



HM Courts &  
Tribunals Service

# Family Public Law Reform

Local Authority and Legal Professionals briefing pack  
V1.0 26.02.2020



# Briefing Pack for Local Authorities and Legal Professionals

The Family Public Law (FPL) project is preparing to commence its National Roll Out from 30th March 2020, the following pack provides a briefing for Local Authorities and Legal Professionals. This contains background on the FPL project and what actions are required to set up access to the new service.

Should you or your team have further questions or feedback, please contact us via our project inbox – [publiclawandadoption@justice.gov.uk](mailto:publiclawandadoption@justice.gov.uk)

# The new digital service

The Family Public Law Project tested the first phase of the new digital service (application through to gatekeeping) with four family court sites and the associated local authorities from January 2019. Towards the end of last year the project extended to a further six family court sites and also released additional functionality. This pilot phase has meant the project has been able to test and improve the system based on feedback from people using it and make sure it is ready to roll out to a wider audience.

From 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 the project entered the 'Public Beta' phase which means the service will be rolled-out nationally, still in a testing environment and all local authorities and public law legal professionals within England and Wales will be able to use the end to end service.

# What is changing?

The digital service allows local authorities to complete and submit a C110a application for care and supervision orders along with the supporting documents required by the family court to issue and progress the case online. Case bundles can be uploaded, annotated and presented in court and Standard Directions, Case Management and Final Orders can all be created within the service from a digital template to increase consistency at a national level. All Legal Professionals involved in public law cases will be able to access orders and confirm the status of individual tasks prior to a hearing, via the task compliance functionality, allowing early sight of parties' readiness for a hearing.

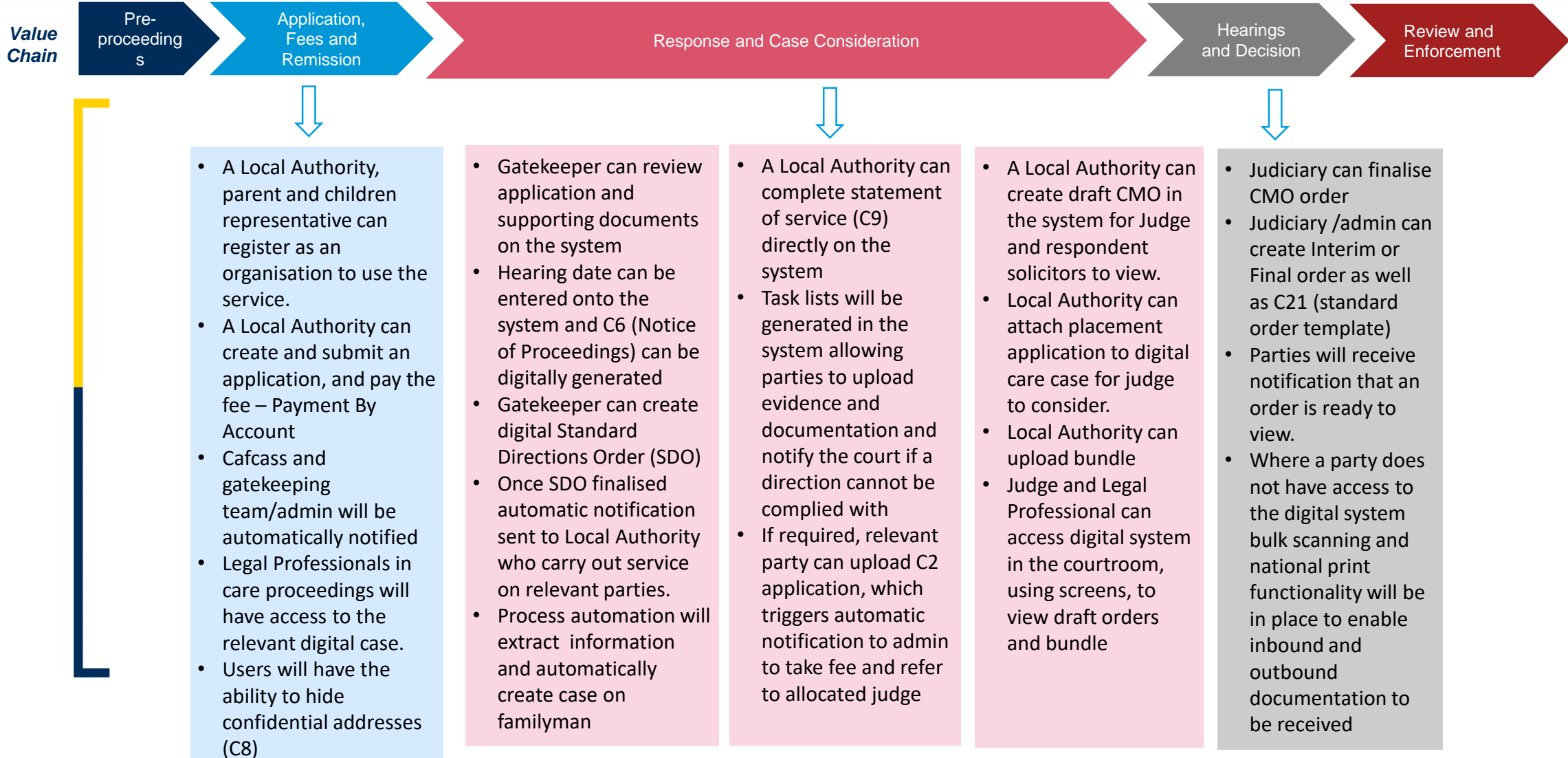
A video of the full walkthrough up to complying with SDO directions can be accessed here:  
<https://youtu.be/Axg1zF7sxPw>

