

What happened next?

A study of interim outcomes following private law proceedings as reported by parents six to nine months on.

March 2016

What happened next?

1. Executive Summary

This is the report into the third annual national survey carried out by Cafcass. Like the previous two surveys, it is based on a sample of parents' views¹ about private law cases. Unlike the previous surveys it seeks principally to explore 'what happened next', inquiring into how arrangements made at court have worked out for parents and their children six to nine months after the conclusion of proceedings.

143 parents (90 applicants and 53 respondents) took part in the survey of 380 that were eligible to complete the survey. Each parent was asked to talk about one child only regardless of how many children were the subject of proceedings, so the survey data relates to 143 children. A random sample was taken of 500 applications for a Child Arrangements Order – Live With and Spend Time With (s8 Children Act 1989) - where the final order for the lead application was made between 01 February 2015 and 30 April 2015. One adult party from each case was selected at random to participate in the study. Of the 500 parents contacted to take part in the survey, 120 people were excluded (leaving 380 potential participants), mainly because the telephone number held by Cafcass was incorrect.

We summarise the key findings under four sub-headings: communication; contact; the court order; and stability:

Communication: the majority of parents (60% of the total) said that communication with the other parent was ineffective six to nine months after the court proceedings: compared with 28% of the total that described it as effective. However, when comparing communication now to communication before the proceedings, there was a substantial decrease (24 percentage points) in ineffective communication, and a substantial rise in effective communication (18 percentage points). Notably, the number of parents reporting very ineffective communication dropped by 28 percentage points.

Contact: there was a marked drop in the number of cases where parents reported that no contact took place with the parent the child did not live with, from 26% pre-proceedings to 2% at the conclusion of proceedings, and a marked rise (22 percentage points) in regular and overnight contact arrangements. In some cases safeguards were put in place – either supervised or indirect contact.

The Court Order: 66% of participants said that the court order was in their child's best interests and 60% said they were happy with the order. A sizeable minority thought the order was not in their child's interests or were unhappy with the order (31% and 25% respectively).

Stability: 53% of participants said that the arrangements now were the same as set out in the court order, with a further 32% describing only minor/some changes. Where changes were made, these commonly took place shortly after the proceedings concluded. In just over a fifth of the cases where the arrangements changed, the court order was not followed at all. In the 68 cases where arrangements had changed, participants were asked if these changes were agreed by both parents; 39% of the 66 participants reported that these changes were

¹ As explained below the vast majority of participants in this study (140 of 143) were parents.

agreed, with some participants describing making new arrangements in response to, for instance, new work patterns. In 61% of cases the arrangements changed without the agreement of both parties. One tenth of total participants said that they had made another application to court or planned to do so.

This was a small-scale study which was limited in its scope. However, overall the findings are encouraging, particularly so in light of the considerable pressures upon the courts (a rise in the number of litigants in person and professionals working in the family court being more hard-pressed being two notable factors). A sizeable majority of participating parents were content with the order of the court and considered it to be in their child's best interests. Communication between parents had improved. Arrangements were mostly stable and had, in some cases, changed for the better. We might infer from these findings that the proceedings have served to reduce the conflict in many cases, and that such changes have promoted children's welfare.

Having said that, our findings also point to the fragility of arrangements in some cases as: communication between parents commonly remained ineffective; the court order was not followed in about one-fifth of cases; over a quarter of arrangements changed without the agreement of the other parent; and one-tenth of participants said that they had made another application to court or planned to do so.

2. Context and Aims

2.1 Context

This report sets out the findings of *What happened next?* - the third national survey undertaken by Cafcass (the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service). The survey was commissioned and sponsored by Anthony Douglas, Chief Executive. Like the two previous annual surveys it is based on a sample of parents' views about their private law cases. However, whilst the purpose of the first two surveys, conducted in 2013 and 2014, was primarily to establish views about the quality of Cafcass services, this survey was more focussed on establishing some interim outcomes six to nine months after the proceedings had concluded. The survey was conducted by the Cafcass Policy team together with colleagues from various departments within Cafcass who assisted with the telephone calls. All of those who worked on the survey were independent from operational line-management.

2.2 Aim

The aim of the survey was to generate data from a random (within the specified criteria) sample of parents on how arrangements made at court have worked out for themselves and their children, six to nine months after the conclusion of the court proceedings.

