

New ways for people to access guidance and support

- Live webchat in addition to telephone support
- Available for probate and social security and child support queries
- Will be extended for all service centre inquiries

The pop-up window, which connects any user with a specialist team in one of our service centres, can be accessed from the contact us section of the probate and social service and child support (SSCS) service pages on GOV.UK. It enables both parties to message each other in real time, and means the user doesn't need to leave the screen they're working on to ask questions and get a response while they are using online probate or SSCS services.

By linking the user directly to a dedicated team, we will be able to provide better guidance and support more quickly. A transcript of the chat will be kept on record, alongside details of the applicant or claimant's case, to help answer any future enquiries. Users can also download a copy of their transcript or receive it by email.

People using paper forms can also use webchat if they choose to. All they need to do is visit the GOV.UK service page.

Our webchat was launched in July 2019, and has already been used by over 250 people, helping to resolve queries about a range of probate and SSCS queries. It will gradually be extended to support the full range of service centre inquiries including divorce, civil money claims and single justice procedure which is used for less serious offences.

Jeannine North, Service Centre services manager said:

It's all about offering people a choice. Everyone is different and we want to be able to offer a range of options so that people can choose to contact us in the way that best suits their needs.

Webchat has been introduced alongside: digital reforms which are creating online versions of some services (such as applying for probate and divorce); and our service centres which are centralising our administrative and support functions, bringing trained expertise together under one roof and using technology to support court users queries more effectively.