



# EQUAL PARENTING ALLIANCE & FAMILIES NEED FATHERS FAMILY LAW SURVEY 2007 (CHILD CONTACT)

## What is this survey for?

Families Need Fathers (FNF) and the Equal Parenting Alliance (EPA) have joined forces to collaborate on a series of surveys into family law. But why are such surveys necessary?

The government already claims that family courts always put the best interests of the child first – but how can they prove this without keeping any record of outcomes? How would you feel about a surgeon who never saw a patient after operating and had no idea (or interest in) whether they even lived or died?

What if nobody could tell you whether it was better to treat your ingrown toenail with amputation or antibiotics - simply because nobody had ever bothered to find out? Would you still think the NHS was wonderful?

This initial survey concentrates on contact issues and mainly focuses on perceptions of family law by non-resident parents.

We believe this is the largest survey into family law ever conducted in the UK, collecting around 450 different bits of information for each participant.

Gathering evidence puts us in a much stronger position to raise issues and prevent them being fobbed off as problems affecting only a minority of cases.

## Who should fill it in?

We're asking anyone who's been personally involved in a family law dispute involving contact with children to fill this form in.

Although we realise the size of this survey form may appear somewhat daunting, we've tried to lay it out clearly and hope it's not difficult to fill in. However, some questions require more explanation than there is room for on the page and these explanatory 'notes' can be found on page 19.

If you would prefer not to answer any question please just leave it blank.

## What will happen to the results?

We are committed to making the results publicly available, providing a useful source of information for all to use. This will include information on the best and worst professionals involved in family law.

The results of this survey will be entirely anonymous, we will not even store your email address with the results.

For the complete and most up-to-date information about this survey and how the data collected will be used, please visit our web site [www.FamilyLawSurvey.co.uk](http://www.FamilyLawSurvey.co.uk) where the results will be published when they are ready.

## Questions we may be able to answer after this survey:

How many different judges does the average family law case have, and how long does it take?

What percentage of father's say they are falsely accused of sexually abusing their children immediately after they separate from the mother?

# Equal Parenting Alliance / Families Need Fathers Family Law Survey 2007



## About You & Your Court Case/s

Your gender?

Male  Female

First letters of your post code eg M (optional)

This will help identify differences in the way cases are treated between regions. Please only provide the letters from the first part of the code to preserve your anonymity, eg if your postcode is SW2 3FG enter "SW" or M54 2PP enter "M"

Your age when court proceedings started?

under 20  20 - 29  30 - 39  40 - 49  50 +

Your marital status when court proceedings started?

married  divorced  separated  never married  N/A

Number of children involved?

Their age/s when court proceedings started?

Child 1  Child 2  Child 3  Child 4  Child 5  Child 6

Are court proceedings still ongoing?

Yes  No  Don't Know

How many separate cases were/are there involved in these proceedings?

Often, even though not much has happened, the court may assign a new case number. For example, you may apply for contact and get a case number NN 001 and a few months later apply to enforce that contact where you may be assigned a new case number NN 002. In this case this would involve 2 separate cases. Also see note 6 page 19.

How many judges heard the case?

How many CAFCASS officers were involved with the case?

Approximately how long did the entire court proceedings take (or, if they are still ongoing, how long is it since they started)?

years  months

see note 6 page 19.

In which year did the proceedings first start?

Which court was the main court in the proceedings?

eg Manchester County Court

We just want to find the court where the most significant parts of the case occurred.

What was the approximate cost to you of the legal proceedings?

(Or cost to date if they are still proceeding)

Did you get legal aid?

Yes  Most of the time  Some of the time  No

Equal Parenting Alliance / Families Need Fathers

Family Law Survey 2007



What is / was the application for?

(Tick all that apply)

- Contact
- Parental Responsibility
- Residence
- Shared/Joint Residence
- Specific Steps
- Leave to apply for contact
- Adoption
- Other: please specify

In relation to this case, are **you** a: (Tick all that apply)

If there are several children involved, you could be the father of one and a step-parent of the others, for example.

- Mother
- Father
- Step-parent
- Grand Parent
- Other (please specify)

In relation to this case, is **the other party** a: (Tick all that apply)

- Mother
- Father
- Step-parent
- Grand Parent
- Other (please specify)

If the court application has ended, what was the result?

If it has not ended, what has been the result so far?