2.3 Limitations

The study measures proxy interim outcomes in general and cannot directly measure Cafcass' contribution to an outcome. We have set out above what we mean by 'interim' i.e. the collection of data six to nine months after the conclusion of the case. To explain what is meant by proxy outcomes:

Proxy: the survey does not measure child welfare outcomes and has not sought the child's perspective. Rather it draws inferences from responses provided by parents about practical arrangements which are likely to impact on children's wellbeing. For example, the incidence of breakdown in arrangements could be seen as an inherently negative outcome for children representing instability and parental conflict in which parents are not able to adhere to or negotiate agreed changes to arrangements. Likewise, stable arrangements or changes to arrangements which are agreed by both of the parents could be seen as likely to be associated with better short and longer term outcomes for children as they indicate parents are able to manage their relationship in the interests of the child. This inference is in line with Fortin et al's 2012² study into the perspective of young adults who experienced parental separation in their youth. The study found that parental conflict not only has a psychologically damaging impact on children but it impairs their relationships with both parents and seriously undermines their enjoyment of contact with the non-resident parent.

Whilst many of the survey questions are fact-based and multiple-choice, it is important to note that the responses to these questions may entail an element of subjectivity, and that the responses provided are not 'triangulated' against any other data.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample

The sample was drawn from closed cases on Cafcass' Electronic Case Management System (ECMS) which had a final legal outcome for the lead application recorded between six and nine months prior to the start of the survey. In practice this meant that eligible cases were ones where the final order for the lead application was made between 01 February 2015 and 30 April 2015. Cases were eligible for inclusion in the survey sample if they included an application under s8 of the Children Act 1989 (specifically a Child Arrangements – Live With or Spend Time With application). Cases were excluded from the sample when there was no final order recorded on ECMS or where there was a current open case relating to any of the parties in the case.

A random sample of 500 applications for Child Arrangements Orders was selected according to the criteria above. One party from each case was then selected at random. We sought to survey just one party per case for two reasons: many of the questions were fact-based; and we wished to avoid duplicating responses about a child.

The sample was made up of 500 participants: 276 applicants and 224 respondents.

Please see Appendix A for a copy of the survey questions.

3.2 Gaining consent

As in the similar 2013 and 2014 studies, an "opt out" approach was adopted. Letters were sent to parents who might wish to participate two weeks in advance of the survey. They were offered three methods by which to let Cafcass know that they did not wish to participate:

² Fortin, J., Hunt, J. and Scanlan, I. (2012) Taking a longer view of contact: The perspectives of young adults who experienced parental separation in their youth, University of Sussex Law School.

telephone, email and letter. They were also informed at the start of the telephone call that they could choose to opt out at any time.

To ensure that the survey was compliant with diversity practice and principles, the letter offered special arrangements for speaking on the telephone, such as a translation service or the opportunity to receive a paper version of the survey on request. Two participants asked for a paper version, one of which was returned, and one participant asked for a translation service which was provided.

3.3 How parents were contacted

Potential participants were contacted between 9th November and 7th December 2015. At least three attempts were made to establish contact – once each in the morning, afternoon and evening, not necessarily on the same day. In a few cases more than three calls were made to participants when an arrangement had been made for us to call them back at a specified time. We invited participants to complete the survey online if they preferred: 11 people did so.

The letter to potential participants included the last 3 digits of the telephone number(s) the callers would ring them on. In an effort to offset the number of incorrect or out of use telephone numbers, participants were given the option to e-mail or ring if the last 3 digits of the telephone number in the letter was not their current number. However no participants did this.

3.4 Questions

A questionnaire was designed on the Survey Monkey platform making use of the skip function to take the participant to the next relevant question (in response to the previous answer). The survey included more factual closed questions (as opposed to questions relating to attitude or opinion) than the two previous surveys, establishing, for example, with whom the child lived before the application was made. Some open questions were included to allow the participant to expand upon their response. If the participant had more than one child they were asked to select one of their children when providing answers to ensure continuity in their responses across the survey. Participants were also asked to give the age of the child in respect of whom they had completed the survey.

Each participant was assigned a survey number at the top of the letter posted to them which they or the caller inputted when completing the survey monkey for administrative purposes.

3.5 Response rate

Of the 500 potential participants contacted to take part in the survey, 120 (24%) were excluded (leaving 380) because: the telephone number held by Cafcass was incorrect (79); permission letters were returned due to incorrect or outdated addresses (27); the online survey was incomplete (7); the proceedings had not closed before 01 May 2015 or were currently ongoing (6); the requested paper version of the survey was not returned (1); or because there was only one party in the case (1).

237 of the potential participants did not take part in the survey: 192 did not answer the phone on any of the three attempts made to contact them; 39 opted out of the survey and 6 participants were unable to participate for other reasons.

