



JUDICIARY OF ENGLAND AND WALES

**Electronic Working in Care Proceedings – Standard Procedure
The Family Court Sitting at Manchester
Practice Note**

Object

We intend to eliminate the paper based systems for filing documents and providing electronic bundles for Magistrates hearings in all private and family law proceedings issued within the family courts in the Greater Manchester area. The new processes will be simpler, easier, and considerably less resource intensive for all parties, HMCTS, and the judiciary, including the family magistracy.

Starting date

Manchester DFC - Monday 18th July 2016

Bolton, Oldham, Stockport, and Wigan Family Hearing Centres - Monday 8th August 2016

E-filing An electronic file will be created for each case upon issue. There will be no “paper” file.

All family applications must be submitted to familyapplications.manchester@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk

After issue parties will file all documents and correspondence with the relevant court by sending them by email to

Manchester manchesterfamily@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk
Bolton boltonfamily@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk
Oldham oldhamfamily@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk
Stockport stockportfamily@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk
Wigan wiganfamily@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk

Attachments sent by email must be formatted as follows

YYYY.MM.DD [Case Number] [Child's surname] [Document]
e.g. 2015.11.06 MA15C00000 Smith Guardian's report

Provided that formula is used the document will lodge itself on the correct electronic file within minutes of sending. HMCTS staff will be responsible for ensuring that the electronic file is maintained in an organised fashion and that relevant correspondence is brought to the attention of the allocated judge, if s/he is available, within 48 hours. Hence documents and correspondence should not be sent or copied directly to the allocated judge.

If the correct formula is not used, the document will not be deemed to have been filed with the court.

The electronic file can be accessed by members of the judiciary and identified court staff via a number of mechanisms the simplest of which is a hyperlink from fdiary.

No paper copies of documents are necessary and indeed will not be accepted by the court unless exceptionally, a party is not legally represented does not have access to a computer and a court so directs.

E-bundling

By noon, at least 3 working days before any hearing before the magistrates bench

The instructing solicitor will

- (a) file the bundle for each hearing electronically in accordance with the instructions contained within the Court order, by emailing it to the relevant courts email account and will
- (b) email a copy to each for the parties

The court will not accept paper bundles for magistrates hearings.

Advocates will still be requested to file paper bundles for any hearings before a District Judge, Circuit Judge or High Court Judge.

Until a better arrangement can be devised, the advocate will bring to court a witness bundle in hard copy for any hearing when it appears that oral evidence may be necessary.

Where so directed by the court the advocate may also be required to provide a hard copy of the witness bundle to an unrepresented party

Wifi

Obviously, efficient wifi within the CJC would enable us to provide all litigants and advocates with the level of service they deserve. I continue to press for that facility and offer my apologies that, at this stage, I cannot promise when wifi will be installed.

The initial stages of implementation are likely to give rise to challenges for all of us. Do not hesitate to let me know if you have any suggestions for improvement.

This local Practice Note is issued by Her Honour Judge Newton, Designated Family Judge for Greater Manchester.