(Tick all that apply)

- Contact Order
- Parental Responsibility
- Residence for Applicant
- Shared/Joint Residence
- Specific Steps
- Residence for Respondent
- Adoption
- No order
- Leave to apply for contact
- Other: please specify

In this case, are **you** the applicant or the respondent?

- Applicant
- Respondent

If *you* took the case to court originally, you are the applicant.

If you were *taken* to court by someone else, you are the respondent.

(In Scotland, the applicant is termed the *Pursuer* and the respondent is termed the *Defender*).



## Equal Parenting Alliance / Families Need Fathers Family Law Survey 2007

### Contact Time - How to enter information about contact time with children

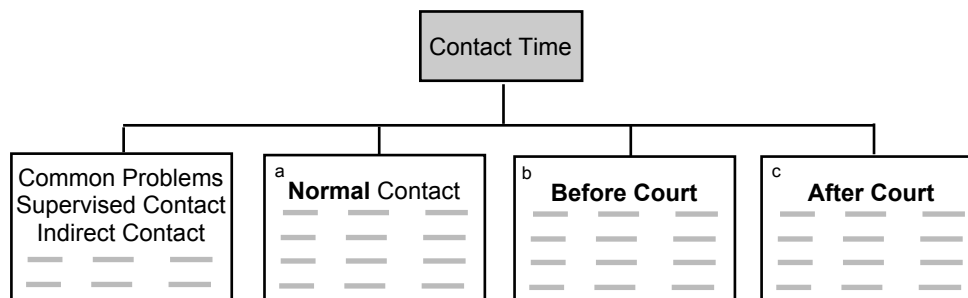
Most private family law cases (and the controversy surrounding it) are concerned with applications for contact with children, so gathering this information makes up a major part of this survey.

We decided we needed to establish the following:

- a) Find out what contact the children were used to in the '**normal**' parenting situation before the parents split up, ie when they were together as mother and father to the children.
- b) Then find out what contact there was *after separation* of the parents, but **before** they went to court. (In most cases, the difference between a and b will reveal *why* they went to court in the first place!)
- c) Then find out what the current situation is **after the court case** (whether the case is finished or not). If the case has finished this will indicate how successful the application was, if it hasn't, this will give us an idea of progress.

There are also a number of **general issues** that apply overall to applications for contact.

So this is the way we have organised this part of the survey. Firstly there is one page each for common contact problems and any supervised or indirect contact. Then we ask about the *normal*, *before* and *after* contact (paragraphs a, b and c above).



In the *normal*, *before* and *after* contact pages we ask for a summary of contact with each of the children you entered on the "About You and Your Court Case" page.



### Common Problems - for anyone applying for contact with children

Was there a period when you were unable to have *any* direct contact with your children, against your wishes?  Yes  No

If yes, how long was that period (or how long has it been since it started, if still ongoing)?  months

If more than one child is involved, please enter the *longest* time, if different for each child.

#### Objections made to your application

Were any **false allegations** or claims made against the applicant that, in your opinion, adversely affected the contact subsequently awarded?  Yes  No - please continue on next page

Allegation Type	tick if accused of this	tick if you feel the allegations were correctly investigated? (note 3 page 19)	tick if the allegations were <i>found</i> to be false by a Judge or expert (note 4 page 19)	tick if the allegations were withdrawn or set aside? (note 5 page 19)	tick if the allegations were pursued in a <i>criminal</i> court (not a family court)
Domestic Violence (physical)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic Violence (emotional)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual abuse of children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual abuse of other parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other inappropriate sexual behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical abuse of children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of Parental Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk of abducting children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being in poor physical health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being in poor mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having unsuitable living accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcoholism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Drug Problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alienating Child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Were you **arrested** at any time because of these false allegations?  Yes  No

How many court **finding of fact** hearings were held to establish the truth of any allegations?

If any false allegations were made, did the court make any **sanctions** against whoever made false allegations?  Yes  No



## Supervised Contact

We want to see the most common reasons for attending supervised contact centres and how many people who are forced to attend contact centres eventually end up with normal, unsupervised contact with their children.

Was (or is) *any* of the contact the applicant had/has with the child at a **supervised contact centre**?  Yes - please complete this page  No - please continue on next page

How long did the children have to see the applicant in a contact centre, in total? (or how long since it started, if still ongoing)?  months

If more than one child is involved, please enter the *longest* time, if different for each child.

