



HM Courts &
Tribunals Service

Family Public Law Reform



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Reforming family public law and adoption - our vision

Timescale: October 2017 – April 2020

Our ambition is to make the court process in relation to family public law and adoption **more efficient** and ensure that **courts, parties and their representatives** (where legally represented) have **access to the right information at the right time**. Our aim is to support the court in its role to decide on the **best outcomes for the children** involved in public law and adoption cases.

Family public law timeline

- **October 2017** - work begins with events to explore processes across the user groups and identify improvements
- **January 2019** - testing of digital service for C110a applications began in Swansea, Portsmouth and Stoke courts
- **November 2019** - additional courts and local authorities begin testing and new features including standard directions order added
- **January 2020** - phase 2 of testing begins allowing cases to be managed digitally from start to finish and more users invited to test the service
- **March 2020** - 3 court sites transition to Courts and Tribunal Service Centres – paused national rollout due to COVID-19
- **March to August 2020** - further improvements made to online care and supervision applications (C110a)
- **September 2020** - the Family Public Law service resumes its phased national rollout

Benefits of using the family public law digital service

- Local authorities can complete and submit C110a applications online and add counsel to the digital case
- If required, relevant parties can upload a C2 application in the service - this triggers an automatic notification to the Judge and the fee can be automatically taken by PBA
- Local authorities can upload a draft Case Management Order (CMO) and case summary in preparation for a hearing. Following a hearing, an agreed CMO can be uploaded for a Judge to review and approve and for parties to access and comply with directions
- Local authorities can upload a bundle up to 500MB
- Judges and Legal Professionals are provided with access to the digital service and can access documents in the courtroom, using screens, to view draft orders and bundles
- Once a local authority has been onboarded, support will be provided by the Courts and Tribunal Service Centre in Stoke to ensure the smooth progression of a case

What is the current and future process?

Legacy

C110a application submitted by post or email

Email sent to CAFCASS to notify of new submitted case

Orders created on 'Familyman' and sent by post

Documents posted to the court/users and stored manually

Notice of issue and emails sent to local authorities and CAFCASS to serve case papers

Manual paper file storing / sharing of case documents including bundle

Digital

C110a created and submitted online with automatic notification to court and parties

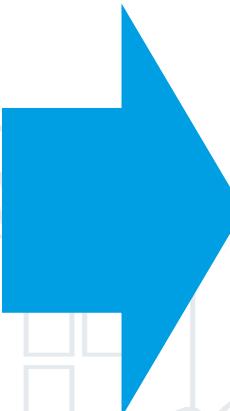
Automatic notification to CAFCASS to access new case.

Orders created on the new service available online or by post to litigants

Case documents uploaded online directly onto case by user and available for users to download or view

Direct notifications from new system to local authority and CAFCASS to access case documents for service

Electronic digital documents and bundle accessible to users 24/7 from any device



What functions does the service offer?

- User satisfaction survey issued when an application is submitted by local authorities
- Legal professionals can be added to the digital case and engage with service digitally to provide documents/evidence in preparation for a hearing
- Task list allows easy completion of digital applications
- Ability to upload draft and agreed CMO which automatically notifies a judge that there is an order for review and approval - judge seal and serve or return for amends
- Check your answers pages after each event is completed to ensure the correct information/document has been added
- Uploading a C2 triggers a notification to the Judge to action
- Capture and display who has uploaded the document
- Deep linking of notifications enables a user to navigate directly to the correct part of the case when clicked

Before: C110a application form

Paper application submitted by post or email

C110a
Application for a care or supervision order and other orders under Part 4 of the Children Act 1989 or an Emergency Protection Order under section 44 of the Children Act 1989

To be completed by the court
The family court sitting at
Case number Date issued
Children's name(s)
Fee charged

Name of applicant
Full name of respondent(s)

Nature of application
What order(s) are you applying for? (tick all which apply)

Care and supervision or other Part 4
 Care
 Supervision
 Interim care order
 Interim supervision order
 Other (please specify)

Emergency Protection Order
 Information on the whereabouts of the child(ren) (Section 48(1) Children Act 1989).
 authorisation for entry of premises (Section 48(3) Children Act 1989).
 authorisation to search for another child on the premises (Section 48(4) Children Act 1989).
 Other (please specify)

Is the Local Authority considering adoption?
 Yes No
If Yes, please complete Section 7b

Additional information required

Is an urgent hearing required?
Is a without notice hearing required?
Are there previous or ongoing proceedings for the child(ren)?
Are there factors affecting litigation capacity?
Is this a case with an international element?
Will the child or any of the people involved need to use spoken or written Welsh during the course of the proceedings?

