

Children and contact: glossary of terms

Applicant

The person applying to the court for an order, i.e. parent/spouse/guardian

Cafcass

The Children and Family Court Advice and Support Service

Child of the Family

A child who has been treated as a member of the family – usually natural children, but may include adopted children and step-children (although not foster children)

Child of the Marriage

A child who is the child of both the parties to the marriage

Conciliation Appointment

A meeting between the parents of the child and judge and family court reporter (formerly Court Welfare Officer) to discuss possible arrangements for the children. No order can be made unless an agreement reached by the parents and if conciliation fails, the judge will give directions for the future conduct of the application

Contact

The arrangements for the child to see a parent who is not living with the them, normally means contact visits, but also includes indirect contact, such as letters, cards or presents

Directions and Directions Appointment

A court hearing where the Court considers the case and then instructs the parties as to what things need to be done prior to the next hearing, including preparation of a welfare report and filing of statements.

Ex Parte Application/Without Notice Application

The term ex-parte application is the old term for an application to the court in which one side has the opportunity to put their case – now known as a “without notice” application

Family Court Reporter

A person appointed by the Court to help the court decide what arrangements should be made for children if the parents are unable to agree. The Family Court Reporter usually prepares a report after discussing the matter with both parents and the children – previously called the Welfare Officer.

Interim Order

An order made in a case before the final decision is made

Non-resident parent

The term used in the new child support scheme for the parent who does not officially live with the child

Parent with Care

The term used in the old child support scheme – the parent with whom the child officially lives; both parents continue to care for the child, but normally one parent is seen as providing the bulk of the daily care

**Parental Responsibility**

All the rights, duties, powers and responsibilities that a parent has for the child – unmarried fathers do not automatically have parental responsibility

Residence Order

An order setting out the arrangements as to with whom the child is to live

Respondent

The spouse/partner/guardian who receives and responds to the application

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*The information contained in this article is based on the law at October 2004.
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