



# Judiciary of England and Wales

Royal Courts of Justice

30 September 2025

Dear Colleague,

## **Revised Public Law Practice Note for London**

I write in my capacity as Family Presiding Judge for London and enclose a revised edition of the London Practice Note. This replaces the first edition of the Practice Note issued in November 2024.

The revisions made to the Practice Note centre on reiterating the test of necessity for both the instruction of expert evidence and the attendance of experts for cross examination at any final hearing. A similar revision is made in respect of controlling the use of intermediaries. Minor changes have also been made with respect to the consequences of default of case management directions.

As you will be aware, the London Practice Note forms one part of the wider London Family Justice Strategy (LFJS). The key objectives of that strategy are to reduce delay in public law proceedings and to deal with the backlog of private law cases, with a view to preparing London for Pathfinder. To this end, the Practice Note for London is designed to maintain rigour in the case management of public law cases. In addition, a programme has been introduced to identify and seek to resolve long running private law cases that are, or can be made, ready for final hearing in short order. The Ministry of Justice has provided funding for additional sitting days for private law and additional courts are sitting at Wandsworth deal with those cases. A pilot project is examining the use of Cafcass case progression officers. The LFJS is coordinated and promoted through regular meetings involving myself, the Designated Family Judges, the Ministry of Justice, HMCTS, Cafcass and a representative of the London Directors of Children's Services.

Within the usual constraints of data gathering, progress is being monitored in respect of each of the objectives of the LFJS. The hard work that has been undertaken by all involved in the family justice system in London is starting to lead to signs of improvement, both with respect to the timeliness of public law proceedings and the size of the private law backlog of long running cases. I am *extremely* grateful to the judiciary, the magistracy, HMCTS, the London local authorities, Cafcass, the Bar and solicitors for the way in which each has engaged positively with the LFJS.

As I said in my letter accompanying the first edition of the London Practice Note, the family justice system is a human endeavour which, of course, cannot be reduced to the question of performance alone. However, the performance improvements that are starting to result from the LFJS, and the further improvements it is seeking to achieve, constitute a tangible benefit for children and families in London, representing as they do a reduction in the delay that is so damaging to them.

Once again, I am extremely grateful to all involved for your continued professionalism, dedication and hard work and thank you for it.

Yours Ever,

**Mr Justice MacDonald**

**Family Presiding Judge for London**