Yes No If Yes, complete Section 1
 Yes No If Yes, complete Section 2
 Yes No If Yes, complete Section 3
 Yes No If Yes, complete Section 4
 Yes No If Yes, complete Section 5
 Yes No If Yes, complete Section 6
 Yes No If Yes, complete Section 7
 Yes No If Yes, complete Section 8
 Yes No If Yes, complete Section 9

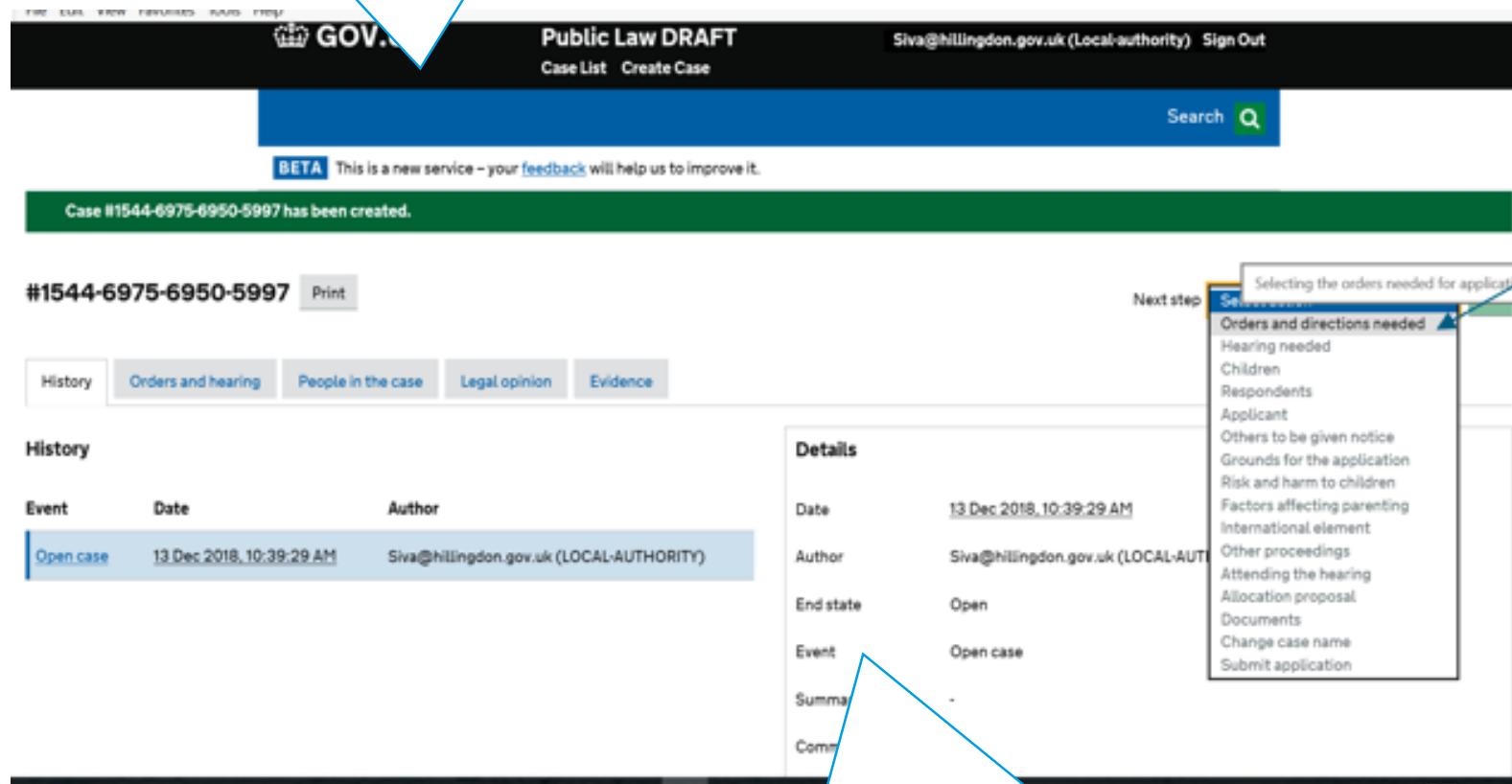
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22-page application form to complete

