



Making arrangements for children, explained

Out of court agreements

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| <h3>Up to and including the first meeting</h3> | <h4>What your solicitor will do</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take full information from you in relation to the background• Consider your goals and what is important for your children• Advise you of your options to agree matters and advise of the applicable law• Agree a plan and next steps | <h4>You will need to</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide full information in relation to your circumstances• Provide your instructions as to how you wish to proceed | <h4>Timescales</h4> <p>1 month</p> |
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| <h3>Agreeing on arrangements for your children</h3> | <h4>What your solicitor will do</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correspondence with your former partner/their solicitor• Put forward your position supported with relevant legal principles• Explore the best forum to agree matters e.g. correspondence, meeting or mediation• Identify if agreement cannot be reached what other routes are available and which is most suitable e.g. court or arbitration. | <h4>You will need to</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide your instructions | <h4>Timescales</h4> <p>2 months - 6 months</p> |
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Making arrangements for children, explained

The court process

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| <h3>Up to and including First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointment (FHDRA)</h3> | <h4>What your solicitor will do</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare court application if you are the applicant setting out proposals and concerns to court• If you are the other party who the application is made against, advise you about the procedure• Assist in preparation for CAFCASS call with you• Consider any evidence required• Prepare for hearing and narrow issues• Represent at hearing or instruct a barrister to represent you | <h4>You will need to</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide your instructions• Speak with CAFCASS• Attend the hearing to give instructions and listen to the court's feedback on the merits of the application. | <h4>Timescales</h4> <p>1 month - 3 months</p> |
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If a Fact Finding Hearing (FFH) is ordered by the court

What your solicitor will do

- Advise you about procedure for your specific case
- Consider the evidence in your case
- Assist you in preparing your witness statement and details of allegations or response and/or counter allegations
- Prepare for the hearing and consider narrowing issues with possible admissions
- Represent at hearing or instruct a barrister
- Advise on implications and effect of outcome

You will need to

- Provide your instructions and full details relating to the allegations
- Assist fully in producing your evidence
- Attend the hearing to give instructions and give evidence and listen to the court's findings

Timescales

1 month - 3 months

Up to and including second hearing Dispute Resolution Appointment

What your solicitor will do

- Consider any experts reports obtained
- Advise in relation to options for resolution in light of expert evidence
- Prepare for hearing
- Represent at hearing or instruct a barrister

You will need to

- Provide your instructions
- Meet with CAFCASS in relation to any Section 7 report
- Attend the hearing

Timescales

3 months - 6 months

Up to and including Final Hearing

What your solicitor will do

- Advise on possible outcomes
- Draft statement on your behalf
- Prepare your case for hearing
- Collate and present all necessary evidence to the Court
- Advise on the process of giving evidence
- Instruct a barrister to represent you at the hearing

You will need to

- Provide your instructions
- Attend the hearing to give evidence to the Court

Timescales

6 months - 12 months