143 participants took part in the survey. This was a response rate of 38% (143 of 380 potential participants) and, as such, a lower response rate than the national surveys of 2013 and 2014 (46% and 49% respectively). However, data for those surveys was collected six to twelve weeks after the proceedings ended.

The sample of 143 constitutes:

- 140 parents and three other close relatives of children subject to proceedings. (Henceforth we use the terms 'parent' and 'participant' inter-changeably to denote all 143 people who completed the survey.)
- 132 surveys completed via telephone and 11 surveys completed online;
- 90 applicants and 53 respondents;
- 88 male and 55 female participants;
- 85 Spend Time With applications and 58 Live With applications³;

Appendix B (table 3) sets out the number of participants by service area.

4. Survey results

The survey findings are presented in respect of each question. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

In line with the structure of the survey, the findings are set out in three sections: before, during and after the court proceedings.

The phrase 'the other parent' refers to the parent⁴ that did not take part in the survey and 'you' is in reference to the parent that did take part in the survey.

Age of the child

The mean age of the child in respect of whom participants completed the survey was 6 years and 8 months, showing that more participants completed the survey about younger children than children in their teens. The age range was from under 1 year of age to 15 years of age.

Before the court proceedings

Who did the child live with before the application?

Of the 143 parents:

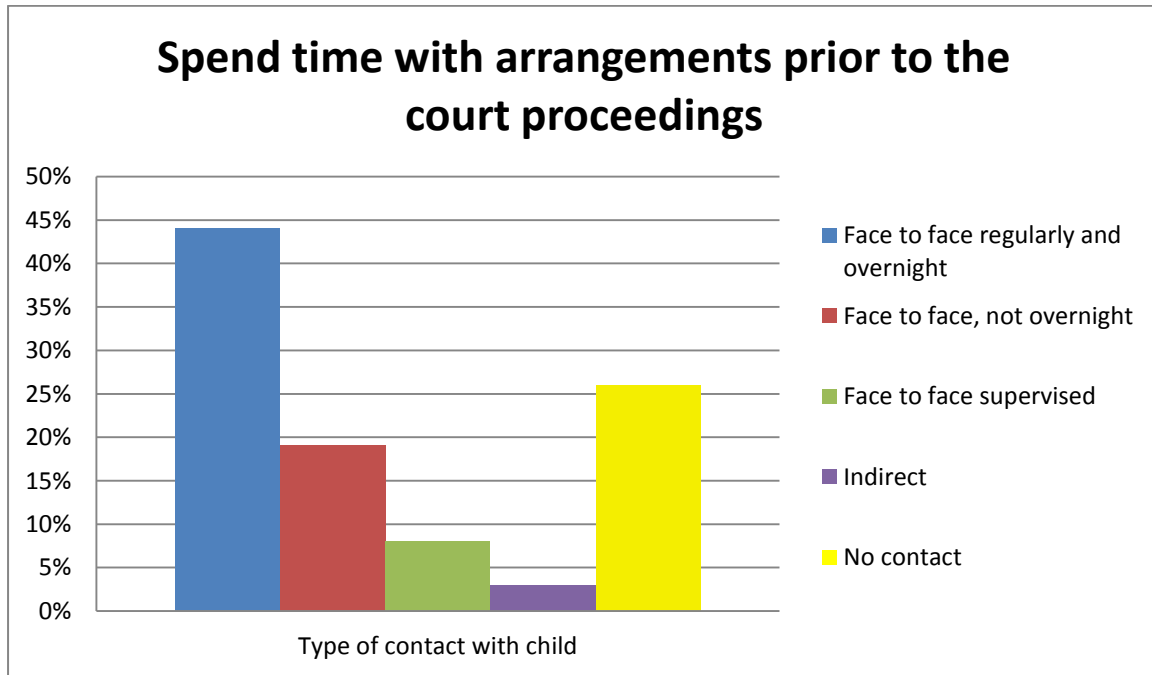
- 41% (n=59) stated that the child lived with them;
- 48% (n=69) said the child lived with the other parent;

³ These were the primary applications recorded on the Cafcass system; some cases may have had more than one application type.

⁴ In a small minority of cases the other party in the case to whom the phrase 'the other parent' refers may not have been a parent (i.e. they may have been a relative or other person who has/had care of the child or for any other reason was an applicant or respondent to a CAO application).

- 6% (n=8) reported that the child had a shared care arrangement and lived with both parents in separate houses;
- 5% (n=7) stated that the children lived with both parents in the same house.