Form difficult to complete

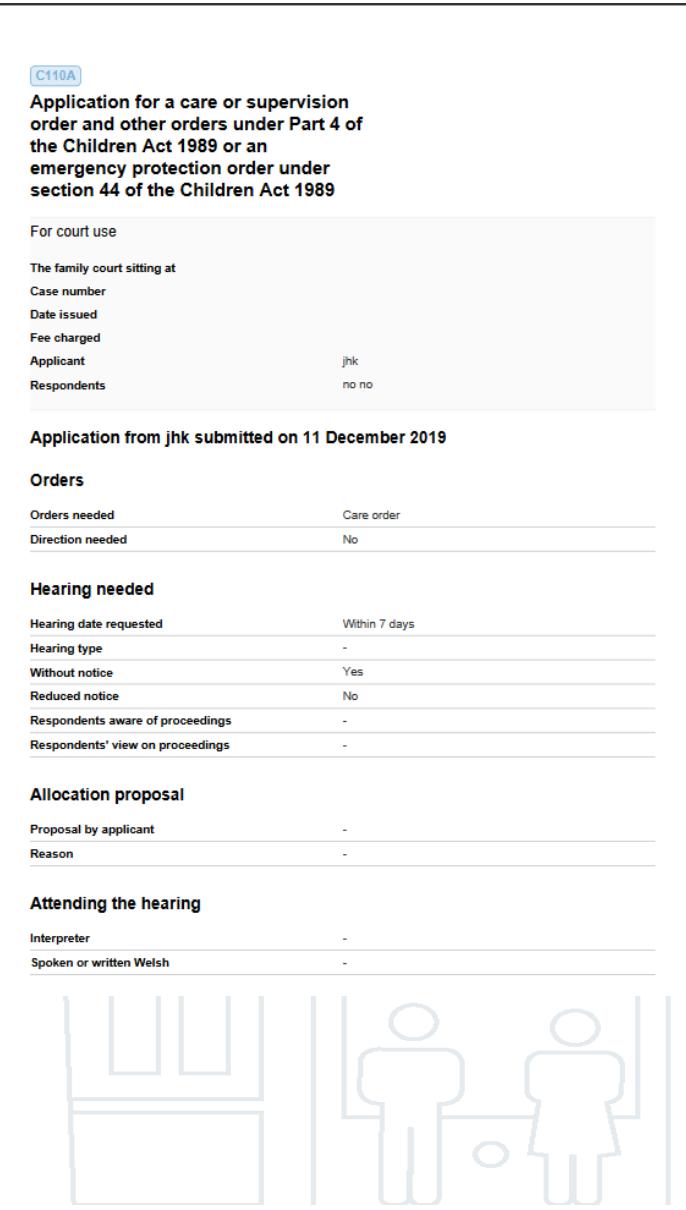
After: The new look of the C110a process

Digital application



The screenshot shows the 'Public Law DRAFT' application interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Case List' and 'Create Case'. The main content area displays a success message: 'Case #1544-6975-6950-5997 has been created.' Below this, a case identifier '#1544-6975-6950-5997' is shown with a 'Print' button. A navigation bar below the identifier includes tabs for 'History', 'Orders and hearing' (which is selected), 'People in the case', 'Legal opinion', and 'Evidence'. The 'History' section shows a single event: 'Open case' on '13 Dec 2018, 10:39:29 AM' by 'Siva@hillingdon.gov.uk (LOCAL-AUTHORITY)'. The 'Details' section provides case metadata: Date (13 Dec 2018, 10:39:29 AM), Author (Siva@hillingdon.gov.uk (LOCAL-AUTHORITY)), End state (Open), Event (Open case), Summary (not visible), and Comment (not visible). A 'Next step' button is visible, with a dropdown menu open titled 'Selecting the orders needed for application'. The dropdown list includes: Orders and directions needed, Hearing needed, Children, Respondents, Applicant, Others to be given notice, Grounds for the application, Risk and harm to children, Factors affecting parenting, International element, Other proceedings, Attending the hearing, Allocation proposal, Documents, Change case name, and Submit application.

6 page export to PDF



The screenshot shows the 'C110A' application form. At the top, it says 'Application for a care or supervision order and other orders under Part 4 of the Children Act 1989 or an emergency protection order under section 44 of the Children Act 1989'. Below this, there are sections for 'For court use' and 'The family court sitting at'. The 'For court use' section includes fields for 'Case number' (jhk), 'Date issued', 'Fee charged', 'Applicant' (jhk), and 'Respondents' (no no). The 'The family court sitting at' section is empty. Below these, a section titled 'Application from jhk submitted on 11 December 2019' is shown. It contains sections for 'Orders', 'Hearing needed', 'Allocation proposal', and 'Attending the hearing'. The 'Orders' section includes fields for 'Orders needed' (Care order) and 'Direction needed' (No). The 'Hearing needed' section includes fields for 'Hearing date requested' (Within 7 days), 'Hearing type' (not specified), 'Without notice' (Yes), 'Reduced notice' (No), 'Respondents aware of proceedings' (not specified), and 'Respondents' view on proceedings (not specified). The 'Allocation proposal' section includes fields for 'Proposal by applicant' (not specified) and 'Reason' (not specified). The 'Attending the hearing' section includes fields for 'Interpreter' (not specified) and 'Spoken or written Welsh' (not specified).

