

PRACTICE DIRECTION UPDATE No. 3 of 2026

The amendments to existing Practice Directions supplementing the Family Procedure Rules 2010 are made by the President of the Family Division under the powers delegated to him by the Lady Chief Justice under Schedule 2, Part 1, paragraph 2(2) of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, and are approved by Baroness Levitt KC, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice.

The provisions in this Practice Direction Update come into force as follows:

Provision	Coming into force date
Practice Direction 2C	The day after the date on which this Practice Direction Update is signed by the Minister
Practice Direction 11A	26 October 2026
Practice Directions 12A, 12B, 12J and the amendment to paragraph 14.2(e) of, and the insertion of new paragraph 24B,1 of, PD12B (Pilot) annexed to PD36Z	The day after the date on which this Practice Direction Update is signed by the Minister
Practice Direction 12B (Pilot) annexed to PD36Z (other than those referred to in the preceding row of this table)	The day after the date on which this Practice Direction Update is signed by the Minister
Practice Directions 25B and 25C	20 July 2026
Practice Direction 36ZI	The day after the date on which this Practice Direction Update is signed by the Minister

Signed:

_____ Date: 17 June 2026 _____

Sir Stephen Cobb, The President of the Family Division

Signed:

_____ Date: _____ 25 June 2026 _____

Baroness Levitt KC, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice

PRACTICE DIRECTION 2C- JUSTICES' LEGAL ADVISER

(1) In the table at paragraph 2(b) for the row for the entry for “the 1989 Act, section 32(4)” substitute-

“the 1989 Act, section 32(4)	Except that the carrying out of such function must not have the direct or indirect effect of extending the timetable for the proceedings with the effect that the disposal of the application would occur later than- (a) the end of twenty-six weeks beginning with the day on which the application was issued, or (b) such other period as may have been directed for the disposal of the application under section 32(5) of the 1989 Act. (See also below as regards the exercise of the court’s powers to make orders under section 32(5) of the 1989 Act.)
the 1989 Act, section 32(5)	Only where- (a) the court previously made an order under section 32(5) of the 1989 Act extending the timetable for the proceedings; (b) when making that previous order, the court expressly recorded that the court anticipated- (i) that there would be a future need for a further extension to the timetable beyond the period stated in the order, to enable compliance with a provision in that previous order (for example in relation to the filing of evidence in accordance with the timing set in that previous order); and (ii) that the need for such a further extension would be considered by a Justices’ Legal Adviser; and (c) none of the parties has notified the court of any material change in circumstances since the date of the previously made order.”

PRACTICE DIRECTION 11A – NOTIFICATION OF CERTAIN PROTECTION ORDERS TO THE POLICE

- (1) In paragraph 1.1 for “Protectionorders@pds.police.uk.cjism.net” substitute “acroprotectionorders@acro.police.uk”.
- (2) For paragraph 1.2 substitute-

“1.2 Where an order is made varying, extending or discharging a protection order, notification must be given to the police by the court officer emailing notification, together with a copy of the protection order and a copy of any order varying, extending or discharging the protection order -

 - (a) to the local police force for the address of the person who is the subject of the protection order ; and
 - (b) if the court so directs, to the local police force for the address of the respondent.”.
- (3) For paragraph 2.2 substitute-

“2.2 A notification showing that the person has been served with, or has been informed of the terms of, the order must be sent by email-

 - (a) to the local police force for the address of the person who is the subject of the protection order ; and
 - (b) if the court so directs, to the local police force for the address of the respondent.”.
- (4) In paragraph 2.4-
 - (a) before sub-paragraph (a) insert-

“(za) the court must provide to the applicant details of the email address to which a notification referred to in paragraph 2.2 must be sent;”; and
 - (b) in sub-paragraph (b) for “being” substitute “been”.

PRACTICE DIRECTION 12A – CARE, SUPERVISION AND OTHER PART 4 PROCEEDINGS: GUIDE TO CASE MANAGEMENT

- (1) In the Public Law Outline, Stage 1, section headed “Day one and Day 2”, at the end of the existing bullet point which reads “Sending a request for disclosure to, e.g. the Police or health service body” insert-

“(reference should be made to the current version of the Protocol on disclosure of information between family and criminal agencies and jurisdictions)”.
- (2) In the Public Law Outline, Stage 2, column 2 (Case Management Hearing), before the final bullet point, insert-

“If necessary, giving directions or making orders in relation to disclosure by the police: see the current version of the Protocol on disclosure of information between family and criminal agencies and jurisdictions”.

