

# Applications for care and supervision orders for children move online

Every local authority across England and Wales is now using the Family Public Law service online to apply for a court order to safeguard the welfare of children.

Launched in 2020 as part of our reform programme, using the online service, MyHMCTS, allows local authorities, courts and legal representatives to access the court information they need at any time and from any location. It makes court proceedings relating to children quicker and more efficient, giving families greater certainty.

Adam Lennon, Deputy Director, Family commented:

COVID-19 has shown the importance of MyHMCTS in providing a modern, flexible service that meets the needs of busy local authority teams. We have already processed almost 6,000 applications through the new system and we know that instant access to documents means cases can progress quicker, leading to more timely decisions for children.

We're really pleased with the way the service has been adopted. We've worked closely with local authorities across England to understand the way they work and listened to their challenges. We used that information to plan a phased approach to introducing the service across the country at a pace that meets their needs.

## **Benefits of using the service**

The service was developed in partnership with local authority legal teams. It provides the flexibility they need to progress cases and allows them to document every stage, improving transparency.

Legal professionals can upload documentation directly to the court file. This means all parties can view reports and court bundles, which contain all the information relevant to the application, and collaborate on draft orders at the hearing to begin the process of deciding the future of the child. Orders can be approved faster as a result, giving more time for parties to comply with directions and providing families with greater certainty.

Existing court proceedings relating to children are also more efficient. Judges receive automatic notifications when applications are received so they can begin assessing information sooner.

## **The future of the service**

As we continue to improve the service, this year local authorities will be

able to make placement applications to request a child be placed with a named person. We'll give local authorities the option to select the court they want to issue applications to, so that they can choose the most appropriate court for their circumstance.

Later this year, local authorities will be able to issue standalone applications for secure accommodation for young people, applications for child assessment and applications to withhold contact with a child in care.

Solicitors will be able to issue standalone applications for discharge of care and applications for supervision or contact with a child in care. This will mean that they can apply in the same way as care proceedings and will not need to make paper applications at the local court.

For more information, you can contact [publiclawandadoption@justice.gov.uk](mailto:publiclawandadoption@justice.gov.uk).