed treatment for S and opposed the prescribed use of the leg brace on S. While PSV noted in its Social Report and, later, its affidavit, that NF blamed NM for removing the leg brace—possibly citing caregiver stress—NF did not follow up with such an allegation in court.

30 In this case, I accept PSV's submissions that the term "adequate" in s 5(1)(*c*)(i) CYPA carries a "very basic" threshold: (*BGC (Parent of B) v Child*

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

Protector [2013] SGJC 1 at [26]–[27]). Adequate medical care refers to what is necessary for S's physical development at a basic level. In this case, I find it more likely than not that NF had wilfully withdrawn the use of the leg brace on S contrary to medical advice, and he has neither provided justification for doing so, nor actually demonstrated steps to procure a separate medical opinion. In this case, I find that there was medical neglect.

Most appropriate order for the child

31 In my view, the more difficult question is the practical one of which order(s) are the most appropriate to be passed in the child's best interests.

Submissions

32 NM had previously submitted that the maternal grandparents should care for S, but in written and oral submissions submitted that the most appropriate order to be made was to return S to be cared for by herself, but she was open to access, to be supervised, if PSV thought it necessary. NM argued that it was not in S's best interests to place him in foster care, as he was not being properly cared for. NM said that:

(a) She observed over multiple access sessions that S's fingernails were cut too short, with the nail bed visible and reddish on several fingers, and his toenails were overgrown and chipped.

(b) There were abrasions on S's clubbed foot, consistent with inadequate protection from the foot brace

(c) She found that S developed a diaper rash and an injury at S's groin area

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

(d) She observed one of the foster parents slapping another young child and threatening that young child with a clothes hanger.

33 NF, in his written submissions, did not make any direct submissions on the orders which were in S's best interests, but highlighted that S's welfare had deteriorated significantly ever since entering state care, and that PSV had failed to address allegations of physical abuse of another child in the foster household. I treat this as a submission that the parents regard foster care as unsuitable. At any rate, NF had previously taken the position that PGF and PGM should care for S, but in oral submissions he submitted that the most appropriate order to be made was to return S to be cared for by both parents, with equal time spent with each parent (*ie*, as per the letter of undertaking).

34 More generally, both parents highlighted that State intervention—especially removing a child from a home—is a drastic measure, and a blunt instrument, and is a measure of last resort.

35 PSV submitted, first, that a statutory supervision order was inappropriate, because S would be exposed to a high risk of physical and emotional harm, and that the order would be ineffective given that the parents have not demonstrated an ability to co-parent safely and a willingness to cooperate with PSV and the agencies. PSV pointed out that:

(a) S's parents were unable to prioritise S's safety over their deep-seated animosity, and resorted to physical violence to gain possession of S despite the EO and despite the risk of harm to S;

(b) S's parents continued to display a lack of insight into safe co-parenting practices, and refused to agree on caregiving arrangements.

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

(c) S's grandparents in fact participate in conflict rather than de-escalating conflict.

36 Thus, PSV assessed that the usual safeguards in a statutory supervision order (*eg*, announced/unannounced home visits) would be insufficient to mitigate the risks to S.

37 Next, PSV submitted that it was not in S's best interests to place S with kin-carers. Each parent had nominated their own parent(s) as kin-carers, but had strongly objected to the other parent's nominations. PSV submitted that S's grandparents had lacked restraint when engaging with each other, and this would permit parents to continue engaging in conflict and fail to mitigate the risk of harm to S.

38 Third, PSV submitted that it was also not in S's best interests to return S to the care of either parent, considering the risks of harm to S, and that this would entrench the conflict-laden relationship.

39 Fourth, PSV submitted that S was adjusting well in foster care, and the 12-month period with a review midway was appropriate because it is a meaningful timeframe for PSV to work with the parents and help them gain insights into safe co-parenting and to assess their ability to prioritise S's well-being over their acrimony, and formulate a suitable care arrangement that addresses the safety concerns.

Analysis

40 The key question in this case is whether an out-of-home placement in respect of S (in this case, fostering) was justified.

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

41 I did not consider that medical neglect was a strong basis for an out-of-home placement. Both parents expressed some commitment to observing any prescribed treatment regimen, and it appears that a recent KKH memorandum noted that S's condition had improved under NM's sole care. To my mind, ill-treatment and emotional harm were clearly the more important concerns in this matter.

42 To begin with, it is settled that State intervention should be a measure of last resort (*UNB v Child Protector* [2018] 5 SLR 1018 ("*UNB*") at [29]). PSV sought to distinguish *UNB* on the basis that it concerned a case of psychological abuse without risk of physical harm or ill-treatment. However, in my view, the principle of last resort is one that really applies to all cases. In my view, it is really an expression of the principle in s 4(*a*) of the CYPA that the parents/guardian of a child are primarily responsible for that child's care and welfare, and they should discharge their responsibilities to promote the child's welfare. As was noted by the Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports at the Second Reading of the CYPA amendments in 2011, it was far more efficient, effective, and morally right, to bring up a child within the context of an intact family, and that *removal* of a child would be a last resort. The fostering of a child is also not an end in itself, but done with a view to reuniting the child with his/her family once it becomes possible. In this sense, the "last resort doctrine" should, I think, be better understood as an expression of parsimony, in that the State should make the minimal intervention necessary in a case to secure an adequate level of care and protection for the child.