PRACTICE DIRECTION 12B – CHILD ARRANGEMENTS PROGRAMME

- (1) After paragraph 13A.5 insert-

“Disclosure of information by the police

13B.1 Where the court is considering issues relating to disclosure of information by the police (whether on application or of its own motion), reference should be made to the current version of the Protocol on disclosure of information between family and criminal agencies and jurisdictions.”.

PRACTICE DIRECTION 12J – CHILD ARRANGEMENTS AND CONTACT ORDERS: DOMESTIC ABUSE AND HARM

- (1) In paragraph 19(f) after “obtained” insert-

“(as regards disclosure of information by the police, reference should be made to the current version of the Protocol on disclosure of information between family and criminal agencies and jurisdictions)”.

PRACTICE DIRECTION 25B – THE DUTIES OF AN EXPERT, THE EXPERT’S REPORT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN EXPERT TO ATTEND COURT

- (1) At the end of paragraph 5.1 insert-

“In children proceedings, except proceedings under Schedule 1 to the 1989 Act, the court may only give permission to instruct a regulated expert. This is subject to the exceptions found in FPR 25.5A(2) to (4).”.

- (2) At the end of paragraph 6.2 insert-

“In children proceedings, if applicable, the expert will also be asked to confirm and provide evidence that they are a regulated expert.”.

- (3) In paragraph 8.1-

(a) in sub-paragraph (f), for “court.” Substitute “court;” and

(b) after sub-paragraph (f) insert-

“(g) (if applicable) that the expert is a regulated expert, accompanied by evidence to that effect.”.

- (4) In paragraph 9.1(a) for “and experience” substitute “, experience and (if applicable) confirmation that they are a regulated expert”.

PRACTICE DIRECTION 25C – CHILDREN PROCEEDINGS – THE USE OF SINGLE JOINT EXPERTS AND THE PROCESS LEADING TO AN EXPERT BEING INSTRUCTED OR EXPERT EVIDENCE BEING PUT BEFORE THE COURT

- (1) In paragraph 3.1 for “and FPR 25.5” substitute “, FPR 25.5 and FPR 25.5A”.
- (2) At the end of paragraph 3.5 insert-
“If applicable, the party or parties must also obtain confirmation and evidence of whether the expert is a regulated expert.”.
- (3) In paragraph 3.10 after sub-paragraph (a) insert-
“(aa) whether the expert is a regulated expert;
(ab) where an applicant asserts that FPR 25.5A(3) applies, why no person who falls within FPR 25.5A(2) is available to give expert evidence;”.

PRACTICE DIRECTION 36Z – PILOT SCHEME: PRIVATE LAW REFORM: INVESTIGATIVE APPROACH: AMENDMENTS TO THE ANNEXED PRACTICE DIRECTION 12B (PILOT) – PRIVATE LAW REFORM: INVESTIGATIVE APPROACH

In Practice Direction 12B (Pilot) annexed to Practice Direction 36Z-

- (1) In paragraph 7.1 omit the second sentence.
- (2) In paragraph 8.8 for “one working day after issue, or in courts where applications are first considered on paper ideally by no later than two” substitute “three”.
- (3) In paragraph 8.10 for “As soon as possible after completing initial gatekeeping (see section 9 below)” substitute “Where the applicant is a litigant in person, within 5 to 10 working days of the date on which the court sends or hands the documents referred to in paragraph 8.8 to the applicant”.
- (4) For paragraph 8.10A substitute-
“8.10A Where the respondent is a litigant in person, the telephone contact referred to above should also be attempted with the respondent. This should be attempted within 5 to 10 working days of the date on which the court sent the acknowledgement form C7 to the respondent (see paragraph 8.9). In the event that the applicant is to serve the documents referred to in paragraph 8.9 on the respondent, the court staff should attempt telephone contact with a respondent who is a litigant in person, but only after the applicant has filed a certificate of service confirming service of the documents on the respondent.”.
- (5) For paragraph 8.11 substitute-

“8.11 On the same date on which the court sends documents to the applicant in accordance with paragraph 8.8, the court shall send to the Social Work agency leading on the preparation of the Child Impact Report (see paragraph 13.2A below) copies of-

(a) the Form C100 (and the form C1A, if supplied) or the Form C79, as applicable; and

(b) any Form C8 or other document stating that contact details are to be kept confidential.