How often did the applicant see the children in the contact centre?  Weekly  Fortnightly  Monthly  Less Often  Irregularly  Just a few times

How far away was the contact centre from the applicant's location?  miles, approximate travelling time :  hours

How far away was the contact centre from the resident parent's location?  miles, approximate travelling time :  hours

What are the main reasons that contact took place in a contact centre?  Allegations of sexual abuse  Resident Parent would not allow unsupervised contact  Alleged Child did not want contact  Allegations of poor parenting skills  Allegations of violence  Allegations of alcoholism  Alleged child did not know applicant well enough

If it has finished, why did the contact centre contact end?  Agreed better contact  Resident Parent refused to continue  Applicant refused to continue  Child refused to continue  Expert recommendation  Other

Does the applicant **now** have unsupervised contact with the child concerned?  Yes  No

Did the contact centre staff do any of the following? (tick all that apply)  Question applicant's parenting skills (in front of child)?  Imply applicant was a risk to child (in front of child)?

What do you think of the level of training of staff at the contact centre?  Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know N/A

Overall, how would you rate the experience of maintaining contact with children at a contact centre?  Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know N/A

Any other comment you would like to make?:



## Indirect Contact

Indirect contact is contact where you do not directly see the child; and usually consists of writing or receiving letters or telephone contact and the ability to send presents.

Was (or is) *any* of the contact the applicant had/has with the child  Yes - please complete this page  No - please continue on next page **indirect** contact ordered by the court?

How long did the children have indirect contact with the applicant? (or how long since it started, if still ongoing?)  months

If more than one child is involved, please enter the *longest* time, if different for each child.

What types of indirect contact are/were allowed?  (tick all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Letters or Postcards	<input type="text"/>	times a year, or	<input type="checkbox"/> no limit :	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone calls	<input type="text"/>	times a year, or	<input type="checkbox"/> no limit :	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Emails	<input type="text"/>	times a year, or	<input type="checkbox"/> no limit :	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Xmas Cards and/or Presents				<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Birthday Cards and/or presents				<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: what? :	<input type="text"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>

tick if **effective**  
(see note 7 page 19)

What are the main reasons that indirect contact took place?

<input type="checkbox"/> Allegations of sexual abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Resident Parent would not allow unsupervised contact	<input type="checkbox"/> Alleged Child did not want contact	<input type="checkbox"/> Allegations of poor parenting skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Allegations of violence	<input type="checkbox"/> Allegations of alcoholism	<input type="checkbox"/> Alleged child did not know applicant well enough	

If it has finished, why did the indirect contact end?

<input type="checkbox"/> Agreed better contact	<input type="checkbox"/> Resident Parent refused to continue	<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant refused to continue	<input type="checkbox"/> Child refused to continue	<input type="checkbox"/> Expert recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
--	--	--	--	--	--------------------------------

Does the applicant **now** have unsupervised contact with the child concerned?

Yes  No

Do you think that letters sent through indirect contact reach the children?

Always  Usually  Sometimes  Occasionally  Never  Don't Know N/A

Overall, how effective do you think indirect contact is for maintaining contact with children?

Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know N/A

Any other comment you would like to make?:



## Relationship of applicant with children in 'normal' parenting situation

What contact did the applicant have with the children in the **normal** situation *before* the parental relationship broke down, or before the parents separated.?

Please try and answer to give a true impression of the relationship of the applicant with the children, whether that was one week before the relationship breakdown, or six months before.

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
Did the applicant live with the child or did they sometimes come to stay?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Was the applicant a 'normal' parent sharing care of this child with the other parent approximately 50:50?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Approximately how many <b>over-nights</b> did the applicant have with this child over a <b>year</b> ?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Approximately how many <b>hours</b> did the applicant spend with <b>sole, unsupervised</b> care of this child every <b>week</b> ?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Approximately how many <b>hours</b> did the applicant spend with <b>shared</b> care of this child every <b>week</b> ?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Did the applicant have contact with the child's school or other learning activities such as playgroups?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant take part in any medical care of this child, such as attending GP or hospitals with them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant ever put this child to bed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant ever bath this child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant's extended family (or friends) have a relationship with this child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes

For most parents, this will be 365 before splitting up. See note 2 on page 19.

