

Care cases with an international element: New ICACU form for requests for co-operation under Brussels IIa and the 1996 Hague Child Protection Convention and guidance notes

The International Child Abduction and Contact Unit ('**ICACU**') discharges the day to day duties of the central authority in England and Wales for Council Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003 ('**Brussels IIa**') and in England for the [1996 Hague Child Protection Convention](#). It acts as a contact point for requests for co-operation into and out of this jurisdiction made under either Brussels IIa or under the 1996 Hague Convention.

A request for co-operation can be made where the issues are covered by Brussels IIa or the 1996 Hague Convention and the other country is a Member State of the European Union and/or the 1996 Hague Convention is in force between the other country and the UK including, for example, if:

- a local authority needs information to assist it in developing a care plan for a child either because the child or their family are originally from the other country or because they have family in the other country who may be able to care for the child; or
- because the local authority needs to share information about a child with the authorities in the other country.

The ICACU has published **a form and guidance notes**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-child-abduction-unit-request-for-co-operation-form>

for local authorities to use in child protection cases to make a request for co-operation to another country. The form is intended to help local authorities check their request is covered by the Regulation or Convention and to ensure that they include enough information to enable the ICACU to process their request. The form can be completed by a local authority lawyer or social worker.

The aim of the form is to:

- to reduce delay and improve care planning for the child where the case has an international element and
- to help local authorities make better formulated requests for information or assistance to the other country and
- to improve communication when sharing information about the child with the other country.

The form should be read in conjunction with:

1. the guidance published by the President of the Family Division about the ICACU's role in these cases:
<http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/publications/presidents-guidance-on-the-international-child-abduction-and-contact-unit-icacu-and-its-role/>
2. Departmental advice published by the Department for Education for local authorities where a case has a cross border element:

- a. October 2012: Cross-border child protection cases: the 1996 Hague Convention:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cross-border-child-protection-cases-the-1996-hague-convention>;
- b. January 2013: Advice on Placement of Looked After Children across Member States of the European Union:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/placement-of-looked-after-children-in-eu-member-states>
- c. July 2014: Working with foreign authorities: child protection cases and care orders: Departmental advice for local authorities, social workers, service managers and children's services lawyers.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-protection-working-with-foreign-authorities>