These will be sent in electronic format where possible.”.

(6) For paragraph 8.13 substitute-

“8.13 When the Acknowledgement Form C7 and any Form C1A is filed by the respondent(s), the court shall send a copy of each form to the Social Work Agency leading on the preparation of the Child Impact Report, in electronic format where possible, and shall send copies to the applicant.”.

(7) In paragraph 9.2 after “shall be able to” insert “do any or all of the following”.

(8) After paragraph 9.2 insert-

“9.2A If the Gatekeeper or judge gives-

(a) directions for an accelerated hearing or urgent hearing (see paragraph 9.2(c)); and

(b) Directions on Issue (see paragraph 9.2(a)) for the preparation of a Child Impact Report to begin,

the court shall not require a Child Impact Report to be prepared in time for the accelerated or urgent hearing.”.

(9) In paragraph 10.5-

(a) in sub-paragraph (a) after “(below)” insert “, taking into account any prior such decisions made (see paragraphs 9.2 and 9.2A above)”; and

(b) in sub-paragraph (b) after “decisions” insert “, taking into account any prior such decisions made (see paragraphs 9.2 and 9.2A above)”.

(10) In paragraph 10.6 for “Cafcass/ Cafcass Cymru” substitute “the relevant Social Work Agency”.

(11) After paragraph 13.2 insert-

“13.2A In particular, the court will determine which Social Work Agency should lead on the preparation of the Child Impact Report. This will usually be Cafcass, if the child in the case is ordinarily resident in England, or Cafcass Cymru, if the child is ordinarily resident in Wales. However, the court may

direct a named local authority to be the Social Work Agency to lead on the preparation of the Child Impact Report where-

- (a) the child is the subject of an open and active statutory social work case with that local authority; or
- (b) in the 12 weeks prior to the application being made to court-
 - (i) there has been a statutory social work assessment of the child's welfare in accordance with section 17 or 47 of the Children Act 1989 Act; or
 - (ii) the child has been the subject of a child in need or child protection plan.

13.2B The court may change its determination as to which Social Work Agency should lead on the preparation of the Child Impact Report, for example upon receipt of information collected during the course of the preparation of the Child Impact Report.

13.2C Alternatively, one Social Work Agency may agree with another that there should be a change in which Social Work Agency should lead on the preparation of the Child Impact Report, for example if it is established during the preparation of the Child Impact Report that a particular local authority has been engaged with the child in the ways set out at paragraph 13.2A.

13.2D If two Social Work Agencies agree that there should be a change in which Social Work Agency should lead on the preparation of the Child Impact Report, this decision must be communicated to the court and to the parties by the Social Work Agency first appointed to lead on the preparation of the Child Impact Report.”.

(12) For paragraph 13.3 substitute-

“13.3 The Social Work Agency leading on the preparation of the Child Impact Report will undertake safeguarding checks (see paragraph 13.8 below) and other work for the Information Gathering and Assessment stage.”.

(13) At the end of paragraph 13.5 insert-

“(Paragraphs 14.3A and 14.4 make provision in relation to the service of the Child Impact Report on the parties.)”.

(14) In paragraph 13.8-

- (a) for “In order” substitute “As noted at paragraph 13.3, in order”; and
- (b) for “Cafcass/ Cafcass Cymru” substitute “the Social Work Agency”.