Include here: babysitting hours, time spent changing nappies, taking child out alone, taking to school, giving lifts, shopping etc

Include here time spent where the applicant was sharing care of the child with the resident parent.



## Relationship of applicant with children *before court* but after separation

What contact did the applicant have with the children **before** the court proceedings started?

This is the contact the applicant had when they made their application to the court? Why go to court?

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
Did the applicant live with the child or did they sometimes come to stay?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Was the applicant a 'normal' parent sharing care of this child with the other parent approximately 50:50?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Approximately how many <b>over-nights</b> did the applicant have with this child over a <b>year</b> ?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Approximately how many <b>hours</b> did the applicant spend with <b>sole, unsupervised</b> care of this child every <b>week</b> ?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Approximately how many <b>hours</b> did the applicant spend with <b>shared</b> care of this child every <b>week</b> ?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Approximately how many <b>hours</b> did the applicant spend with <b>supervised</b> care of this child every <b>week</b> ?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Did the applicant have contact with the child's school or other learning activities such as playgroups?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant take part in any medical care of this child, such as attending GP or hospitals with them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant ever put this child to bed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant ever bath this child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant's extended family (or friends) have a relationship with this child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes

For most parents, this will be 365 before splitting up. See note 2 on page 19.

Include here: babysitting hours, time spent changing nappies, taking child out alone, taking to school, giving lifts, shopping etc

Include here time spent where the applicant was sharing care of the child with the resident parent.

Include here time spent where the applicant is seeing child on a supervised basis. Such as in a contact centre or under agreed supervision.



### Relationship of applicant with children *after court case*

What contact does the applicant have with the children **after** the court proceedings have finished? If the case is ongoing, what the relationship is now.

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
Did the applicant live with the child or did they sometimes come to stay?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Was the applicant a 'normal' parent sharing care of this child with the other parent approximately 50:50?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Approximately how many <b>overnights</b> did the applicant have with this child over a <b>year</b> ?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Approximately how many <b>hours</b> did the applicant spend with <b>sole, unsupervised</b> care of this child every <b>week</b> ?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Approximately how many <b>hours</b> did the applicant spend with <b>shared</b> care of this child every <b>week</b> ?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Approximately how many <b>hours</b> did the applicant spend with <b>supervised</b> care of this child every <b>week</b> ?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Did the applicant have contact with the child's school or other learning activities such as playgroups?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant take part in any medical care of this child, such as attending GP or hospitals with them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant ever put this child to bed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant ever bath this child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Did the applicant's extended family (or friends) have a relationship with this child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes

For most parents, this will be 365 before splitting up. See note 2 on page 19.

Include here: babysitting hours, time spent changing nappies, taking child out alone, taking to school, giving lifts, shopping etc

Include here time spent where the applicant was sharing care of the child with the resident parent.

Include here time spent where the applicant is seeing child on a supervised basis. Such as in a contact centre or under agreed supervision.

If there has been an improvement in contact since before going to court, *how much* of this improvement is *due to* involvement of the family courts?

The court is largely responsible for the improvement in contact.
  The court is partially responsible for the improvement in contact.
  The court made no difference
  The court made things worse
  The court made things much worse



## Judges

These questions are to allow us to build up some information about the different Family Court Judges and get some idea of which are the 'best' and 'worst' ones – or whether they are all the same.

If you had several different judges please fill in a separate sheet for each.

Name of Judge?:   Don't Know

Eg District Judge Bloggs

Sex?  Male  Female

We want to see if there is any sex bias

Geographical Location?:

Eg Leeds – There may be more than one "Judge Bloggs", so with area as well it is more likely we will be able to match your comments with the right judge.

What level is this Judge?  District  Deputy District  Circuit  High Court  Other  Don't Know

How would you rate this Judge for the following ...

Listening to both sides of the argument:	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
Fairness:	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
Ability to understand the main issues:	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
Effectiveness, acting on the main issues:	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
Making everyone feel at ease in court:	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
Putting the interests of the child first:	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know

If you represented yourself in court (as a litigant in person) how would you rate your treatment by this judge of you as a LIP?  Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know N/A

If you had the same judge again in the future, in another case, would you initially be:  Very Pleased  Pleased  Neutral  Displeased  Very Displeased  Don't Know

**Overall**, how would you rate this Judge?  Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

Any other comments you would like to make on this Judge? :



### Solicitors & Barristers

These questions are to allow us to build up some information about the different legal professionals and get some idea of who are the 'best' and 'worst' ones – or whether they are all the same.

