



Children and Adoption Act 2006

2006 CHAPTER 20

PART 1

ORDERS WITH RESPECT TO CHILDREN IN FAMILY PROCEEDINGS

Contact with children

1 Contact activity directions and conditions

After section 11 of the Children Act 1989 (c. 41) insert—

“11A Contact activity directions

- (1) This section applies in proceedings in which the court is considering whether to make provision about contact with a child by making—
 - (a) a contact order with respect to the child, or
 - (b) an order varying or discharging a contact order with respect to the child.
- (2) The court may make a contact activity direction in connection with that provision about contact.
- (3) A contact activity direction is a direction requiring an individual who is a party to the proceedings to take part in an activity that promotes contact with the child concerned.
- (4) The direction is to specify the activity and the person providing the activity.
- (5) The activities that may be so required include, in particular—
 - (a) programmes, classes and counselling or guidance sessions of a kind that—
 - (i) may assist a person as regards establishing, maintaining or improving contact with a child;
 - (ii) may, by addressing a person’s violent behaviour, enable or facilitate contact with a child;

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- (b) sessions in which information or advice is given as regards making or operating arrangements for contact with a child, including making arrangements by means of mediation.
- (6) No individual may be required by a contact activity direction—
 - (a) to undergo medical or psychiatric examination, assessment or treatment;
 - (b) to take part in mediation.
- (7) A court may not on the same occasion—
 - (a) make a contact activity direction, and
 - (b) dispose finally of the proceedings as they relate to contact with the child concerned.
- (8) Subsection (2) has effect subject to the restrictions in sections 11B and 11E.
- (9) In considering whether to make a contact activity direction, the welfare of the child concerned is to be the court's paramount consideration.

11B Contact activity directions: further provision

- (1) A court may not make a contact activity direction in any proceedings unless there is a dispute as regards the provision about contact that the court is considering whether to make in the proceedings.
- (2) A court may not make a contact activity direction requiring an individual who is a child to take part in an activity unless the individual is a parent of the child in relation to whom the court is considering provision about contact.
- (3) A court may not make a contact activity direction in connection with the making, variation or discharge of a contact order, if the contact order is, or would if made be, an excepted order.
- (4) A contact order with respect to a child is an excepted order if—
 - (a) it is made in proceedings that include proceedings on an application for a relevant adoption order in respect of the child; or
 - (b) it makes provision as regards contact between the child and a person who would be a parent or relative of the child but for the child's adoption by an order falling within subsection (5).
- (5) An order falls within this subsection if it is—
 - (a) a relevant adoption order;
 - (b) an adoption order, within the meaning of section 72(1) of the Adoption Act 1976, other than an order made by virtue of section 14 of that Act on the application of a married couple one of whom is the mother or the father of the child;
 - (c) a Scottish adoption order, within the meaning of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, other than an order made—
 - (i) by virtue of section 14 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978 on the application of a married couple one of whom is the mother or the father of the child, or
 - (ii) by virtue of section 15(1)(aa) of that Act; or

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- (d) a Northern Irish adoption order, within the meaning of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, other than an order made by virtue of Article 14 of the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 on the application of a married couple one of whom is the mother or the father of the child.
- (6) A relevant adoption order is an adoption order, within the meaning of section 46(1) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, other than an order made—
 - (a) on an application under section 50 of that Act by a couple (within the meaning of that Act) one of whom is the mother or the father of the person to be adopted, or
 - (b) on an application under section 51(2) of that Act.
- (7) A court may not make a contact activity direction in relation to an individual unless the individual is habitually resident in England and Wales; and a direction ceases to have effect if the individual subject to the direction ceases to be habitually resident in England and Wales.

11C Contact activity conditions

- (1) This section applies if in any family proceedings the court makes—
 - (a) a contact order with respect to a child, or
 - (b) an order varying a contact order with respect to a child.
- (2) The contact order may impose, or the contact order may be varied so as to impose, a condition (a “contact activity condition”) requiring an individual falling within subsection (3) to take part in an activity that promotes contact with the child concerned.
- (3) An individual falls within this subsection if he is—
 - (a) for the purposes of the contact order so made or varied, the person with whom the child concerned lives or is to live;
 - (b) the person whose contact with the child concerned is provided for in that order; or
 - (c) a person upon whom that order imposes a condition under section 11(7)(b).
- (4) The condition is to specify the activity and the person providing the activity.
- (5) Subsections (5) and (6) of section 11A have effect as regards the activities that may be required by a contact activity condition as they have effect as regards the activities that may be required by a contact activity direction.
- (6) Subsection (2) has effect subject to the restrictions in sections 11D and 11E.

