

## Response ID ANON-VPUF-TE11-V

Submitted to **Review of Part 1 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and creation of a family justice modernisation strategy**

Submitted on **2018-07-19 12:52:46**

### Obtaining the views of a child

#### **1 Should the presumption that a child aged 12 or over is of sufficient age and maturity to form a view be removed from sections 11(10) and 6(1)(b) of the 1995 Act and section 27 of the 2011 Act?**

Yes – remove the presumption and do not replace it with a different presumption.

##### **Why did you select your answer above? :**

Each child is different and can understand a situation and express a view at different ages.

However care must be taken to ascertain that the views given have not been coerced or manipulated by a parent or a Social Worker. Any child may try to please both parents and should not be made to choose between them. Early intervention and is crucial and back up checks with schools etc to get a full picture. e.g. drawings at school can tell a lot about a child's thoughts.

#### **2 How can we best ensure children's views are heard in court cases?**

Child welfare reporters, Speaking directly to the judge or sheriff, Child support workers, Another way (please specify)

##### **If another way, please specify. :**

Family consultant, psychologist

##### **Why did you select your answer above?:**

A form does not give the child the opportunity to explain their views.

2.27 It depends on the judge or sheriff as some are less intimidating than others - better training may help with this. If they don't update their training they shouldn't deal with family cases.

2.33 - Agree will all points re Child support workers in Section 11 cases

2.44 - Could a direct assistant collate information for the judge or sheriff before speaking to the child.

Better preparation would minimise the impact on the child and have a lesser impact on their mental health

If child support workers sought the child's views early it would result in fewer court appearances , therefore saving money and stress in the long term.

#### **3 How should the court's decision best be explained to a child?**

Another option (please specify)

##### **If other, please specify::**

Whoever sought their views as they will have built up a relationship with the child

##### **Why did you select your answer above?:**

Whoever has put forward the child's views would then have to justify their own recommendations in a way so it would reduce the chance of lies and manipulation. Parental feedback may not always be neutral so they should not explain any decision.

Too many people make decisions for children and don't have to deal with the consequences for the child

Writing to the child would only be appropriate if the child was of an age to understand fully and the sheriff was proficient in letter writing in a manner the child would understand.

#### **4 What are the best arrangement for child welfare reporters and curators ad litem:**

A new set of arrangements should be put in place that would manage and provide training for child welfare reporters. (option 1 described above above)

##### **If another option, please specify. :**

##### **Why did you select your answer above?:**

An overhaul is required and needs to be a minimum standard and consistent procedure throughout Scotland, then it can be tailored to suit the individual when necessary. If they don't meet the National standard they must be removed from the list.

Work and decisions must be monitored with training imperative, including regarding how their decisions actually impact the child.

Children 1st Family Group Conferencing is an excellent system.

2.71 states that the advantages of minimum standards would be in the best interests of the child - this is supposed to be how the system is working right now?

### Commission and diligence

**5 Should the law be changed to specify that confidential documents should only be disclosed when in the best interests of the child and after the views of the child have been taken into account?**

No

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

The 'best interest of the child' is an opinion and varies depending on the person or even the situation.

Anything confidential need not be discussed in open court, but the sheriff or judge should have access to all information so that an informed and balanced decision can be reached.

Too many wrongful convictions have come to light recently where information has been withheld and this is no different. Full facts must be available and disclosed or a wrong decision could be made.

**Contact**

**6 Should Child Contact Centres be regulated?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

There must be a minimum standard of accommodation, facilities and training. Charges should also be standardised. They should be welcoming for productive family contact.

With proper regulation centres shouldn't need to close, simply move to more appropriate premises. The child is the priority, and any cost implication will be an investment in the child's future.

Any checks should not be a paper exercise. It should be done similarly to a 'secret shopper' to ensure the place is suitable.

**7 What steps should be taken to help ensure children continue to have relationships with family members, other than their parents, who are important to them?**

**What steps should be taken to help ensure children continue to have relationships with family members, other than their parents, who are important to them?:**

If a child has had a relationship with an adult it is child abuse to prevent that ongoing contact without justifiable cause.

Better promotion of mediation, along with family education in relationships and conciliation for all concerned.

A change in culture is required where this wouldn't be considered.