Participants were asked either: ***Before the application, what were the arrangements for you to spend time with your child?*** Or: ***Before the application, what were the arrangements for your child to spend time with their other parent?***



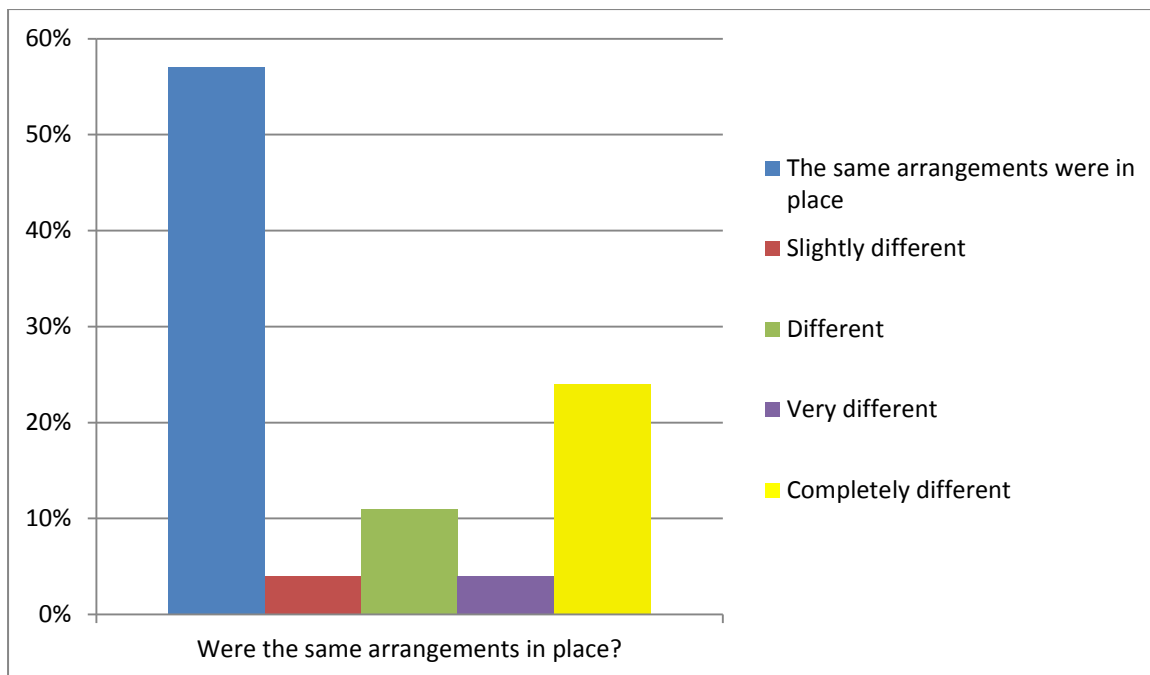
We did not see a marked difference in responses between the answers given by the parent the child lived with and the parent the child did not live with. See appendix B (table 1) for a table listing the exact figures. The above chart combines the figures.⁵

Participants reported that the most common scenario was that the child saw the parent they did not live with face to face regularly and had overnight contact (44%, n=57) and the least common scenario was that child only had contact with the parent they did not live with indirectly (3%, n=4).

When the application was made were the same arrangements you have just described in place?

This question asked all participants to compare the arrangements to spend time with or live with the child before the application to court was made, with the contact taking place at the time of the application to court. For example a parent might have had unsupervised overnight contact with the child before the application to court, but at the point of applying to court, no contact was taking place between them and their child.

⁵ Please note that 15 participants did not answer this question as it was not applicable to them due to them having answered for the previous question that they had a shared care arrangement or that both parents were living in the same house.