43 After considering the facts, and the parties' positions at the hearing, I was not persuaded that fostering was the most ideal arrangement for S.

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

44 Ultimately, this is a case where each parent was individually capable of taking care of the child. PSV conceded as much. The real concern was that the parents' relationship was so acrimonious that it would endanger S's safety to place him around both parents at the same time. Accordingly, care must be taken before ruling out the possibility of placing the child under statutory supervision under the care of one parent.

45 At this juncture, I address PSV's submission that it would not be in S's best interests to return S to the care of either parent, considering the risks of harm to S, and that this would entrench the conflict-laden relationship. PSV's submissions were generally made on the basis of *UNB*, which I now consider.

46 In *UNB*, the parents were in the midst of divorce proceedings. An interim access order gave care and control to the father, with overnight access to the mother. When the youths were brought to the mother's residence for overnight access, they refused to leave the car. As a result, they were socially admitted to KKH. There, the District Judge ordered the youths to be placed under the supervision of an approved welfare officer under the care of the father, with the mother's contact with the youths be subject to the approval of the protector. The High Court (Family Division) allowed the father's appeal. Debbie Ong J reasoned that such an order would risk having negative effects, *ie*, it risked entrenching the *status quo* of parental conflict and aligned the State with the father in that the mother was an unfit parent, which would lead to the father feeling vindicated and less likely to cooperate with the mother, and reinforcing the children's negative perception of the mother. She wrote:

> **Whether the Orders were in the Children's welfare**
>
> 58 I was of the view that the Orders were not in Children's welfare and best interests. The Orders have been summarised at [4] above. The effect of the Orders was to grant sole care and control to the Father while restricting access to the Mother. The

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

Mother pointed out that in the past 14 months, CPS facilitated only 14 calls with the older child and 12 calls with the younger child, each lasting about 5 to 15 minutes. The Mother did not see the Children during that period. The Mother argued too that telephone contact alone was unsatisfactory as it only permitted one dimension of interaction, *ie*, conversations. In this sense, the effect of the Orders was to override the order of DJ Singh dated 2 August 2016, in which he granted the Mother overnight access, school holiday access and public holiday access to the Children: see [11] above.

59 In my view, such intervention by the state under the CYPA was not necessary and in fact carried a risk of negative effects, which I explain below. The problems arising from the Mother's attempts to enforce access to the Children could have been addressed first by the Family Court. For instance, the Family Court could have varied the order on access, on the ground that there was a material change in circumstances or because it was unworkable. It could also have directed parties to receive professional help with the aim of restoring the Mother's relationship with the Children. I also observe that in this case, CPS had determined that the Father was a sufficiently fit parent with whom the Children were to reside. **In my view, where one parent is capable of caring for the child, state intervention will rarely be warranted unless, for example, that fit parent is also determined to be unable to protect the children from being further harmed by the unfit parent.**

60 It was of concern to me that in the present case, state intervention **risked entrenching the status quo at that time of parental conflict**. This case is unlike the more typical situation where CPS removes a child from both parents. Instead, by leaving the Children in the care of the Father while limiting the Mother's access, **the state and the Father were aligned with each other in their stance that the Mother was an unfit parent by causing the Children emotional harm**. As CPS had itself recognised, the Parents needed to "address their poor communication with each other and to work on their ability to co-parent [the Children]", and that "[t]heir poor communication pattern has affected the intervention for the children and themselves". By this alignment, **the Father may have perceived that his views have been vindicated, rendering him even less likely to co-operate with the Mother**. At the same time, **the Children's negative perception of the Mother may have been reinforced by the impression that even the state has chosen to align with the Father's views**. As a result, the prospects of restoring the Children's relationship with the Mother could have been severely undermined.

[emphasis added in bold]

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

47 In my view, the various concerns in *UNB* arising from ordering the child to be under the care of one parent did not quite arise here.

48 Two preliminary points are in order.

49 *First*, the effect of the orders here is different from the effect of the orders in *UNB*. There, the effect of the orders in the care and protection matter were to curtail the access which the mother would otherwise have had under the interim access order. To recapitulate, the court in the divorce proceedings there granted:

(a) In February 2016, joint custody with interim care and control to the father, with the mother having access by way of phone/Skype calls, for half an hour, two days a week;

(b) At the court-scheduled review in August 2016, essentially a continuation of the orders as final orders (care and control to the father, with the mother having access by way of phone/Skype calls, for half an hour, two days a week); and

(c) With effect from November 2016, joint care and control, with the mother having overnight, school holiday and public holiday access to the children.

50 In September 2017, the District Judge hearing the care and protection application granted the orders sought by the protector, which included a condition that the mother's contact with the children be subject to the approval of the welfare officer. The practical result, it appeared, was that PSV facilitated only 14 calls with the older child and 12 calls with the younger child, each lasting about 5 to 15 minutes, with no face-to-face contact. This was more

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

restrictive to the mother than even the interim access orders had been. In this sense, it is easy to see why the High Court considered that the effect of the care and protection orders was to override the care and control/access orders made by the divorce court.