If you encountered several different solicitors please fill in a separate sheet for each. For example, you may wish to rate your own solicitor and that of your opponent.

Name of solicitor/ barrister?:

Are they? :  A Solicitor  A Barrister

Name and address of Firm?:

If known, or just "Leeds" for example

Were they acting:  For you  For the other party  For the children  Other

Did they suggest you should try mediation at any point?  Yes  No  Don't Know

How well did they explain all your **options** at your first meeting?  Very Well  Quite Well  OK  Not Very Well  Very Badly  Don't Know

How would you rate the usefulness of any legal advice they gave you.  Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

How would you rate their **value for money** to whoever was paying?  Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

How would you rate their **efficiency**? (Did they do what they said they would do?)  Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

If you represented yourself in court (as a litigant in person) how would you rate their treatment of you as a LIP?  Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know N/A

How do you think their involvement with the case affected the child?  Very Beneficial to the child  Beneficial to the child  Made no difference  Harmful to the child  Very Harmful to the child  Don't Know

Would you recommend them to others?  Definitely  Probably  Neutral  No  Definitely Not  Don't Know

**Overall**, how would you rate them?  Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

Any other comments you would like to make on this Solicitor?:



### Experts (including CAFCASS officers)

There are often a large number of experts involved with a family law case. Most commonly, a CAFCASS officer may be appointed by the court to do a report. But other people involved may be psychologists, social workers, doctors etc.

If you encountered several different 'experts' please fill in a separate sheet for each.

Name of Expert?:

Name and address of organisation?:

If known, eg  
Leeds CAFCASS

Type of expert:  CAFCASS  Psychologist  Social Worker  Paediatrician  
 GP  Teacher  Other, please specify:

If they produced a **written report**, how would you rate the value of the report?  
 Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

How many reports did they produce?  Approximately how many hours did they spend discussing the case **with you**?

**If they gave evidence in court**, how would you rate the value of their evidence?  
 Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

How would you rate their **value for money** to whoever was paying?  
 Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

**Listening skills.** How good do you think this expert was at listening to you and understanding the situation?  
 Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

How **factually accurate** do you think this expert was?  
 Absolutely correct  Mostly correct  OK  Minor Errors  Major Errors  Don't Know

How good was this expert, in your opinion, at **including all relevant information** in their report?  
 Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

How much do you think they put the **interests of the child first** in the work they did?  
 Very Well  Well  OK  Not Well  Not at all well  Don't Know

How do you think their involvement with the case affected the child?  
 Very Beneficial to the child  Beneficial to the child  Made no difference  Harmful to the child  Very Harmful to the child  Don't Know

Would you **recommend** involvement of this expert to others?  
 Definitely  Probably  No View  No  Definitely Not  Don't Know

Overall, how would you rate this expert  
 Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

Any other comments you would like to make on this Expert? :

# Equal Parenting Alliance / Families Need Fathers Family Law Survey 2007



## Questions for those who represented themselves in court

Many people choose to represent themselves in court as a Litigant in Person (LIP) for some or all of their case. This may be for many reasons.

These questions aim to find out if you felt this changed the way you were treated or changed the outcome of your case.

Did you represent yourself at any time during the court proceedings?

- Yes - please complete this page
- No - please continue on next page

Please tick the following factors if they affected your decision to represent yourself

- I couldn't get legal aid, but neither could I afford solicitors
- I thought I could probably do better myself
- I did not want to fund the legal system more than I had to
- I think legal professionals are poor value for money
- I wanted to be able to express myself properly in court
- I wanted to be in control of my case
- Other:

Do you feel **Judges** treated you as a LIP:

- better
  - about the same
  - worse
- than if you had been legally represented?

Do you feel **other court staff** treated you as a LIP:

- better
  - about the same
  - worse
- than if you had been legally represented?

If the other side was legally represented, do you feel **they** treated you:

- better
  - about the same
  - worse
- than if you had been legally represented?

If **CAFCASS** was involved, do you feel they treated you:

- better
  - about the same
  - worse
- than if you had been legally represented?

If **other experts** (eg psychologist) were involved, do you feel they treated you:

- better
  - about the same
  - worse
- than if you had been legally represented?

Did you have someone in court to assist you at any time (McKenzie Friend)?