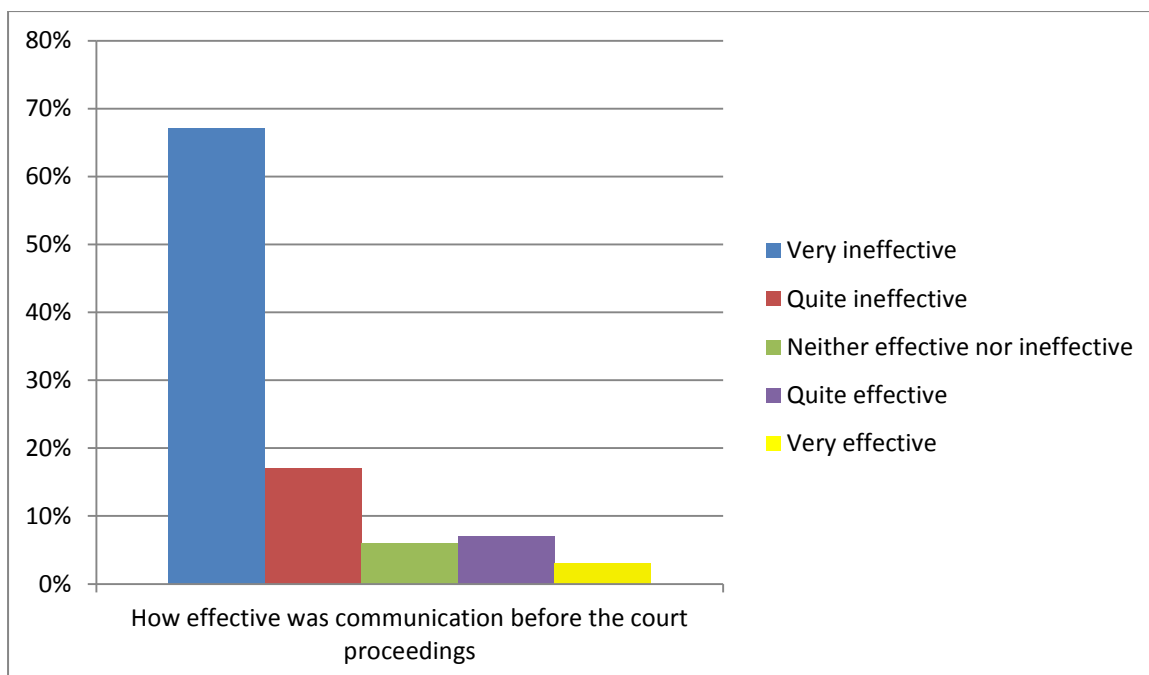
- 57% (n=82) of participants said that the same arrangements were in place when an application to court was made;
- 43% (n=61) said that the arrangements were different and, of these, more than half (n=34, 24% of total respondents) said that the arrangements were completely different.

If participants said that the arrangements were different, they were asked: ***If arrangements were not the same please could you describe in which way(s) they were different?***

As this was an open question a range of different responses was given of which the key theme was that contact between the child and the parent they did not live with was stopped or restricted by the parent the child did live with. Reasons for this included:

- Safeguarding reasons;
- The child no longer wanting to see the parent;
- Child abduction;
- The parent with whom the child lived moving away with the child.

How effective was communication between you and the other parent before the court proceedings?



All 143 participants were asked this question, of which:

- 84% (n=120) of participants said that communication with the other parent was ineffective prior to court proceedings, the vast majority of these describing it as ‘very ineffective’;
- 10% (n=15) of participants said that communication was effective, with 3% (n=4) saying it was very effective.

The court proceedings

Did you have any legal advice or representation in the proceedings?

Of the 142 participants who answered this question⁶:

- 46% (n=66) had representation or legal advice throughout all of the proceedings;
- 21% (n=30) were represented or received legal advice for some but not all of the proceedings, making a total of 67% of participating parents who have representation or legal advice at some point in the proceedings;
- 33% (n=46) were not represented at all.

At the end of the court proceedings what did the court order about where your child should live?

Court order	Frequency
Remain living with the other parent	43% (61)
Remain living with me	38% (54)
With both me and the other parent under a	7%