51 These concerns do not arise in the present case. *First*, there is no underlying access order to begin with. Previously, after NF left the matrimonial home (and this was in my judgment quite voluntary), S effectively came under NM's sole care and control. *Second*, in some sense, the nature of the concern in *UNB* is one step removed from the overall aim of the care and protection framework. Ultimately, the framework is intended to secure an adequate level of care and protection for the child, rather than secure a degree of equity or impartiality between the parents. Even if unequal time with a child under the care and protection order risks causing emotional harm to the child, the risk of harm is in my judgment not as direct or clear as the benefits that may be lost from a sub-optimal placement for the child.

52 I now turn to the substantive concerns expressed in *UNB*.

53 First, the concern that the order would reinforce the youth's (or, in this case, the child's) negative perception did not quite arise here, because in this case S was only 9 months old, and in my judgment would not have sufficient awareness to form negative impressions of the parent who was not caring for him.

54 Next, unlike *UNB*, if S is placed in the care of one parent, it is not intended to send the message that the other parent is unfit to care for S. It is simply that S is safer in the care of *one* parent rather than *both* parents concurrently. If NF and NM can, as between themselves, arrive at a common

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

view as to the parent who should care for S, this will not lead that parent to think that his or her views have been vindicated, or encourage/incentivise that parent to not cooperate with the other parent.

55 In these circumstances, I do not consider that a care and protection order which places S in the care of one of the parents will itself cause the *status quo* of parental conflict to be entrenched.

56 At the hearing, I invited both parents to state whether they would rather see the child fostered out, or be placed under the care of the parents in accordance with the other party's preferences. While NM stated that she would rather see S fostered out than effectively share care of S with NF, NF accepted that he would rather see S cared for by NM full-time than see the child fostered out. I therefore proceeded on the basis that there was common ground between both parties, *ie*, that in terms of ordinal preferences, both parties ranked placing S under the mother's care ahead of fostering S. Assuming that each party's headline position in court is their most preferred option, I would consider that each parent's position is as follows, with > denoting a preference:

(a) NM: **statutory supervision under NM's care > fostering** > statutory supervision under both parents' care; and

(b) NF: statutory supervision under both parents' care > **statutory supervision under NM's care > fostering**.

57 In the final analysis, I noted that it was not unsafe to leave S in the care of one parent at one time, and that both parents shared the view that statutory supervision under NM's care was a superior option to fostering. I therefore took the view that it would be in S's best interests to place S under NM's care and under the supervision of an AWO.

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

Conclusion

58 Considering that this hearing took place on a Friday afternoon, I ordered that S's fostering arrangement cease on the following Monday.

59 My orders were as follows:

(a) S be committed to the care of the Ministry's registered foster parent(s) until 11 May 2026;

(b) S to be placed under the supervision of an AWO, under the care of NM, for a period of 12 months with effect from 11 May 2026;

(c) The Director-General, a protector or care-giver of S may, without the consent of the parent or guardian of S but under the supervision of the Court, make decisions relating to S in accordance with s 55 CYPA.

(d) The Director-General or a protector may vary the determination of the fit person or place of safety or place of temporary care and protection S is committed to for the duration of S's committal.

(e) The following conditions and directions are imposed for the purpose of ensuring the safety and well-being of S, under s 54(8) CYPA:

(i) S's contact with the Parents and any significant others are subject to the approval and review of the Approved Welfare Officer ("AWO");

(ii) the Parents are not to do any act that will compromise the safety and wellbeing of S;

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

(iii) the Parents are to provide the contact details of their respective family and social support networks to the AWO to facilitate safety planning and care plans for S;

(iv) the Parents and significant others are to discuss safety plans and caregiving arrangements with the AWO to ensure the safety and wellbeing of S;

(v) the AWO and/or any other professionals working with the family shall be allowed to conduct announced and unannounced visits and/or safety checks to ensure the safety and wellbeing of S;

(vi) the Director-General, a protector or caregiver of S is authorised to make decisions on the following aspects of S's care under s 55(2) CYPA for a period of 12 months: medical treatment, medical assessment, follow-ups or procedures as deemed necessary by the medical professionals which falls within reg 3(1)(*m*) of the Children and Young Persons Regulations;

(vii) professionals are to release medical, psychological, counselling and/or relevant reports of the Parents and S to the AWO.

(f) S and the Parents are to undergo mediation, counselling, psychotherapy or other assessment, programme or treatment under ss 60(2) and 60(4) CYPA.

(g) That NF and NM execute a bond, in the sum of $1,000 each, to exercise proper care and guardianship of S.

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)

(h) That NF and NM execute a bond, in the sum of $1,000 each, to comply with the terms of the counselling order under ss 60(2) and 60(4) CYPA.

60 The father has appealed my decision.

Chua Wei Yuan
District Judge

Grace Morgan, Pesdy Tay and Hannah Tan (Attorney-General's Chambers) for the applicant;
the natural mother in person;
and the natural father in person.

Version No 1: 27 Aug 2026 (15:32 hrs)