11D Contact activity conditions: further provision

- (1) A contact order may not impose a contact activity condition on an individual who is a child unless the individual is a parent of the child concerned.
- (2) If a contact order is an excepted order (within the meaning given by section 11B(4)), it may not impose (and it may not be varied so as to impose) a contact activity condition.

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- (3) A contact order may not impose a contact activity condition on an individual unless the individual is habitually resident in England and Wales; and a condition ceases to have effect if the individual subject to the condition ceases to be habitually resident in England and Wales.

11E Contact activity directions and conditions: making

- (1) Before making a contact activity direction (or imposing a contact activity condition by means of a contact order), the court must satisfy itself as to the matters falling within subsections (2) to (4).
- (2) The first matter is that the activity proposed to be specified is appropriate in the circumstances of the case.
- (3) The second matter is that the person proposed to be specified as the provider of the activity is suitable to provide the activity.
- (4) The third matter is that the activity proposed to be specified is provided in a place to which the individual who would be subject to the direction (or the condition) can reasonably be expected to travel.
- (5) Before making such a direction (or such an order), the court must obtain and consider information about the individual who would be subject to the direction (or the condition) and the likely effect of the direction (or the condition) on him.
- (6) Information about the likely effect of the direction (or the condition) may, in particular, include information as to—
- (a) any conflict with the individual’s religious beliefs;
 - (b) any interference with the times (if any) at which he normally works or attends an educational establishment.
- (7) The court may ask an officer of the Service or a Welsh family proceedings officer to provide the court with information as to the matters in subsections (2) to (5); and it shall be the duty of the officer of the Service or Welsh family proceedings officer to comply with any such request.
- (8) In this section “specified” means specified in a contact activity direction (or in a contact activity condition).

11F Contact activity directions and conditions: financial assistance

- (1) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision authorising him to make payments to assist individuals falling within subsection (2) in paying relevant charges or fees.
- (2) An individual falls within this subsection if he is required by a contact activity direction or condition to take part in an activity that promotes contact with a child, not being a child ordinarily resident in Wales.
- (3) The National Assembly for Wales may by regulations make provision authorising it to make payments to assist individuals falling within subsection (4) in paying relevant charges or fees.

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- (4) An individual falls within this subsection if he is required by a contact activity direction or condition to take part in an activity that promotes contact with a child who is ordinarily resident in Wales.
- (5) A relevant charge or fee, in relation to an activity required by a contact activity direction or condition, is a charge or fee in respect of the activity payable to the person providing the activity.
- (6) Regulations under this section may provide that no assistance is available to an individual unless—
 - (a) the individual satisfies such conditions as regards his financial resources as may be set out in the regulations;
 - (b) the activity in which the individual is required by a contact activity direction or condition to take part is provided to him in England or Wales;
 - (c) where the activity in which the individual is required to take part is provided to him in England, it is provided by a person who is for the time being approved by the Secretary of State as a provider of activities required by a contact activity direction or condition;
 - (d) where the activity in which the individual is required to take part is provided to him in Wales, it is provided by a person who is for the time being approved by the National Assembly for Wales as a provider of activities required by a contact activity direction or condition.
- (7) Regulations under this section may make provision—
 - (a) as to the maximum amount of assistance that may be paid to or in respect of an individual as regards an activity in which he is required by a contact activity direction or condition to take part;
 - (b) where the amount may vary according to an individual's financial resources, as to the method by which the amount is to be determined;
 - (c) authorising payments by way of assistance to be made directly to persons providing activities required by a contact activity direction or condition.

11G Contact activity directions and conditions: monitoring

- (1) This section applies if in any family proceedings the court—
 - (a) makes a contact activity direction in relation to an individual, or
 - (b) makes a contact order that imposes, or varies a contact order so as to impose, a contact activity condition on an individual.
- (2) The court may on making the direction (or imposing the condition by means of a contact order) ask an officer of the Service or a Welsh family proceedings officer—
 - (a) to monitor, or arrange for the monitoring of, the individual's compliance with the direction (or the condition);
 - (b) to report to the court on any failure by the individual to comply with the direction (or the condition).
- (3) It shall be the duty of the officer of the Service or Welsh family proceedings officer to comply with any request under subsection (2).”