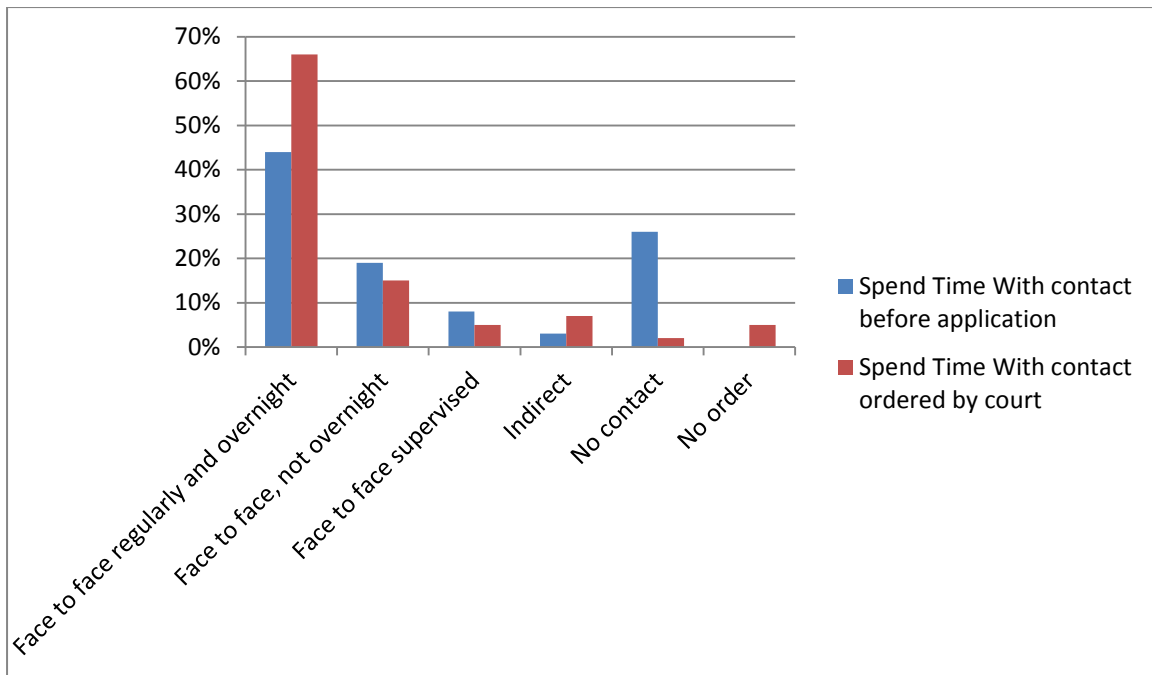
⁶ One participant did not answer this question.

shared care arrangement	(10)
Move to live with me	5% (7)
Move to live with the other parent	4% (6)
The court did not make an order, the child lived with me at the end of proceedings	2% (3)
The court did not make an order, the child lived with the other parent at the end of proceedings	1% (2)
Total	100% (143)

As can be seen from the above table:

- 81% of parents reported that at the end of the court proceedings the court ordered that the child continue living with the parent they lived with before the proceedings;
- 9% reported that the court ordered that the child should move to live with a different parent than they were previously living with;
- 7% reported that a shared care arrangement was made by the court;
- 3% reported that the court did not make an order.

The next questions asked participants for the spend time with arrangements the court ordered between the parent the child does not live with and the child. This question was phrased differently depending on whether the parent lived with the child: ***At the end of the proceedings, what did the court order about you spending time with your child?*** or ***At the end of the proceedings what did the court order about your child spending time with their other parent?***



This chart⁷ shows a comparison of contact taking place before the court proceedings and when the Spend Time With order was made by the court. Most notably, the court ordered overnight contact in 66% of cases, this being 22 percentage points higher than the 44% of cases where overnight contact was taking place before the application. There was also a marked difference in the 'no contact' category; this was at 26% before the court proceedings, but the court only ordered it in 2% of cases for cases within this survey.

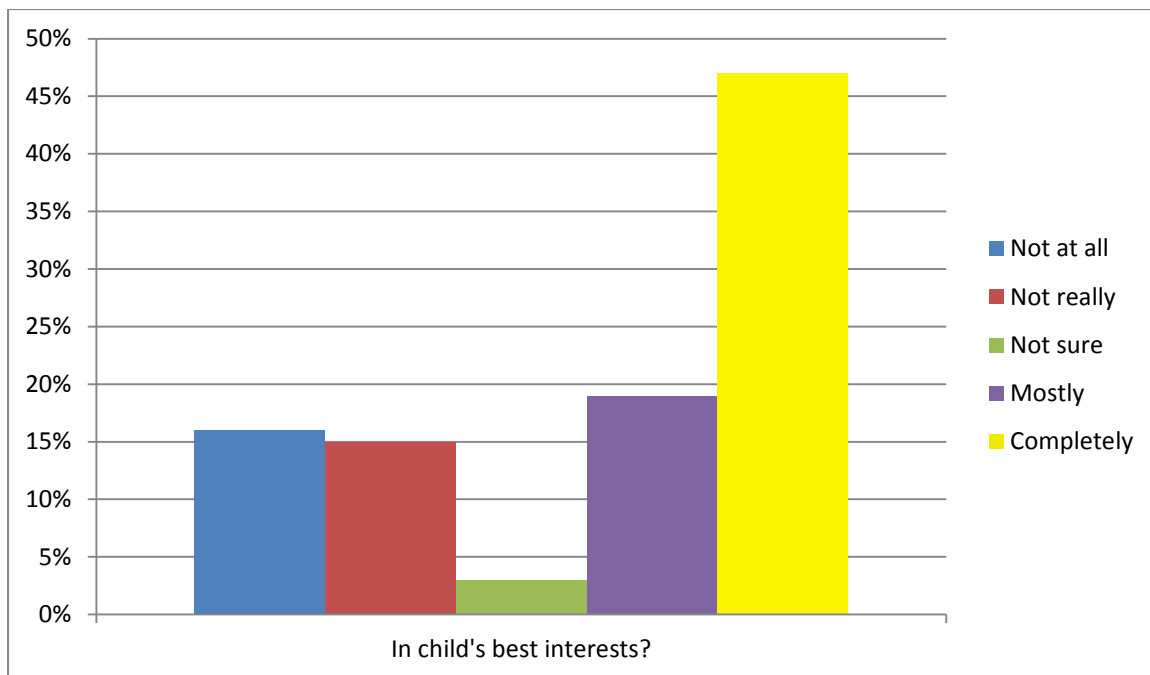
Appendix B (table 2) shows the breakdown of the exact figures.