Social Work need retraining to understand the impact on children when they are separated from all the people they love. Reports must be checked for honesty. They do make mistakes and reports are not always amended accordingly when challenged.

Solicitors' procedures must change to a less adversarial system when parents separate as this has a hugely detrimental effect on families and children in particular.

**8 Should there be a presumption in law that children benefit from contact with their grandparents?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

A child is a relative of their grandparent.

A child can make a claim of their grandparent's estate if their parent dies before their grandparent, but can't make a claim on the grandparent's love and time during their lifetime. There is definitely an anomaly in a child's rights in this respect. They can't claim on anyone else's estate.

Granting a child a legal presumption of contact would not mean grandparents would have, or want, rights over the child. PRRs are not required for a visit, outing, phone call etc. Safeguards are already in place to protect a child if contact would be unsafe. This also covers potential contact with an unsuitable parent.

France (EU) has contact rights for children and grandparents.

It is generally accepted that contact with grandparents is a benefit for a child, so if that right is not supported we are not acting in the child's best interest.

There is also a need for any child to know of any hereditary illness in the family to allow for prevention or even cure.

The current 'relevant person' criteria does not cover a grandparent who has had significant contact with a child to allow them to continue that relationship when disputes or authorities are involved.

**9 Should the 1995 Act be clarified to make it clear that siblings, including those aged under 16, can apply for contact without being granted PRRs?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

PRR's are for Parents - the clue is in the word 'Parental'. Contact is a different thing entirely and should only be prevented in safety is a concern.

A child is attached to their siblings, as seen in an adopted child looking for their birth family, whether they are separated or not. As before, it is abuse to deny contact for no justifiable reason.

**10 What do you think would strengthen the existing guidance to help a looked after child to keep in touch with other children they have shared family life with?**

**What do you think would strengthen the existing guidance to help a looked after child to keep in touch with other children they have shared family life with?:**

Social Work retraining and attitudes must change. Reports must be checked for accuracy and allowed to be challenged without fear of exclusion.

Separation should never occur unless the child's safety is an issue. Children are traumatised by separation from loved ones. There should be visits, face-time, phone etc. if children can't be with their siblings.

Contact in most cases is positive and in the child's best interest, laws need to reflect this. As before laws are already in place to prevent contact if a danger exists.

**11 How should contact orders be enforced?**

Option two: alternative sanctions. (eg unpaid work, attending a parenting class or compensation)

**If another option, please specify. :**

There has to be sanctions and enforcement that a court will use. Contempt of court is an offence and should be treated as such. There needs to be a proper investigation about why contact isn't happening to ensure all information has been made available to the court

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Not Answered

**Cross border cases within the UK: jurisdictional issues**

**12 Should the definition of "appropriate court" in the Family Law Act 1986 be changed to include the Sheriff Court as well as the Court of Session?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Should specify family court.

A sheriff or judge with little or no experience or training is wasting court time and money and potentially damaging children

**13 Are there any other steps the Scottish Government should be taking on jurisdictional issues in cross-UK border family cases?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Mainly in process rather than legal changes. Make the process simpler and reduce costs for parents - speed up solicitor responses and processes etc.

The process needs to be quicker to get matters settled in the best interest of the child. A month is a lifetime to a child, and our legal processes take far too long.

It must be treated as a serious offence if the child is removed to a different country without the agreement of both parents and particularly in contravention of a court order.

Transport costs or additional expenses to allow contact to continue should be shared

**Parentage**

**14 Should the presumption that the husband of a mother is the father of her child be retained in Scots law?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

PRR legislation is included in Family Law Act 2006 and should remain.

However a child should have a right to know who their biological father is. There could be hereditary illness or conditions they should be aware of.

**15 Should DNA testing be compulsory in parentage disputes?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Evidence should be produced for the benefit of the child, not necessarily the mother.

As before there could be hereditary illness or disease which could be prevented if that knowledge is available.

**Parental Responsibilities and Rights**

**16 Should a step parents parental responsibilities and rights agreement be established so that step parents could obtain PRRs without having to go to court?**

No

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

The court needs to check if this would be in the best interest of the child and investigate all circumstances before a decision is made.

Step parents having PRRs should not necessarily replace the father's PRRs and this could lead to too many people having PRRs over a child. There needs to be family agreement about this with the child's view taken into account where appropriate.