2 Monitoring contact

After section 11G of the Children Act 1989 (c. 41) (as inserted by section 1) insert—

“11H Monitoring contact

- (1) This section applies if in any family proceedings the court makes—
 - (a) a contact order with respect to a child in favour of a person, or
 - (b) an order varying such a contact order.
- (2) The court may ask an officer of the Service or a Welsh family proceedings officer—
 - (a) to monitor whether an individual falling within subsection (3) complies with the contact order (or the contact order as varied);
 - (b) to report to the court on such matters relating to the individual’s compliance as the court may specify in the request.
- (3) An individual falls within this subsection if the contact order so made (or the contact order as so varied)—
 - (a) requires the individual to allow contact with the child concerned;
 - (b) names the individual as having contact with the child concerned; or
 - (c) imposes a condition under section 11(7)(b) on the individual.
- (4) If the contact order (or the contact order as varied) includes a contact activity condition, a request under subsection (2) is to be treated as relating to the provisions of the order other than the contact activity condition.
- (5) The court may make a request under subsection (2)—
 - (a) on making the contact order (or the order varying the contact order), or
 - (b) at any time during the subsequent course of the proceedings as they relate to contact with the child concerned.
- (6) In making a request under subsection (2), the court is to specify the period for which the officer of the Service or Welsh family proceedings officer is to monitor compliance with the order; and the period specified may not exceed twelve months.
- (7) It shall be the duty of the officer of the Service or Welsh family proceedings officer to comply with any request under subsection (2).
- (8) The court may order any individual falling within subsection (3) to take such steps as may be specified in the order with a view to enabling the officer of the Service or Welsh family proceedings officer to comply with the court’s request under subsection (2).
- (9) But the court may not make an order under subsection (8) with respect to an individual who is a child unless he is a parent of the child with respect to whom the order falling within subsection (1) was made.
- (10) A court may not make a request under subsection (2) in relation to a contact order that is an excepted order (within the meaning given by section 11B(4)).”

3 Contact orders: warning notices

After section 11H of the Children Act 1989 (c. 41) (as inserted by section 2) insert—

“11I Contact orders: warning notices

Where the court makes (or varies) a contact order, it is to attach to the contact order (or the order varying the contact order) a notice warning of the consequences of failing to comply with the contact order.”

4 Enforcement orders

(1) After section 11I of the Children Act 1989 (as inserted by section 3) insert—

“11J Enforcement orders

- (1) This section applies if a contact order with respect to a child has been made.
- (2) If the court is satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that a person has failed to comply with the contact order, it may make an order (an “enforcement order”) imposing on the person an unpaid work requirement.
- (3) But the court may not make an enforcement order if it is satisfied that the person had a reasonable excuse for failing to comply with the contact order.
- (4) The burden of proof as to the matter mentioned in subsection (3) lies on the person claiming to have had a reasonable excuse, and the standard of proof is the balance of probabilities.
- (5) The court may make an enforcement order in relation to the contact order only on the application of—
 - (a) the person who is, for the purposes of the contact order, the person with whom the child concerned lives or is to live;
 - (b) the person whose contact with the child concerned is provided for in the contact order;
 - (c) any individual subject to a condition under section 11(7)(b) or a contact activity condition imposed by the contact order; or
 - (d) the child concerned.
- (6) Where the person proposing to apply for an enforcement order in relation to a contact order is the child concerned, the child must obtain the leave of the court before making such an application.
- (7) The court may grant leave to the child concerned only if it is satisfied that he has sufficient understanding to make the proposed application.
- (8) Subsection (2) has effect subject to the restrictions in sections 11K and 11L.
- (9) The court may suspend an enforcement order for such period as it thinks fit.
- (10) Nothing in this section prevents a court from making more than one enforcement order in relation to the same person on the same occasion.
- (11) Proceedings in which any question of making an enforcement order, or any other question with respect to such an order, arises are to be regarded for the

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purposes of section 11(1) and (2) as proceedings in which a question arises with respect to a section 8 order.

- (12) In Schedule A1—
- (a) Part 1 makes provision as regards an unpaid work requirement;
 - (b) Part 2 makes provision in relation to the revocation and amendment of enforcement orders and failure to comply with such orders.
- (13) This section is without prejudice to section 63(3) of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 as it applies in relation to contact orders.