Was the order made by consent (this means did you and the other party both agree to the order being made)?

All parents were asked this question. The majority of parents (65%, n=93) reported that the order was made by consent and 27% (n=39) of participants stated that the order was not made by consent. The remainder were not sure whether the order had been made by consent.

Did you feel that the order made by the court was in your child's best interests?

⁷ The chart does not include the 7 participants (5%) who stated that the court did not make any order.



All parents were asked this and 66% (n=95) believed that the court order was in their child's best interests, but 31% (n=44) did not believe it was.

Participants were asked ***Do you have any comments on why you feel this way?***

Key themes which were positive included:

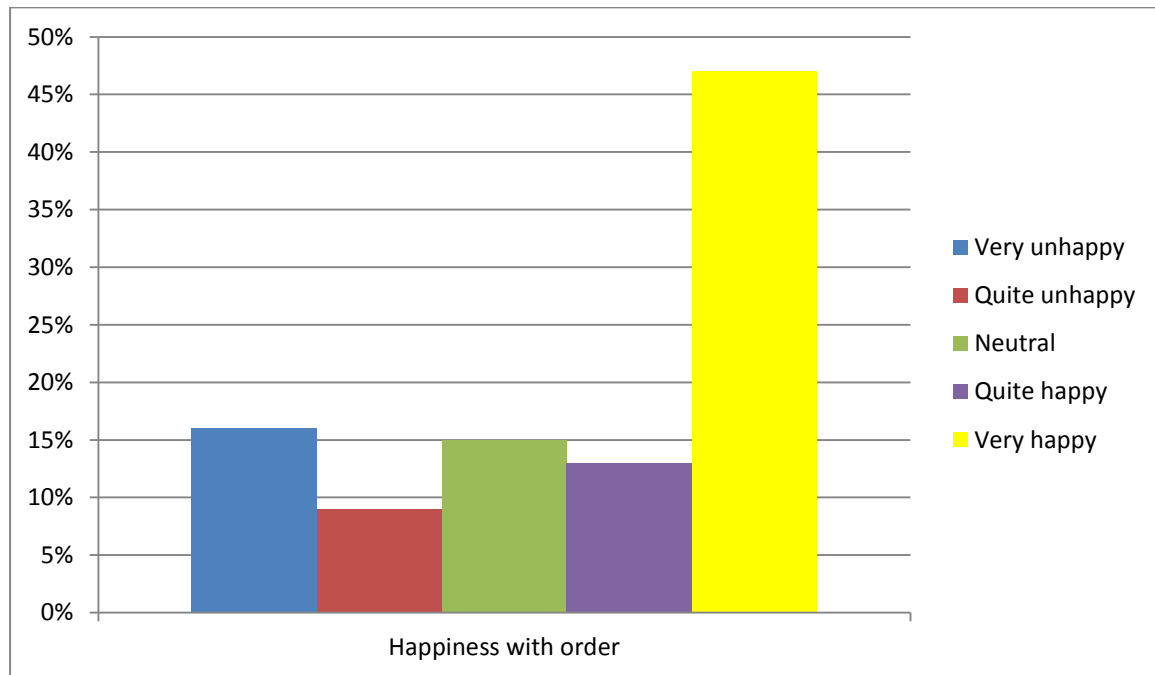
- It is in the child's best interests to spend time with both parents;
 - "He needs both a Mum and a Dad; he needs both parties' love."
- Court ordered arrangements have given the child stability;
 - One participant reported their child had increased in confidence through the security of knowing what the court ordered arrangements were.
- The order made was age appropriate;
 - A participant reported that the child was a teenager who lived with one parent in the week and wanted to be near there at weekends in order to see his friends, and the court took this into consideration when making the order.