There could be an agreement drawn up by solicitors between the parents and step-parent which the court could 'rubber stamp' if all views have been considered.

**17 Should the term "parental rights" be removed from the 1995 Act?**

No

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Parents need to have 'parental rights' to allow them to parent and clarifies who can make decisions about or on behalf of a minor. Parents need protection from over zealous Social Workers in some cases.

'Parental Rights & Responsibilities' also confirms that responsibility comes with those rights

**18 Should the terms "contact" and "residence" be replaced by a new term such as "child's order"?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above? If you answered yes what terms should be used? :**

The focus should be on the child.

There needs to be a change of attitude and expectation that both parents matter to a child.

'Contact' and 'Residence' implies that one parent is more important than the other and that is not the case.

A more neutral term would remind both parents that they are equally important.

'Contact' is different from parenting and should not be confused

'Parenting order' is the term we suggest

**19 Should all fathers be granted PRRs?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

A court could look at evidence to revoke PRRs if a parent is not fit to have them.

It should be remembered that not all mothers are fit persons to have PRRs and domestic abuse happens to men as well as women and is equally traumatic

If the child has been conceived during a casual liaison that person is still the child's father.

Rape if proven should mean automatic removal of PRRs. Help and support should be available for the mother in this situation.

Name changes should only happen with the agreement of both parents and the agreement of the child if they are of an age to express a view. A person can be 'known as' any name if not changed for fraudulent purposes but they would still know their given name. It was important at the time of registration.

**20 Should the law allowing a father to be given PRRs by jointly registering a birth with the mother be backdated to pre 2006?**

No

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

All fathers who don't have PRRs due to the changes in 2006 and did jointly register the birth should be encouraged to obtain PRRs at little or no cost particularly to avoid any difference with siblings.

**21 Should joint birth registration be compulsory?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Both parents matter and it would highlight the responsibility and commitment of both parents.

There would need to be some exclusions e.g. armed forces, rape/abuse, death etc. This should not lead to false accusations to prevent joint registration.

There needs to be a change of culture and attitude - an expectation that fathers will be involved unless it would be unsafe.

In some circumstances mothers can name a father without them being present and without them knowing. If there is any dispute DNA testing should be available to resolve this.

**22 Should fathers who jointly register the birth of a child in a country where joint registration leads to PRRs have their PRRs recognised in Scotland?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

**23 Should there be a presumption in law that a child benefits from both parents being involved in their life?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Courts should not presume either parent is good or bad without evidence - there are bad mothers as well as bad fathers and good fathers as well as good mothers

Protections already exist to protect children if contact would be unsafe.

Why do mothers have unquestioned rights, but father's rights are questioned - this is based on assumptions that men are bad and is discriminatory.

**24 Should legislation be made laying down that courts should not presume that a child benefits from both parents being involved in their life?**

No

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

It is not in a child's best interest to automatically assume either parent is unfit. It is generally in a child's best interest to have a relationship with both parents and wider family. A court should decide based on all the facts if necessary.

**25 Should the Scottish Government do more to encourage schools to involve non-resident parents in education decisions?**

Yes – put the pupil enrolment form and annual update form on to a statutory basis.

**If other, please specify.:**

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Guidance is not always followed.

All areas and schools need to be doing the same thing and providing the same information to both parents. Annual updates are crucial.

Solicitors should provide information on this so that fathers know they have a right to this involvement and should inform the school if any problem.

A report on progress does not impact on the mother unless knowing their location is an issue.

**26 Should the Scottish Government do more to encourage health practitioners to share information with non-resident parents if it is in the child's best interests?**

Yes – legislation.

**If other, please specify.:**

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Hospitals/GPs/Health Practitioners should all work to the same rules, standards and be consistent.

Solicitors should provide information on this so that fathers know they have a right to this involvement unless the child has the capacity to make the decision to deny this. It must be ensured that the child has not been alienated.

What criteria means that it is or not in the child's best interest? This varies from person to person and must be regulated.

**27 Does section 11 of the 1995 Act need to be clarified to provide that orders, except for residence orders, or orders on PRRs themselves, do not automatically grant PRRs?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Contact is not residence. Children have contact with many people throughout their life and PRRs are not required to have that contact.