11K Enforcement orders: further provision

- (1) A court may not make an enforcement order against a person in respect of a failure to comply with a contact order unless it is satisfied that before the failure occurred the person had been given (in accordance with rules of court) a copy of, or otherwise informed of the terms of—
- (a) in the case of a failure to comply with a contact order that was varied before the failure occurred, a notice under section 11I relating to the order varying the contact order or, where more than one such order has been made, the last order preceding the failure in question;
 - (b) in any other case, a notice under section 11I relating to the contact order.
- (2) A court may not make an enforcement order against a person in respect of any failure to comply with a contact order occurring before the person attained the age of 18.
- (3) A court may not make an enforcement order against a person in respect of a failure to comply with a contact order that is an excepted order (within the meaning given by section 11B(4)).
- (4) A court may not make an enforcement order against a person unless the person is habitually resident in England and Wales; and an enforcement order ceases to have effect if the person subject to the order ceases to be habitually resident in England and Wales.

11L Enforcement orders: making

- (1) Before making an enforcement order as regards a person in breach of a contact order, the court must be satisfied that—
- (a) making the enforcement order proposed is necessary to secure the person's compliance with the contact order or any contact order that has effect in its place;
 - (b) the likely effect on the person of the enforcement order proposed to be made is proportionate to the seriousness of the breach of the contact order.
- (2) Before making an enforcement order, the court must satisfy itself that provision for the person to work under an unpaid work requirement imposed by an enforcement order can be made in the local justice area in which the person in breach resides or will reside.

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- (3) Before making an enforcement order as regards a person in breach of a contact order, the court must obtain and consider information about the person and the likely effect of the enforcement order on him.
- (4) Information about the likely effect of the enforcement order may, in particular, include information as to—
 - (a) any conflict with the person’s religious beliefs;
 - (b) any interference with the times (if any) at which he normally works or attends an educational establishment.
- (5) A court that proposes to make an enforcement order may ask an officer of the Service or a Welsh family proceedings officer to provide the court with information as to the matters in subsections (2) and (3).
- (6) It shall be the duty of the officer of the Service or Welsh family proceedings officer to comply with any request under this section.
- (7) In making an enforcement order in relation to a contact order, a court must take into account the welfare of the child who is the subject of the contact order.

11M Enforcement orders: monitoring

- (1) On making an enforcement order in relation to a person, the court is to ask an officer of the Service or a Welsh family proceedings officer—
 - (a) to monitor, or arrange for the monitoring of, the person’s compliance with the unpaid work requirement imposed by the order;
 - (b) to report to the court if a report under paragraph 8 of Schedule A1 is made in relation to the person;
 - (c) to report to the court on such other matters relating to the person’s compliance as may be specified in the request;
 - (d) to report to the court if the person is, or becomes, unsuitable to perform work under the requirement.
- (2) It shall be the duty of the officer of the Service or Welsh family proceedings officer to comply with any request under this section.

11N Enforcement orders: warning notices

Where the court makes an enforcement order, it is to attach to the order a notice warning of the consequences of failing to comply with the order.”

- (2) Schedule 1 (which contains a Schedule to be inserted before Schedule 1 to the Children Act 1989 (c. 41)) has effect.

5 Compensation for financial loss

After section 11N of the Children Act 1989 (as inserted by section 4) insert—

“11O Compensation for financial loss

- (1) This section applies if a contact order with respect to a child has been made.
- (2) If the court is satisfied that—

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).

- (a) an individual has failed to comply with the contact order, and
 - (b) a person falling within subsection (6) has suffered financial loss by reason of the breach,
- it may make an order requiring the individual in breach to pay the person compensation in respect of his financial loss.
- (3) But the court may not make an order under subsection (2) if it is satisfied that the individual in breach had a reasonable excuse for failing to comply with the contact order.
 - (4) The burden of proof as to the matter mentioned in subsection (3) lies on the individual claiming to have had a reasonable excuse.
 - (5) An order under subsection (2) may be made only on an application by the person who claims to have suffered financial loss.
 - (6) A person falls within this subsection if he is—
 - (a) the person who is, for the purposes of the contact order, the person with whom the child concerned lives or is to live;
 - (b) the person whose contact with the child concerned is provided for in the contact order;
 - (c) an individual subject to a condition under section 11(7)(b) or a contact activity condition imposed by the contact order; or
 - (d) the child concerned.
 - (7) Where the person proposing to apply for an order under subsection (2) is the child concerned, the child must obtain the leave of the court before making such an application.
 - (8) The court may grant leave to the child concerned only if it is satisfied that he has sufficient understanding to make the proposed application.
 - (9) The amount of compensation is to be determined by the court, but may not exceed the amount of the applicant’s financial loss.
 - (10) In determining the amount of compensation payable by the individual in breach, the court must take into account the individual’s financial circumstances.
 - (11) An amount ordered to be paid as compensation may be recovered by the applicant as a civil debt due to him.
 - (12) Subsection (2) has effect subject to the restrictions in section 11P.
 - (13) Proceedings in which any question of making an order under subsection (2) arises are to be regarded for the purposes of section 11(1) and (2) as proceedings in which a question arises with respect to a section 8 order.
 - (14) In exercising its powers under this section, a court is to take into account the welfare of the child concerned.

