

VIEW FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CHAMBERS (8)

The process of reform : private law

Sir James Munby, President of the Family Division

In previous 'Views from the President's Chambers' I have said much about the ongoing reforms to public law. Some of what I have said applies equally to private law. But thus far I have said very little which is specific to private law, where reform is equally necessary.

The Private Law Working Group which I set up under the chairmanship of Mr Justice Cobb has now reported. Its Report recommends the replacement of the Private Law Programme with an entirely new Child Arrangements Programme. The Working Group has prepared further draft documents and also approved an expectation document prepared by Cafcass. Copies of all these documents can be found on <http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/publications-and-reports/FamilyCourtGuide>.

I am grateful for the work done so quickly and so effectively by Stephen Cobb and his team and trust that it will receive the careful consideration which it deserves.

I am anxious to consult as widely as possible on these proposals. I shall welcome and value all comments from anyone with an involvement or interest in the family justice system.

Comments should be sent to Nicola Massally and Joanna Wilkinson in my office, Joanna.wilkinson@judiciary.gsi.gov.uk and Nicola.massally@judiciary.gsi.gov.uk.

Early responses would be appreciated but can I ask for all comments on the draft Guidance on Allocation and Gatekeeping to be with me by 2 December 2013 and on everything else by 6 January 2014 at the latest.

I am very conscious that you have been bombarded with material since I became President. I make no apologies for this: I am very anxious that everyone should be

kept aware of what is happening in this massive programme of reform that has to be in place by April 2014. There will, I fear, be more before the end of the year.