It is illogical and wrong that to allow someone a day or weekend out with a child involves anything to do with PRRs.

Guidance is not always followed

**28 Should the Scottish Government take action to try and stop children being put under pressure by one parent to reject the other parent?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above? If you selected yes, what should be done?:**

This is cruelty and should be considered child abuse. This would also cover Social Work practice.

It's what abusive adults do to isolate their partner in the abuse cycle. Coercive behaviour is considered abuse when a woman is the victim. The same applies to children. It also applies to male victims.

This is alienation - giving it another name does not change the result or the effect on the child.

Immediate parental education is crucial, enforced if necessary, to explain the cruelty and effect. It should also be explained that this behaviour can backfire in the future if the child sees that lies have been told about the other parent.

There must be more awareness in courts of subconscious alienation.

**29 Should a person convicted of a serious criminal offence have their PRRs removed by the criminal court?**

Yes – by giving the criminal court a duty to consider the removal of PRRs when a person is convicted of certain types of offences.

**If other way, please explain.:**

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

For prescribed offences it would make it unsafe for a child to have contact or be 'controlled' by that person.

Male or female parent can still have contact if it is agreed suitable without having PRRs

A child's views should be sought outwith court by a suitable independent adult and produced in court.

**Child Abduction by parents**

**30 Should the reference in section 2 of the 1995 Act to “exercising” parental rights be changed to reflect that a person may not be exercising these rights because the child is now outwith the UK?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

'exercising' should be changed to 'has been or was' exercising parental rights

Parents must not be excluded due to any change

You can't exercise a right if you are being denied that right

**31 Should section 6 of the Child Abduction Act 1984 be amended so that it is a criminal offence for a parent or guardian of a child to remove that child from the UK without appropriate consent?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

You must have consent/agreement to take a child on holiday abroad so to remove a child from it's home is much more serious and should be considered criminal.

If it is possible to obtain an interdict to stop a child being removed from Scotland this should be enforced, with proper procedures and checks if safety is an issue.

The law to adhere to is the law in the country of declared residence i.e. school/doctor etc.

Both parents should give consent to take a child out of the UK and this should be checked at border control. A certified letter of agreement or other document should be provided.

**Domestic Abuse**

**32 Should personal cross examination of domestic abuse victims be banned in court cases concerning contact and residence?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Needs to be done by a solicitor or by recorded interview.

Facts must be checked, evidence of the behaviour of the victim e.g. happy, afraid, nervous, callous etc., bruises, excuses.

There must be more visible recognition that men are victims of domestic abuse too and that they are sometimes arrested and charged for defending themselves.

Sometimes accusations of abuse are raised to prevent a parent having contact with children and this must be investigated thoroughly.

**33 Should section 11 of the 1995 Act be amended to provide that the court can, if it sees fit, give directions to protect domestic abuse victims and other vulnerable parties at any hearings heard as a result of an application under section 11?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Again, it needs to be acknowledged that men are victims of abuse too and require the same protections as female victims.

Children must be protected from parental fighting or manipulation.

Case management and support workers have a part to play in this.

Care must be taken that the 'system' is not being abused or misused. Abusers can manipulate the system as well as people.

**34 Should subsections (7A)-(7E) of section 11 of the 1995 Act containing a list of matters that a court shall have regard to be kept?**

Yes but amend (please give details).

**If yes - but amend, please give details.:**

Include subsections

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Subsections would be useful as a guide and set an expected standard, but must not be manipulated or seen as complete or exhaustive.

Again, checking for potential manipulation of preferential treatment for 'victims' is crucial and must be dealt with constructively

**35 Should section 11 of the 1995 Act be amended to lay down that no further application under section 11 in respect of the child concerned may be made without leave of the court?**

No

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Further investigation behind repeated applications should happen.

Better records of previous behaviours and time wasting/repetitiveness would reduce applications.

Full and proper information at the outset would also reduce repeated applications.

**36 Should action be taken to ensure the civil courts have information on domestic abuse when considering a case under section 11 of the 1995 Act?**

Yes

Introducing a duty in legislation on the civil courts to establish if there has been domestic abuse., Placing a duty in legislation on child welfare reporters that they must consider in each case whether there is evidence of domestic abuse and, if so, report on it accordingly., Including domestic abuse in any welfare checklist for the courts to consider in section 11 cases., Discussing with the Law Society of Scotland and the Family Law Association whether guidance for practitioners would be helpful., Other (please give details).