# What is changing?

From 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020, in line with the rollout of the digital service, public law will transition into the Court & Tribunal Service Centre (CTSC) in Stoke. This means, support for some of the more administrative tasks involved in the case management of a digital public law case will move to a central function.

Local Courts will continue to undertake some of the tasks, for example listing, dealing with special measures and the gatekeeping role will remain in the Local Courts. They will also continue to support the legacy / offline process as they currently do now, and we will provide you with details on how to contact CTSCs and the level of support they will provide in due course.

# Features of the new family public law service



# Further development of the service

As mentioned earlier public beta is still a pilot of the new digital service with live cases and your feedback shapes how the service looks and feels. The approach of the reform programme is that we will work in an 'Agile' manner. This means:

- getting end users involved from the start and throughout a project
- evolving solutions through regular feedback and user insight
- finding a basic solution, which is then tested and enhanced over time.

The end to end service we have developed is a minimum viable product (MVP). This is a version of a new product which allows us to collect the maximum amount of validated learning before we progress the product too far causing re-work. This means the product we have now may be quite different from the final product. It will be different because we will work with you to improve and enhance the service available based on the feedback you provide.

# Section 1

## Further development of the service

Additional digital features we will be working on in the future:

- Notice of acting/change of representation.
- Work allocation –e.g. automatic referrals to legal advisers and judiciary.
- Additional features to ‘manage hearings’ capturing availability/ participants.
- Ability to transfer a case.
- Introduce further digital order templates.
- In-court presentation.



# Roll-out plan

In consultation with Senior Operational Colleagues in HMCTS and Senior Judiciary a roll-out plan has been agreed, which is a phased roll-out, and will be implemented by Designated Family Judge (DFJ) area.

It is recognised that this roll-out plan cannot be rigid and will need to be reviewed as it is dependent on the professional users take up and interactions with the new service.

