



Family Justice Council: 2013-14 Draft Business Plan

Activity 1: Quality Standards for the use of Experts in Family Proceedings	
Led by: Working group on Experts, Joint BPS/FJC working group on psychologists	
Time Scale	April 2013 – March 2014
Objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) To develop and produce new quality standards for expert evidence, and work with the MoJ to set up a consultation period prior to dissemination2) To collaborate with the British Psychological Society in producing quality standards for psychological experts3) To consider the applicability of the recommendations in the Law Commission report <i>'Expert Evidence in Criminal Proceedings in England and Wales'</i>, to family proceedings4) To develop guidance for GP practices that helps improve timeliness of release of medical records into court proceedings
Outcome: To improve the quality, supply and use of experts in family courts	

Activity 2: Pre-proceedings in private law cases	
Led by: Working group on Pre-proceedings	
Time Scale	April – June 2013
Objectives	<p>1) To develop a standard tool, to be used by all practitioners involved in the delivery of dispute resolution services, for the initial screening of risk issues and domestic violence.</p> <p>2) To consider and develop proposals with DfE, MoJ and Cafcass, for minimum underpinning standards or guidance to which all pre-proceedings services should be encouraged to work so as to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are identified and safeguarded.</p> <p>3) To collaborate with DfE, MoJ and Cafcass, and acting as critical friend, in the production of the new Parenting Agreement and identifying the barriers to accessing services pre-court, with proposals to address these.</p>
Outcome: To contribute to the family justice reform programme in private law proceedings	

Activity 3: To meet the challenge posed by increased numbers of LiPs in private law cases after the withdrawal of Legal Aid in 2013	
Led by: Working group on litigants-in-person (LiPs)	
Time Scale	April 2013
Objectives	<p>1) To make recommendations to the FJB, MoJ & DfE, in respect of the increased number of litigants in person (LiPs), following an overview of the initiatives taken and support available to LiPs in family courts across the jurisdiction.</p> <p>2) To prepare guidance, with course leaders at the Judicial College, for judges hearing an increased number of cases with LiPs; which is intended to offer some consistency of approach with the FPR 2010.</p> <p>3) To support AdviceNow in its application for funding from the MoJ, to produce guides for LiPs to be available nationally in all courts which hear private law cases</p>
Outcome: To advise and make recommendations to the FJB, MoJ & HMCTS to ensure that all necessary mitigating actions are being put in place to deal with the impact of the Legal Aid reforms in April 2013. To assist the judiciary in its preparation for the same.	

Activity 4: Litigants-in-person in financial remedy cases	
Led by: Money and Property working group	
Time Scale	April – June 2013
Objective	To draft written and audio-visual material designed to assist LiPs on Form E, the First Appointment, the FDR, the Trial, Appeals and general advice including case management
Outcome: To assist litigants-in-person in financial remedy cases	

Activity 5: Contribution to the Judicial Family Justice Modernisation Programme	
Led by: Executive Committee	
Time Scale	April 2013 – March 2014
Objective	To respond to the requests for multi-disciplinary advice on a number of issues over the course of the Modernisation Programme including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More effective use of expert evidence in the family courts ○ Best practice and quality standards for experts in the family courts ○ Pre-proceedings in private law ○ Litigants-in-person ○ Inter-professional working
Outcome: To play a key role in supporting the implementation plans for the Modernisation Programme and the Single Family Court in particular.	

Activity 6: Enabling feedback for judges, magistrates and legal advisers on the outcomes for children and families of the decisions they make	
Led by: Executive Committee and working group to be established	
Time Scale	April – June 2013
Objective	To develop a work plan for taking forward the recommendations of the research by Professor Judith Masson on providing feedback to the judiciary on decisions in Family Law cases
Outcome: The final research to be considered by the Council, with recommendations for the FJB, MoJ and DfE.	

Activity 7: Risk-assessments in family proceedings	
Led by: Working group on risk-assessments	
Time Scale	March 2014
Objective	To propose and promote a consistency of approach and understanding of the appropriate use of risk-assessments within family proceedings. To develop a working model for inter-professional working and learning.
Outcome: To produce guidance for use in family courts to promote more effective use of risk assessments within family proceedings.	

Activity 8: Improving access to research relevant to family proceedings for practitioners and judiciary	
Led by: Executive Committee and working group to be established	
Time Scale	April 2013 – March 2014
Objective	To propose an overall strategy for the development and production of concise research digest materials relevant to family law proceedings, for use by practitioners and judiciary
Outcome: A model and process for commissioning a research digest of research relevant to family proceedings. This will include the process of peer-reviewing, summarising and validating the conclusions, application and limitations of published research, making access available to the original publications, and updating on a regular basis	

Activity 9: Promoting a better understanding of the use of Fact-Finding Hearings within family proceedings	
Led by: Executive Committee and working group to be established	
Time Scale	April 2013 – March 2014
Objective	To consider the outcomes of the research on Fact-Finding Hearings by Professor Rosemary Hunter, and develop an action plan for dissemination of key messages
Outcome: To provide the President of the Family Division with a robust evidence base for considering amendments to the Practice Direction: Residence and Contact Orders: Domestic Violence and Harm on 9 May 2008, subsequently revised on 14 January 2009	