Easier to complete online

Task list – digital application form

Local authority vs respondents last name

CCD ID: #1545-3874-6217-4575

Next step Select action

Start application View application History

Add application details

Orders and directions sought **MANDATORY INFORMATION ADDED**

Hearing urgency

Add grounds for the application

Threshold criteria

Risk and harm to children

Factors affecting parenting

Add supporting documents

For example, the social work chronology and care plan

Upload documents

Add information about the parties

Your organisation's details **MANDATORY INFORMATION ADDED**

The child's details **MANDATORY INFORMATION ADDED**

Respondents' details **MANDATORY INFORMATION ADDED**

Add court requirements

Allocation proposal

Add additional information

Only complete if relevant

Other proceedings for the child

International element

Other people in the case

Facilities or services needed in court

Submit application

Submit application **CANNOT START YET**

On the new task list page, if a user has completed all the mandatory questions in a section then the "Mandatory information added" label/tag will show on the task list page next to the relevant section so the user knows which section has been completed.

When you have completed all the necessary fields the submit application will become active

- Following engagement, user research and testing with local authorities already using the service we made further enhancements to the digital application
- This allows for better visibility of the completeness of the application which also allows other legal representatives to collaborate more effectively
- The application can be viewed in a PDF format before being submitted to the court
- Payment is automatically taken by PBA

What is the feedback so far?

- “The training material itself is good.” (Judge)
- “The material provided was useful as to the mechanics of the system.” (HMCTS)
- “I received a notification to approve a CMO and was able to access the document, review and approve it within minutes.” (Judge)
- “Digital application is much quicker to complete” (Local authority Solicitor)
- “Received a notification that an order was approved and was able to download it and act on it straight away” (Legal representative)
- “Portal was easy to get around and downloading the documents was fine” (Local authority user)

What is the feedback so far?

A Judge whom was one of the first members of the judiciary to use the service says:

“Cardiff was a relatively early adopter of the new online public law system so I have now been using it for some time. A significant advantage is that the file is always available, no need to wait for staff to bring it to you and you can access it from wherever you are. This has been of great assistance during the national and more recent local lockdowns.

I was originally concerned that having a centralised system with staff not being easily accessible might lead to delays but that has not happened. The Courts and Tribunal Service Centre at Stoke appears to be well staffed and progress is swiftly made once for example, orders are approved. Like any new system there have been some “glitches”, but the development team are accessible and quick to take up any issues raised.

The early adopters had to approach using the system with very little training, which caused some headaches in the initial phase, but the training now available should mean those new to the system quickly adapt to using it.”

Family Public Law: National Roll out (NRO)

Weekly Progress Update – 28th October 2020

NRO Progress

Month	Mar 2020	September 2020					October 2020					November 2020					December 2020				
W/C Date	W/c 30/3	W/c 7/9	W/c 14/9	W/c 21/9	W/c 28/9		W/c 5/10	W/c 12/10	W/c 19/10	W/c 26/10		W/c 2/11	W/c 9/11	W/c 16/11	W/c 23/11	W/c 30/11	W/c 7/12	W/c 14/12	W/c 21/12	W/c 28/12	
Tranche of Courts	N/a	1	2	3	PAUSE		4	5	6	PAUSE		7	8	9	10	11	12	PAUSE	N/a	N/a	
Status	14 COURTS LIVE																				

NRO Progress in Detail

Sites Already Live in Stoke CTSC (Last 2 Tranches)				Courts Live This week – w/c 19/10/20			Courts due to Go Live – w/c 2/11/20		
Date Live	Tranche	Courts	Local Authorities (LAs) Onboarded	Courts	Local Authorities (LAs) Onboarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lincoln Brighton Lancashire 			
5/10/20	4	Milton Keynes	2	West London Family Court	1				
12/10/20	5	Watford & Teesside	3	Taunton	1				

Deferred Go-live Decisions (Last 2 Tranches)

Original Go-live date	Court	Reason	Resolution	New Go-live date
12/10/20	Liverpool (Remaining LAs)	Due to the increasing COVID-19 infection rate in the North West, and the detrimental impact on the court offices, amongst staff and judges.	Further engagement sessions with judges and key managers taking place with a view to agreeing a new go-live date.	TBC

Digital Applications received at CTSC

199

Ramp Up Plan into Stoke CTSC – From a Care Centre & Local Authority Perspective v5.10

Last Upd
27.10.20

- This is the approved revised FPL NRO and Ramp Up Plan into the CTSC reviewed on court-by-court basis, subject to Covid-19 pandemic outcomes and further validation.
- Latest changes are in red font. The courts highlighted in yellow are likely to move – dates to be confirmed.