**If other, please give details.:**

Equality guidance that both sexes can be and are victims. All information must be put before the court and 'evidence' confirmed, also when provided by Social Services

**If another option, please explain.:**

Not Answered

**37 Should the Scottish Government do more to promote domestic abuse risk assessments?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

There should be equality training for assessors to have no preconceived ideas of victim and perpetrator.

There should also be training to pick up on signs and behaviour.

All information should be sought and provided in court.

There is too much manipulation of the present system

**If yes what should be done?:**

Not Answered

**38 Should the Scottish Government explore ways to improve interaction between criminal and civil courts where there has been an allegation of domestic abuse?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Communication would assist a fair result. Too many 'specialisms' may not be a benefit.

Sheriffs from civil courts may be better informed of the family situation.

Criminal courts need to be aware of potentially scurrilous accusations to prevent fathers having contact with children, making it harder for real victims.

If the accused is found not guilty the case should revert to the Family Court.

Information should be available to both courts so that the whole picture is before the sheriff/judge.

**Court Procedure**

**39 Should the Scottish Government introduce a provision in primary legislation which specifies that any delay in a court case relating to the upbringing of a child is likely to affect the welfare of the child?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Delays created by unqualified sheriffs postponing decisions is bad for children.

Delays caused by parents unwilling to allow contact or reduce involvement is bad for children, unless there is a safety issue.

Proper investigation and checks and reports early on will prevent delays further down the line meaning a quicker decision and better, more settled outcome for the child.

Non-appearance at court should be addressed seriously.

Repeatedly changing solicitor or court should be justified and dealt with if unjustified.

**40 Should cases under section 11 of the 1995 Act be heard exclusively by the Sheriff Court?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Simplified system would speed up the process.

Better training of all professions involved on how their actions affect the child.

**41 Should a check list of factors for courts to consider when dealing with a case be added to section 11 of the 1995 Act?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above? If you answered yes please give details about what should be in such a check list.:**

Because sheriffs don't have to update their training a check list would highlight the important considerations and to seek assessments as necessary.

It should be noted that the checklist is not exhaustive.

- 1) Is any delay allowing alienation
- 2) Is either party a victim of coercive aggressive behaviour
- 3) Do both parents understand how their behaviour is affecting the child
- 4) Is contact safe? Are there any criminal convictions to consider?

5) If the child is considered able to have a view, has this been sought - has the child been manipulated? The relationship before and after separation should be considered where applicable.

6) Is Legal Aid being abused?

Case management considerations

## Alternatives to Court

**42 Should the Scottish Government do more to encourage Alternative Dispute Resolution in family cases? Please select as many options as you want.**

Yes – introduce Mediation Information and Assessment Meetings in Scotland., Yes – better signposting and guidance., Yes – other.

**If other, please give details.:**

Prevent solicitors creating friction/animosity and a competitive scenario

**Why did you select your answer(s) above?:**

Mediation should be promoted as an early intervention solution. More Legal Aid should be available for this instead of court procedures

Mediation doesn't need to be in the same room and both genders can be victims of abuse. Support should be available where required

Parenting Plan should be part of the early intervention process, not after months of demanding and aggressive communication by legal representation

No court proceeding for families should be adversarial - calm, compromise and problem solving should be promoted

Family group conferencing if necessary with advocates having a child development qualification

**43 Should Scottish Government make regulations to clarify that confidentiality of mediation extends to cases involving cross border abduction of children?**

No

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Mediation information should be available to the sheriff as it forms part of the picture and may show behaviour patterns.

It should not be discussed in court if permission is not given, but should be available so that a correct decision can be reached

**44 Should Scottish Government produce guidance for litigants and children in relation to contact and residence?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Might reduce court time if it encourages ADR, explaining the adversarial system and how it affects all involved.

The guidance should include reminders that adult behaviour affects the child.

## Birth Registrations

**45 Should a person under 16 with capacity be able to apply to record a change of their name in the birth register?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Only if explored fully that no coercion or alienation has led to the decision.