11P Orders under section 11O(2): further provision

- (1) A court may not make an order under section 11O(2) requiring an individual to pay compensation in respect of a failure by him to comply with a contact order unless it is satisfied that before the failure occurred the individual had

been given (in accordance with rules of court) a copy of, or otherwise informed of the terms of—

- (a) in the case of a failure to comply with a contact order that was varied before the failure occurred, a notice under section 11I relating to the order varying the contact order or, where more than one such order has been made, the last order preceding the failure in question;
 - (b) in any other case, a notice under section 11I relating to the contact order.
- (2) A court may not make an order under section 11O(2) requiring an individual to pay compensation in respect of a failure by him to comply with a contact order where the failure occurred before the individual attained the age of 18.
- (3) A court may not make an order under section 11O(2) requiring an individual to pay compensation in respect of a failure by him to comply with a contact order that is an excepted order (within the meaning given by section 11B(4)).”

Family assistance orders

6 Provision as to family assistance orders

- (1) Section 16 of the Children Act 1989 (c. 41) (family assistance orders) is amended as follows.
- (2) In subsection (3) (requirements for making an order), omit paragraph (a) (requirement that circumstances of case be exceptional).
- (3) After subsection (4) insert—

“(4A) If the court makes a family assistance order with respect to a child and the order is to be in force at the same time as a contact order made with respect to the child, the family assistance order may direct the officer concerned to give advice and assistance as regards establishing, improving and maintaining contact to such of the persons named in the order as may be specified in the order.”
- (4) In subsection (5) (maximum duration of order) for “six months” substitute “twelve months”.
- (5) For subsection (6) substitute—

“(6) If the court makes a family assistance order with respect to a child and the order is to be in force at the same time as a section 8 order made with respect to the child, the family assistance order may direct the officer concerned to report to the court on such matters relating to the section 8 order as the court may require (including the question whether the section 8 order ought to be varied or discharged).”

Risk assessments

7 Risk assessments

After section 16 of the Children Act 1989 (c. 41) insert—

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).

“16A Risk assessments

- (1) This section applies to the following functions of officers of the Service or Welsh family proceedings officers—
 - (a) any function in connection with family proceedings in which the court has power to make an order under this Part with respect to a child or in which a question with respect to such an order arises;
 - (b) any function in connection with an order made by the court in such proceedings.
- (2) If, in carrying out any function to which this section applies, an officer of the Service or a Welsh family proceedings officer is given cause to suspect that the child concerned is at risk of harm, he must—
 - (a) make a risk assessment in relation to the child, and
 - (b) provide the risk assessment to the court.
- (3) A risk assessment, in relation to a child who is at risk of suffering harm of a particular sort, is an assessment of the risk of that harm being suffered by the child.”

Transitional provision

8 Transitional provision

- (1) This section applies to any contact order under section 8 of the Children Act 1989 made before, and in force on, the relevant date.
- (2) For so long as a contact order to which this section applies continues in force on and after the relevant date without being varied, the circumstances in which a notice under section 11I of the Children Act 1989 is to be attached to the contact order include—
 - (a) where an application for such a notice to be attached to the contact order is made by a person who, as regards the order, falls within any of paragraphs (a) to (d) of section 11J(5) of the Children Act 1989;
 - (b) where, in any family proceedings, a question arises with respect to the contact order.
- (3) Where the person proposing to apply under subsection (2)(a) is the child with respect to whom the contact order was made, subsections (6) and (7) of section 11J have effect in relation to the application under subsection (2)(a) as they have effect in relation to an application under section 11J for an enforcement order.
- (4) If a failure to comply with a contact order to which this section applies occurs while the contact order continues in force as described in subsection (2), each of sections 11K(1) and 11P(1) of the Children Act 1989 is to have effect, in relation to the failure, as if for paragraphs (a) and (b) there were substituted “a notice under section 11I relating to the contact order”.
- (5) In this section “relevant date” means the day on which sections 3 to 5 come into force.