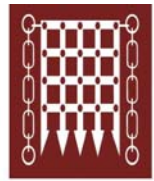


**Westminster Legal Policy Forum Keynote Seminar:
Family justice - next steps for reform and modernisation**

Timing: Morning, Tuesday, 16th July 2013

Venue: Sixty One Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET



**WESTMINSTER
LEGAL POLICY
FORUM**

Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Rt Hon the Baroness Butler-Sloss, Chairman, House of Lords Select Committee on Adoption Legislation
- 9.05 - 9.35 **Implementing the Family Justice Modernisation Programme - next steps**
What challenges lie ahead for the creation of a single family court in 2014, and how might structural reform support a more simplified and transparent family justice system?
Lord Justice Ryder
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.35 - 10.00 **Championing the interests of children across family proceedings - priorities, aims and concerns amidst reform**
How can the needs, wishes and feelings of diverse individual children be understood and supported effectively by family justice agencies and practitioners?
Anthony Douglas, Chief Executive, Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.00 - 10.55 **Assessing changes to public law - case management, tackling delays and ensuring a "child-centred system"**
Perspectives on Government's ongoing agenda for reform of public law following the Family Justice Review last year, and latest thinking on how the current Children and Families Bill might impact on this area of the family justice system. How attainable and realistic are legislative proposals to initiate a six month time limit for the completion of care and supervision cases, and to what extent will this encourage faster case progression as a norm? How can Government improve the quality and timeliness of expert reports in family proceedings, and in what ways might local authorities need to respond to any reduction in their use - particularly with regard to the quality and scope of initial assessments? What challenges remain for raising the standards of social care practice in relation to family court proceedings, and how can best practice in areas such as court preparation and presentation be more effectively shared? What more can be done to avoid duplication between the work of local authorities and family courts, and how effective will current reforms to the scrutiny of care plans and the work of adoption panels be in tackling delays? To what extent has the welfare and interests of the child been prioritised across Government's current agenda for reform?
Dorothy Simon, Head of People Team, Essex Legal Services, Essex County Council and Member, Children's Law Sub-Committee, Law Society
Jennifer Bernard, Board Member, The College of Social Work
Sarah Wellard, Director of Policy, Research and Communications, Grandparents Plus
Stephen Matthews, Chairman of the Family Courts Committee, Magistrates' Association
Dr Judith Freedman, Consultant Psychiatrist, Portman Clinic and Convenor, The Consortium of Expert Witnesses to the Family Courts
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.55 - 11.00 **Chairman's closing remarks**
Rt Hon the Baroness Butler-Sloss, Chairman, House of Lords Select Committee on Adoption Legislation
- 11.00 - 11.30 Coffee
- 11.30 - 11.35 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Baroness Deech, Chair, Bar Standards Board
- 11.35 - 12.25 **Reforming private law - dispute resolution, enforcement and the future for shared parenting**
How will Government's plans to provide a legislative presumption in favour of continued shared parenting impact on the future of private family law, and how warranted are concerns that its introduction may undermine child welfare and increase litigation? In what ways will a "presumption approach" to legislation - as set out in the recent "Cooperative parenting following family separation" consultation - influence the way shared parenting is interpreted in practice? Will courts have sufficient sanctions to enforce court-ordered child arrangements amidst such reforms, and what effect will ensuring that breached orders return to court more promptly have on overall compliance rates? What are the long-term implications of the removal of private family law from the scope of legal aid, and will this lead to an increased number of litigants representing themselves across family proceedings? How will a compulsory Pre-Application Protocol for Mediation and Information Assessment meetings (MIAMs) influence separating parents considering court action? In what ways can the provision of support services for separating and separated parents be further improved upon, and how effective have initiatives such as the Parenting Agreement been in mitigating disputes?
Austin Chessell, Trustee, Families Need Fathers
Jane Robey, Chief Executive Officer, National Family Mediation
Emma Scott, Director, Rights of Women
Nicholas Cusworth QC, Chairman, Family Law Bar Association
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.25 - 12.55 **Family Justice and the Children and Families Bill**
Rt Hon Ellyn Llwyd MP, Member, Justice Committee
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chairman's and Westminster Legal Policy Forum closing remarks**
Baroness Deech, Chair, Bar Standards Board
Marc Gammon, Producer, Westminster Legal Policy Forum