- Yes
- No
- I wanted to but it was refused

Was a reason given for this refusal?

- Yes
  - No
- If yes, what was the reason given?

Would you represent yourself in court again?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Would you recommend others to represent themselves?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know



### How involvement with the family law system affected (or is affecting) you

We would like to get some idea how being involved in family law has affected your life.

**Overall**, what has been the effect of the involvement with the family court process on your life?  Very Good  Good  OK  Bad  Very Bad  Don't Know

Has your **income** been affected?  No  Yes : Approximate annual income ? (nearest thousand before tax) 

before	after
--------	-------

Has your **health** been affected?  No  Yes :

How is/was your health affected (Please tick all that apply)

- Depression  Stress  Heart Problems  Sleep problems  Suicidal thoughts
- Digestive problems  Anxiety  Anger  Paranoia  Suicide attempts
- Other

Have you visited your GP because of it?  No  Yes :

Have you had **time off work** because of the case?  No  Yes : Approximately how many **days** off work have you lost in total? 

--

Please tick other problems you feel you have (or had) which were **due to, or affected by**, your involvement with family law:

- Social Withdrawal  Losing touch with friends  Losing touch with family  Poor work performance  Losing a Job
- Loss of Self Esteem  Financial Worries  Alcohol Problems  Drug Problems  Relationship Problems
- Housing Problems



## Mediation

Mediation is discussing the issues with someone else acting as moderator to try help the parties reach agreement together, hopefully without ever going to court.

Before coming to court, or during the court process, was any mediation tried in your case?

Yes  No



What sort of mediation organisation was used?

Relate  Solicitors  Church  Other professional mediation organisation  
 Informal arrangement (family or friend)  Other

How many sessions were tried?

... and approximately how many hours in total?  hours

Was there any feedback from mediation into the court process?

Yes  No → If no, do you think it would have been better if there *had been*?  Yes  No

Did you pay anything for the mediation?

Yes  No → If yes, approximately how much did you pay in total?  pounds

Do you think it would have been better if you had started mediation sooner?

Yes  No

**Overall**, how would you rate the usefulness of your mediation?

Very Good  Good  OK  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know



What was the main reason for not attending mediation?

One party refused to take part  It was never suggested by solicitors  Did not think it would work  
 Disagreement over payment  There was no contact with the other party  Did not know about mediation  
 Not available  Waiting list too long  Other



## Family Courts

These questions are to help us build up some information about the different family courts, and try and get some idea of which are the 'best' and 'worst' ones – or whether they are all the same. Of course, this is far less important than the legal process and outcomes itself, but we hope to get some useful information from it – even if it is only being able to issue a press release entitled "Is *this* the worst family court in Britain?".

If you attended several different courts please fill in a separate one of these sheets for each court.

Name of Court:

Eg Manchester County Court

How many times did you attend in this court?

Approximately

How would you rate the attitude of the court staff?:

Very Good

Good

OK

Poor

Very Poor

Don't Know

What do you think of the facilities and environment in the court?

Very Good

Good

OK

Poor

Very Poor

Don't Know

If you asked the court staff any questions, how helpful were their responses?

Very Good

Good

OK

Poor

Very Poor

Don't Know

How efficiently do you feel the administration of your case was handled? (for example, were things posted out to you on time etc)

Very Good

Good

OK

Poor

Very Poor

Don't Know

If you made a complaint or comment about the court, how would you rate the way your comments were handled?

Very Good

Good

OK

Poor

Very Poor

Don't Know

If you represented yourself in court (as a litigant in person), how would you rate the attitude of the staff (other than the judge) towards you as a LIP?

Very Good

Good

OK

Poor

Very Poor

Don't Know

Any other comments you would like to make on this Court?:



### Summary

Your overall impressions and feelings about family law and its implementation in the United Kingdom.

Overall, what is your opinion of Family Law implementation in the UK?

- Very Good
- Good
- OK
- Poor
- Very Poor
- Don't Know

How good is the system, in your opinion, at putting the interests of the child first?

- Very Good
- Good
- OK
- Poor
- Very Poor
- Don't Know

Do you feel there is any bias in the system?

- Favours Father
- Favours Mother
- Favours Resident Parent (of whatever sex)
- Overall Fair
- Other Bias
- Don't Know

What do you feel are the weakest aspects of the family law system? (tick any box that applies)

- Judges
- Experts
- Secrecy of family courts
- CAFCASS
- The Cost
- Long Delays
- Solicitors
- Adversarial System
- Don't Know
- The Law
- Ignoring false allegations

Other:

Do you think that denying a child contact with a parent, without good reason, is emotional abuse of the child?

