

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN

WHO IS THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN?

The Children's Guardian is appointed by the court to represent the rights and interests of children in cases that involve social services. They are independent of social services, courts and everyone else involved in the case. They instruct the solicitor who is appointed by the Court to represent the children.

WHO DOES THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN WORK FOR?

The Children's Guardian works for an organisation called CAFCASS. This stands for Child and Family Court and Advisory Support Service. This is an independent organisation made up of people who are qualified and experienced in social work.

WHEN IS A CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN APPOINTED?

The first time that everyone goes to Court, the Court will usually order that a Children's Guardian is appointed. This cannot always happen straight away as there may be a waiting list, but one will be appointed as soon as possible.

WHAT DOES THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN DO?

The Children's Guardian is there to achieve the best possible outcome for the children. To do that, they spend time getting to know the children, parents and any other family members who are involved in their care. They talk to other people who work with the children, such as teachers and health visitors. They then prepare a report, which sets out what they think the Court should do to act in the best interests of the children and why they think that.

HOW MUCH INPUT DOES THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN HAVE?

The Court is always very interested to hear the views of the Children's Guardian, as the whole court process is centred around the best interests of the children. The Children's Guardian will recommend what orders they think the Court should make, as well as any suggestions for future welfare of the children.

WILL I FIND OUT WHAT THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN RECOMMENDS?

Yes. As soon as the Children's Guardian has finished their report, they send a copy to all of the people involved in the case. Your solicitor will discuss the report with you and then you will get a copy so that you know what they are recommending.

DOES THE COURT ALWAYS DO WHAT THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN ADVISES?

It is up to the Court what should happen, and it will make that decision after hearing from all of the people involved in the case. However, the Court does attach significant weight to the views of the Children's Guardian when making a decision.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

It is important that you co-operate with the Children's Guardian. They are there to act in the best interests of the children, and they will need your help to be able to do that. You should be open and honest when the Children's Guardian is talking to you.

The family department are:

Mary Shaw	Partner
Clare Routledge	Partner
Lesley Monkhouse	Partner
Elsbeth Thomson	Partner
Lucy McGivern	Solicitor
Jane Wilkinson	Solicitor
Helen Holmes	Solicitor
Nicky Hunter	Solicitor
Joanne Hall	Solicitor
Janine Calkin	Legal Assistant
Amber Mcllwain	Legal Assistant
Paula Harris	Legal Assistant
Laura Croft	Legal Assistant
Amy Coates	Legal Assistant
Emma Ferguson	Legal Assistant

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(2 minutes from the Central
Station, next to the Old Assembly
Rooms)

Who is the Children's Guardian?

Justice is not black
or **white** It's Gray

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