	Oct-20				Nov-20					Dec-20				Jan-21			
	w/c 5/10	w/c 12/10	w/c 19/10	w/c 26/10	w/c 2/11	w/c 9/11	w/c 16/11	w/c 23/11	w/c 30/11	w/c 7/12	w/c 14/12	w/c 21/12	w/c 28/12	w/c 4/1	w/c 11/1	w/c 18/1	w/c 25/1
	Tranche 4	Tranche 5	Tranche 6		Tranche 7	Tranche 8	Tranche 9	Tranche 10	Tranche 11	Tranche 12					Tranche 13	Tranche 14	Tranche 15
Midlands					Lincoln (1 LA)	Derby (2 LAs) Nottingham (2 LAs)	Coventry (4 LAs) W'chester (2 LAs)	B'ham (2 LAs)	N'ampton (1 LA) & Stoke (2 LAs)	Telford, Walsall & Wolverhampton (6 LAs)							
South West			Taunton (1 LA) LIVE			Truro (Cornwall) (1 LA) Moving Date TBC		Bournemouth & Dorset (3 LAs)		Bristol (5 LAs)						Devon / Plymouth (3 LAs)	
London			West London Family Court (11 LAs) LIVE	HALF TERM				East London Family Court (10 LAs)						CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR PERIOD	Central Family Court (11 LAs) Date TBC		
South East	Milton Keynes (2 LAs) LIVE	Watford (1 LA) LIVE			Brighton (3 LAs)	Guildford (1 LA)	Medway (2 LAs)		P'borough (3 LAs) & Luton (3 LAs)	Chelmsford (3 LAs) & Norwich (1LA)							
North East		Teesside (6 LAs) LIVE			York (2 LAs) Moving Date TBC		Leeds (5 LAs)		Sheffield (4 LAs) Moving Date TBC	Kingston Upon Hull (4 LAs)							
North West					Lancashire (3 LAs)	Liverpool (Remaining 8 LAs) Moving Date TBC	Manchester (10 LAs)			Carlisle (Cumbria) (1 LA)							
Wales							Swansea (Remaining 6 LAs) Moving Date TBC			Wrexham (6 LAs)							

- It is anticipated that 'assign a case' (share a case) phase 1 will be delivered by the beginning of November and Two-factor authentication by mid-November.

KEY:

LA = Local Authority

Next steps

Using the service

To register with MyHMCTS, users must have a Pay by Account (PBA) account.

This allows you to use the HMCTS Fee Account system to pay for online applications.

To use the service, you will need to register an account on MyHMCTS. Once you have registered you will be able to manage your account, register new users and manage their permissions.

Accessing the service

Further information on registering for the service and a link to access it if you have already registered is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

To create a PBA account and to register your organisation on MyHMCTS please follow the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/myhmcts-online-case-management-for-legal-professionals>

Courts and Tribunals Service Centre (CTSC) Stoke

- CTSC support for digital public law applications began on 3 March 2020. Support for some administrative tasks involved in the case management process.
- Local courts will continue to support the offline process.
- As use of digital service increases, we anticipate volume of legacy (offline) applications to decrease.
- Changes to ancillary processes, such as scheduling and listing, between the project's end in August 2020 and the planned fully reformed end state in 2022.

What's next?

- Hearing & Adjournments: The ability for hearings to be vacated and re-scheduled and adjournment reasons to be captured
- Continued service improvements: These will be based on user feedback as we progress national rollout
- New applications to be initiated: Improved process for submitting other applications such as discharge of care and other applications in regards to public law
- Case Sharing / Case Access: local authorities will have the ability to outsource work to legal professional firms.
- Notice of Acting / Change: Legal professionals will be able to add themselves to a case by submitting a digital request.
- Welsh Language: FPL service to be translated into Welsh

Feedback

The service is still in development and we want to ensure it meets the needs of users therefore we're take a collaborative approach when designing and releasing features.

We also want to make sure the service is accessible and easy to use.

If you are a **Legal Professional** and begin using the service we want to hear about your experiences and listen to improvement suggestions you may have to continue to make any necessary enhancements.

Please provide all feedback and suggestions to us here:

publiclawandadoption@justice.gov.uk

Questions?

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