Anyone can be 'known as' any name so a change may not be justified

**46 Should a person who is applying to record a change of name for a young person under the age of 16 be required to seek their views?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

It's their name - they should be consulted

Reasons for the requested change must be given and checked

Any difference in opinion of those involved should be investigated

**47 Should S.I. 1965/1838 be amended so that a father who has a declarator of parentage and has PRRs can re-register the birth showing him on the birth certificate?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

The child has a right to know who their father is and have it recorded.

## **Children's Hearings**

**48 Do you think the Principal Reporter should be given the right to appeal against a sheriff's decision in relation to deemed relevant person status?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

This has major implications if the wrong decision has been reached

Relevant person status requirements need to be clarified - what is a relevant person in a child's eyes?

What is the definition of 'significant involvement' - day to day contact IS significant involvement and this should be recognised.

The definition of 'relevant person' must be clarified to help families when Social Services are involved as they use this criteria to exclude family members

**49 Should changes be made which will allow further modernisation of the Children's Hearings System through enhanced use of available technology?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Better information will lead to better continuity and process, with better outcomes when sheriffs have all relevant information and details don't need to be repeated.

It may also show time wasting and manipulative behaviour.

This should also cover Child Welfare Hearings

**50 Should safeguarder reports and other independent reports be provided to local authorities in advance of Children's Hearings in line with other participants?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Joined up services are crucial to better decisions

It would speed up the system and prevent time wasting, reducing costs with better outcomes for children

All concerned require all information to present a balanced opinion and decision

It is unrealistic to expect an appropriate decision if all the facts are not presented

**51 Should personal cross examination of vulnerable witnesses, including children, be banned in certain 2011 Act proceedings.**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

It is traumatic and should be avoided

Recorded interviews or being cross examined by a solicitor funded by Legal Aid should be available, along with support as necessary.

This should apply to male victims equally

## **Domicile of persons under 16**

**52 Should section 22 of the 2006 Act which prescribes where a child is deemed to be domiciled be amended?**

Yes

**Why did you select your answer above?:**

Clarity and simplification is always better, it provides expectation and allows for clearer follow through if a child is removed from their domicile

## Conclusion

### 53 Do you have any comments about, or evidence relevant to:

The partial Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment, The partial Equality Impact Assessment?

**If yes, please provide your comments below. :**

Child rights are important as the adults can often make decisions in their own best interest, rather than that of the child. This needs to be addressed

There initially was inequality in this consultation but this has been rectified slightly by inviting male victims support groups to contribute

2010 study by Parity says that 40% of domestic abuse victims are male but the theme of family and children's laws favour mothers. Equality should be the starting point for all laws and decisions.

### 54 Do you have any further comments?

Yes

**If you have answered yes please provide your comments below. :**

The main issues to be addressed are -

- 1) Inequality in family laws and in practice
- 2) Non-compliance with contact orders
- 3) Abuse of Legal Aid
- 4) Alienation of one parent
- 5) Better training of all professionals working with families and children in particular
- 6) Better recording of court work to give continuity
- 7) More awareness of manipulation and coercive behaviours

## About you

### What is your name?

**Name:**

June Loudoun

### What is your email address?

**Email:**

grandparentsuk@btinternet.com

### Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

### What is your organisation?

**Organisation:**

Grandparents Apart UK

**If you are responding as an organisation and want to tell us more about your organisation's purpose and its aims and objectives, you can do so here.:**

Initially we support devastated grandparents who have been denied contact with their precious grandchildren, for various reasons.

We have been highlighting to Government for almost 20 years the abuse of children by our current family laws and procedures by encouraging adversarial processes.

Children are too easily denied contact with much loved parents and grandparents due to the inequality in current laws and the lack of support for important relationships.

Our aim and objective is to reduce the animosity in family law practices and encourage adults to work together for the sake of our children

### Where are you resident?

Scotland

### The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response only (without name)

**We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?**

Yes

## Evaluation

Please help us improve our consultations by answering the questions below. (Responses to the evaluation will not be published.)

**Matrix 1 - How satisfied were you with this consultation?:**

Slightly satisfied

**Please enter comments here.:**

The problem has now been addressed, but the inequality of contributors had to be highlighted before Abused Men in Scotland were included in meetings to counter the long term inclusion of Women's Aid

**Matrix 1 - How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?:**

Slightly satisfied

**Please enter comments here.:**

One question had no space for comments