The roll out plan outlines the next sequence of courts and associated public law legal professionals going live with the new service. As mentioned above the plan will need to be flexible and we may find that onboarding may move for some sites, but will we keep you updated on any changes. The scheduled commencement of the roll out will take place from 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

# National Roll out sequence – by DFJ Area v2.0\*

	Mar-20	Apr-20				May-20				Jun-20				
	w/c 30/3	w/c 6/4	w/c 13/4	w/c 20/4	w/c 27/4	w/c 4/5	w/c 11/5	w/c 18/5	w/c 25/5	w/c 1/6	w/c 8/6	w/c 15/6	w/c 22/6	w/c 29/6
Midlands	Leicester			Lincoln	N'hampton		Nottingham	Derby	Coventry	B'ham	Wolvs / Telford			
											W'cester			
South West	Portsmouth & Swindon (remaining)				Devon			Taunton	Truro (Cornwall)	Bournemouth & Dorset	Bristol			
London				West London Family Court (remaining)			Central Family Court			East London Family Court				
South East	Essex & Suffolk			Norwich	P'Borough		Watford	Luton	Brighton	Guildford	Medway	Milton Keynes		
North East	Northumbria & North Durham				Cleveland & South Durham			North Yorkshire		West Yorkshire		South Yorkshire		
North West				Liverpool (remaining)				Blackburn / Lancashire	Carlisle		Greater Manchester			
Wales	Swansea (remaining)						South East Wales (remaining)			North Wales				

\* This includes all family courts within the respective DFJ area

# Training/Guidance

- Training/guidance packs have been created for our professional users. These are separate attachments.
- We will hold regular weekly Webex events for staff, judiciary and legal professionals as virtual drop in sessions.

# Keeping you informed

- As we roll-out the service and test with a wider audience we will gather and act on the feedback we receive. The project team and the regional implementation leads will continue to keep you updated on any changes to the roll-out schedule and enhancements to the service based on your feedback.
- The Family Public Law project is part of the wider HMCTS Reform programme and there will be further 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.
- We will continue to work with these other Reform projects to ensure any changes which may impact you are documented and shared with you before the Family Public Law project's conclusion
- For more information on HMCTS Reform visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-reform-programme-projects-explained>

# What will you need to do?

**Security Requirements** - Due to the sensitive nature of the Public Law cases we request that you sign up to the systems' security measures and before doing so you review the Non-Functional Requirements document and satisfy yourselves that you are comfortable with the requirements from HMCTS as the data controller of the information provided in the digital service. Please provide these to your respective ICT teams for review and approval to ensure the necessary assurances are provided to allow us to onboard you and use our service.

For local authorities, you will need to nominate a person from your organisation to set up your local authority as an organisation with HMCTS. Once set up that person will be able to invite other people from your own organisation to have access to the digital service. Please click on the following link to do so: <https://manage-org.platform.hmcts.net/accessibility>

For legal professional users, you will need to set up your organisation's details on the link below, once you are invited to a case by HMCTS you will gain access to the relevant case you are a party to: <https://manage-org.platform.hmcts.net/accessibility>

**NB:** Once your access account has been set up, you will receive an email with a link to complete your login access details. Please click on this link to complete set up for your access to the digital service. Note: **This link is only live for 1 week and you must set up the account within that period.**

# continued...

## **What about Urgent Court Business Cases/Out of Hours EPOs?**

Out of hours cases will continue as they currently proceed.

Please note, for any urgent or same day hearing request we encourage Local Authorities to contact the court/listing team to put them on notice, as per current practices, to advise that an urgent digital application has been submitted and requires a same day hearing.

**Sign up to Fee Account for paying application fees** - In order for local authorities and other organisations to use the digital service, you will need to pay for application fees with a fee account which is known as Pay By Account (PBA). By registering for our PBA service, you will receive weekly invoices following automatic payment taken by Direct Debit.

It is a free service and available for local authorities, solicitors and other regular users to make payments relating to family cases.

For further information please follow the link below which also contains the service terms & conditions, frequently asked questions and the application form to set up an account.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/form-fee-account-application-form-fee-account-customer-application-form](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/form-fee-account-application-form-fee-account-customer-application-form)

# Contacts and support

To provide feedback on the service or for any general enquiries – [publiclawandadoption@justice.gov.uk](mailto:publiclawandadoption@justice.gov.uk)

To raise an IT service issue or technical error - [dcd-familypubliclaw servicedesk@hmcts.net](mailto:dcd-familypubliclaw servicedesk@hmcts.net)

**Please note - When raising a technical issue please provide details on the error you received, what you were doing at the time and also if possible a screenshot of the error message displayed and then send to the above email address.**