IN THE FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

[2025] SGHCF 59

Youth Court Appeal No 3 of 2025/01

Between

Father of XQD and XQE

… *Appellant*

And

Child Protector

… *Respondent*

JUDGMENT

[Family Law — Youth Court — Care and protection orders]

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Father of XQD and XQE
v
Child Protector

[2025] SGHCF 59

General Division of the High Court (Family Division) — Youth Court
Appeal No. 3 of 2025/01
Choo Han Teck J
15 October 2025

24 October 2025 Judgment reserved.

Choo Han Teck J:

1 This is an appeal by the father against the Youth Court's decision in *Child Protector v Parents of XQD and XQE* [2025] SGYC 5 to grant Care and Protection Orders ("CPOs") in respect of his two children. He married the children's mother in 2007. The children were born on 29 December 2008 and 11 December 2014 respectively, in China. The family resided in China until 2020, when they moved to Singapore. The father and the children are now citizens of Singapore. The mother remains a citizen of China. At the time of the application below, the children were 16 and 10 years of age respectively.

2 The parents frequently quarrelled, sometimes the fights turned violent. By December 2024, the father had been charged with four offences, including voluntarily casing hurt to the mother by slapping her face repeatedly and criminal intimidation by threatening her with death. In March 2025, the mother

left the matrimonial home and sought refuge at a crisis shelter, while the children continued to live in the matrimonial home with the father. The mother then found rental accommodation whose landlord was, in the Child Protector's assessment, a "safe adult".

3 On 2 May 2025, the Youth Court granted interim orders for the children to reside with the mother at a crisis shelter or the residence of a safe adult as assessed and approved by the Child Protector. In addition, the Youth Court directed the father to refrain from going to such crisis shelter or safe adult's residence without the Approved Welfare Officer's approval.

4 Subsequently, the father appeared near the safe adult's apartment, outside the younger child's school and the mother's workplace respectively on various occasions without the Approved Welfare Officer's approval. The Child Protector then applied for CPOs to place the children in their mother's care under the supervision of an approved welfare officer for 12 months. While the mother and the children agreed to the arrangement, the father opposed it and took the position that the children should return to live with him in the matrimonial home.

5 In the Youth Court, District Judge Patrick Tay Wei Sheng ("District Judge") granted the CPOs and most of the incidental orders sought by the Child Protector. The District Judge agreed with the Child Protector that the children "had suffered or were likely to suffer from emotional harm on account of emotional or psychological abuse by their parents within s 5(1)(g) of the [Children and Young Persons Act 1993 (2020 Rev Ed) ('CYPA')]." He found that the "frequent conflicts and violence" between the parents "had affected the children adversely" and "the children were at risk of emotional harm because of emotional or psychological abuse on account of parental conflict". In addition

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to the CPOs, the District Judge also ordered the parents to, *inter alia*, attend counselling sessions and to abstain from acts that will compromise the safety and well-being of the children.

6 In the present proceedings, the father appeals against the District Judge's CPOs and seeks to reverse the CPOs and have the children return to the matrimonial home so that his parental role will be gradually restored. The father says that the reports submitted by the Protective Service ("PSV", then known as the Child Protective Service) ("PSV Reports"), which the Youth Court considered for its decision, consist of "one-sided, emotional accounts" from the mother, omit his accounts of the events, contain exaggerated statements and are inconsistent with police records. Further, the father also says that prolonged separation imposes financial burdens on the family and is contrary to the children's will, and that his conduct has improved.

7 In response, the Child Protector argues that the PSV's report was based on information provided to it by various sources, including the father and third parties, such as the KK Women's and Children's Hospital ("KKH") and Whispering Hearts Family Service Centre ("WHFSC"). In this respect, the Child Protector cites various instances where these sources corroborate each other and reflect the father's accounts. Further, the Child Protector argues that the CPOs were in the children's best interest, given the weight of evidence on the physical and verbal conflicts between the parents and the resultant emotional harm suffered by the children.

8 As the present case concerns the Youth Court's power under s 54 of the CYPA to make care and protection orders, pursuant to Part 3 rule 4(6) read with Part 3 rule 2 of the Family Justice (General) Rules 2024, s 394 of the Criminal Procedure Code 2010 applies. Section 394 provides:

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> Any judgment, sentence or order of a trial court may be reversed or set aside only where the appellate court is satisfied that it was wrong in law or against the weight of the evidence or, in the case of a sentence, manifestly excessive or manifestly inadequate in all the circumstances of the case.

9 In my opinion, the learned District Judge did not err in law or reach his decision against the weight of the evidence. I agree that the children are in need of care or protection under s 5(1)(g) of the CYPA as they have been subject to emotional or psychological abuse by the father. As evident in the PSV Reports, school reports and WHFSC's social report, the children frequently witnessed and were, on several occasions, involved in the conflicts, such as by being made to watch the quarrels and having to intervene when quarrels escalated into violence. The elder son also sustained injuries during one of the parents' altercations. As a result of these experiences, the children were described in the reports as been 'scared'.

10 The learned District Judge correctly held, pursuant to s 5(2)(f) of the CYPA, that a child may be under emotional or psychological abuse by his or her parent if the latter exposes the child to any violence against a related person of the child. And it is clear from the totality of documentary (which reflects the father's account) that the children have been exposed to the father's violence against the mother. He denies this but his denial and arguments did not persuade the court below, nor this court that the evidence is unreliable.

11 The documentary evidence is clear and not only does not support the father's case, but in many instances, refutes it. The makers of the PSV Reports and the WHFSC's social report, among others, had interviewed the children who had direct knowledge of the frequency and intensity of the parents' fights. The visible impact on the children's well-being had been recorded in detail. Other documents, such as the KKH's hospital records and school reports, were

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made by neutral third parties whose observations seem to me, impartial, and I find them to be credible.

12 The father's submissions before me, both oral and written, display a deep animosity towards his wife (the mother), and I am thus of the view that the parents will unlikely reconcile unless both are willing to make great effort to do so. But for the moment, they do not seem to be moving anywhere in that direction, and the children will likely continue to be exposed to physical and verbal abuse because of the parents' strained relationship, if the CPOs are to be reversed.

13 For the reasons above, the father's appeal is dismissed.

- Sgd -
Choo Han Teck
Judge of the High Court

Appellant in-person;
Regina Chang (Attorney-General's Chambers) for the Respondent.

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