- Yes
- No
- No View
- Don't Know

Any other comments you would like to make?

Please now go to page 20



## Explanatory Notes

Some questions require more explanation than there is room to fit on the page. These notes are on this page.

### Note 1 :

**Note 2 :** Though it may seem strange asking for **number of overnights per year**, this seemed like the best way to get the information that covers all eventualities. For example, someone who sees a child two nights every other weekend (52 overnights per year) and then all through July (30 overnights) could then say they had a total of 52 + 30 or 82 overnights a year.

**Note 3 :** What do we mean by **correctly investigated**? False allegations can cause a lot of harm to the applicant and the children. Tick this box if - in your opinion - they were investigated to the **correct** level that was necessary to decide whether they should affect contact with the child. If they were not investigated thoroughly enough, (or, quite possibly, ridiculously over-investigated or over-weighted by the family courts or CAFCASS) then don't tick this box.

**Note 4 : Allegations found to be false** by a Judge or expert : Tick this box if : a Judge says in court that an allegation is false, or does not believe it is true; or an expert says in court or in a report that the allegation is not true.

**Note 5 : Allegations withdrawn or set aside** : Tick this box if : the person making the allegations withdrew them or accepted they were false; or the Judge said they were going to ignore them or set them aside; or the contact subsequently awarded requires the allegations to have been set-aside, even if no-one explicitly said so (for example, allegations of raping a child followed by unsupervised contact with the child. Clearly, the court do not believe the allegations so they have effectively been set aside by the court.)

**Note 6 :** Sometimes the situation may be spread over more than one time period. For example, there may have been one court session (consisting of two cases) that took two years to resolve, and five years later a return to court with another case. In this situation it is little use reporting the case as having lasted seven years because this obscures the true situation. If your situation is similar to this, please fill in the survey once to report on the first (two year) case, and then contact us to arrange to report separately on the second case (five years later).

**Note 7 :** By **effective** we mean: do you think this type of indirect contact allowed the applicant to build or maintain a reasonable relationship with the child?



# Equal Parenting Alliance / Families Need Fathers Family Law Survey 2007

## Completing and Validating this Survey

You can either fill in this form on paper and post the completed form to us; or complete it online. In each case the questions are the same. We are grateful for your completing our survey, whichever method of filling it in you choose. However, please note it is much easier for us to process a survey completed online as we do not have to manually transcribe all the answers.

In order to provide a basic check that people do not return multiple results, we ask you to provide us with an email address with the form. We will then send a message to this address which you will need to reply to, allowing us to verify this address really exists.

Once an email address has been used to submit one survey result, we will not accept any more responses from the same address (except by prior arrangement).

After we have verified your email address, we will not store the email address with your answers, we will *only* use it to check the address is not used again (unless you also opt in to a mailing list).

We will effectively separate and store this page separately from the rest of your answers. **This will ensure your results are entirely anonymous. Nobody (even us) will subsequently be able to tell who a set of survey results came from.**

Email address to verify your identity:

Please add my email address to your mailing list:

Please send me a copy of the results from the survey:

Please tell me about similar surveys:

Please send me information about joining the Equal Parenting Alliance for just £5

Please tell us how you found filling in this survey (tick any that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Straightforward	<input type="checkbox"/> Too Hard	<input type="checkbox"/> Too Long	<input type="checkbox"/> About Right
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Detailed Enough	<input type="checkbox"/> Too Detailed	<input type="checkbox"/> Too much explanation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not enough explanation

Approximately how long did it take you to complete this survey?  minutes

Please tell us how you heard about this survey

<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter or McKenzie	<input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth	<input type="checkbox"/> Internet newsgroup	<input type="checkbox"/> Press Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Internet Search
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(so we can better reach people next time) : Other:

**Thank you for taking the time and trouble to complete this survey.**  
If you have filled out a paper form, please post it to:  
Equal Parenting Alliance  
6 Midland Road  
Bramhall  
Stockport  
Cheshire  
SK7 3DR  
You will receive an email response from us within about a week, which you must reply to to verify the email address given. If you do not reply to this message we regret we will not be able to use your survey results.