(14) In paragraph 13.9-

- (a) for “the Cafcass officer or the Welsh Family Proceedings Officer” the first time those words appear substitute “the Social Work Agency leading on the preparation of the Child Impact Report”;
- (b) for “Cafcass/ Cafcass Cymru” substitute “that Social Work Agency”; and
- (c) for “the Cafcass officer or the Welsh Family Proceedings Officer” the second time those words appear substitute “the Social Work Agency”.
- (15) In paragraph 13.10 for “Cafcass/ Cafcass Cymru or the local authority” substitute “the officer of the Social Work Agency leading on the preparation of the Child Impact Report”.
- (16) For paragraph 13.11 substitute-
- “13.11 In determining whether to order the preparation of specific reports to form part of the Child Impact Report, the court should be conscious of the fact that a Child Impact Report is a report under section 7 of the Children Act 1989, such that there should not be a need to direct the preparation of a separate report under that section 7.”.
- (17) In paragraph 13.13-
- (a) for “the relevant” substitute “a relevant”;
- (b) for “Cafcass/ Cafcass Cymru has provided” substitute “that organisation has already provided to the Social Work Agency leading on the preparation of the Child Impact Report”; and
- (c) for “nature of the local authority’s” substitute “nature of that organisation’s”.
- (18) In paragraph 13.15-
- (a) for “A copy” substitute “Depending on which Social Work Agency is leading on the preparation of the Child Impact Report, a copy”;
- (b) after “to be sent” insert “by the court”; and
- (c) for the words after “Services” substitute “. The same documents are also to be sent by the court to, where known, any allocated social worker.”.
- (19) In paragraph 14.1 for the words after “President” substitute “on Allocation and Gatekeeping in respect of Proceedings relating to Children in the Family Court”.
- (20) At the end of paragraph 14.2(e) insert-
- “(In relation to the police, reference should be made to the current version of the Protocol on disclosure of information between family and criminal agencies and jurisdictions.)”.
- (21) After paragraph 14.3 insert-

“14.3A Service of the Child Impact Report on the parties. When filing the Child Impact Report (see paragraph 13.5), the Social Work Agency leading on the preparation of the Child Impact Report must serve a copy of that Report on the other parties, unless that Social Work Agency has concerns that it may not be appropriate to do so. If the Social Work Agency has such concerns, it must request that the court considers the question of disclosure of the Child Impact Report to the parties.”.

(22) In paragraph 14.4 after **“Report.”** insert “If a Social Work Agency makes a request referred to in paragraph 14.3A, the court must determine whether the Child Impact Report, or part of it, should be disclosed to the parties.”.

(23) In paragraph 17.1(d)(ii)(bb) for “Cafcass/ Cafcass Cymru” substitute “the Social Work Agency that prepared the Child Impact Report in relation to the Child Arrangements Order”.

(24) In paragraph 19.4 for “Cafcass/ Cafcass Cymru (or, where appropriate, the local authority)” substitute “the Social Work Agency leading on that preparation”.

(25) In paragraph 22.3 for “legal adviser” substitute “Justices’ Legal Adviser”.

(26) In paragraph 23.3 for the first sentence substitute “The officer of the Social Work Agency leading on the preparation of the Child Impact Report should not attend any hearing, unless directed to do so by the court. In making any such direction, the court should specify the purpose for which that officer’s attendance is required.”.

(27) In paragraph 24.2 for the third sentence (beginning “A written notification”) substitute-

“A written notification of this work is to be provided by the Social Work Agency leading on the preparation of the Child Impact Report, in the form of an updated Child Impact Report. Where Cafcass or Cafcass Cymru is leading on the preparation of the Child Impact Report, that Report may include, if deemed relevant by Cafcass/Cafcass Cymru, a section 16A Children Act 1989 risk assessment prepared by Cafcass/ Cafcass Cymru.”.

(28) After paragraph 24A.5 insert-

“Disclosure of information by the police

24B.1 Where the court is considering issues relating to disclosure of information by the police (whether on application or of its own motion), reference should be made to the current version of the Protocol on disclosure of information between family and criminal agencies and jurisdictions.”.

(29) In the table in Annex 1-

(a) in the row for “Gatekeeper” in the second column after “nominated” insert “Justices”;

(b) omit the row for “Section 7 report”; and

(c) after the row for “Serve” insert-

“Social Work Agency”	This is Cafcass, Cafcass Cymru or a named local authority.”.
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**PRACTICE DIRECTION 36ZI – PILOT SCHEME: NOTIFICATION TO THE POLICE
WHEN CERTAIN ORDERS ARE MADE UNDER PART 4 OF THE FAMILY LAW
ACT 1996**

- (1) In paragraph 1.2 for “2026” substitute “2027”.
 - (2) In paragraph 4.2, in the inserted rule 10.6A, for paragraph (2)(d) substitute-
“(d) the date of birth of the Applicant and, where known, of the Respondent;”.
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