Themes derived from negative feedback included:

- The parent the child does not live with wanting more time with the child;
 - One participant reported that they would have liked to have seen the child more as the child is under 1 year of age and the participant is struggling to rebuild the relationship given the infrequency of contact.
- The court not ordering what the parent believed the child wanted;
 - "As far as I knew the kids don't want to leave me when they spend time with me so I don't think it can be in their best interests to have no contact with me now."
- The participant agreeing to more contact between the child and the parent they do not live with due to feeling under pressure to at court;
 - A participant reported that she agreed to more days than she wanted to which was not what her child wanted, so the participant has now changed the

arrangements between the parent the child does not live with and the child to suit what is best for the child.

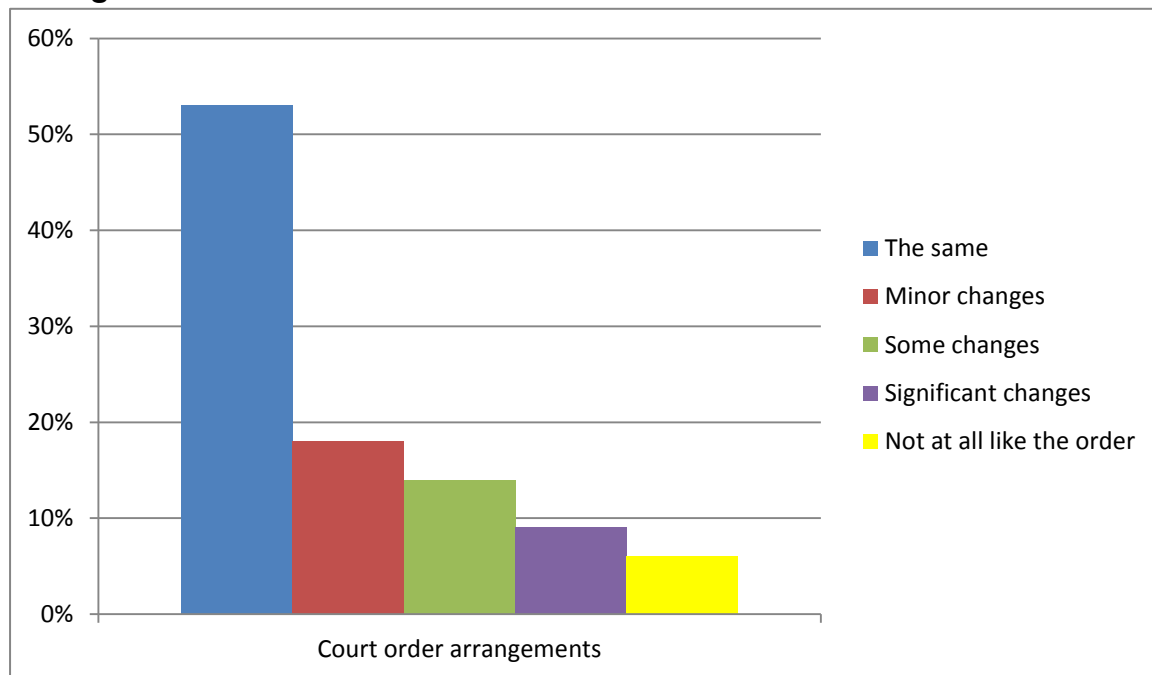
How happy were you with the order at the time it was made?



All participants were asked this. The majority of participants (60%, n=86) were happy with the order at the time it was made. This is similar to the previous question regarding whether the order was in the child's best interests, where 66% of participants believed that it was. 25% (n=36) of participants were unhappy with the order at the time it was made, which is also similar to the previous question where 31% did not think the order made was in the child's best interests. Directly comparing this question with the previous question, ***Did you feel that the order made by the court was in your child's best interests?***, only three participants who believed the order was not in their child's best interests then reported that they were happy with the order and only three participants who thought the order was in the child's best interests reported that they were unhappy with the order.

After the court proceedings

Is the way you and the other parent care for the child now the same as the arrangements set out in the court order?



All participants were asked this question. Just over half, 53% (n=75) of participants said that the arrangements are the same as those set out in the court order. Of the 47% (n=68) who report a change, only a small proportion (6% of total respondents, n=9) report that the arrangements are not at all like the order, with 32% of the total number of participants (n=46) reporting that there have been minor/some changes. The shape of the chart is encouraging with fewer and fewer participants reporting divergence from the court order.

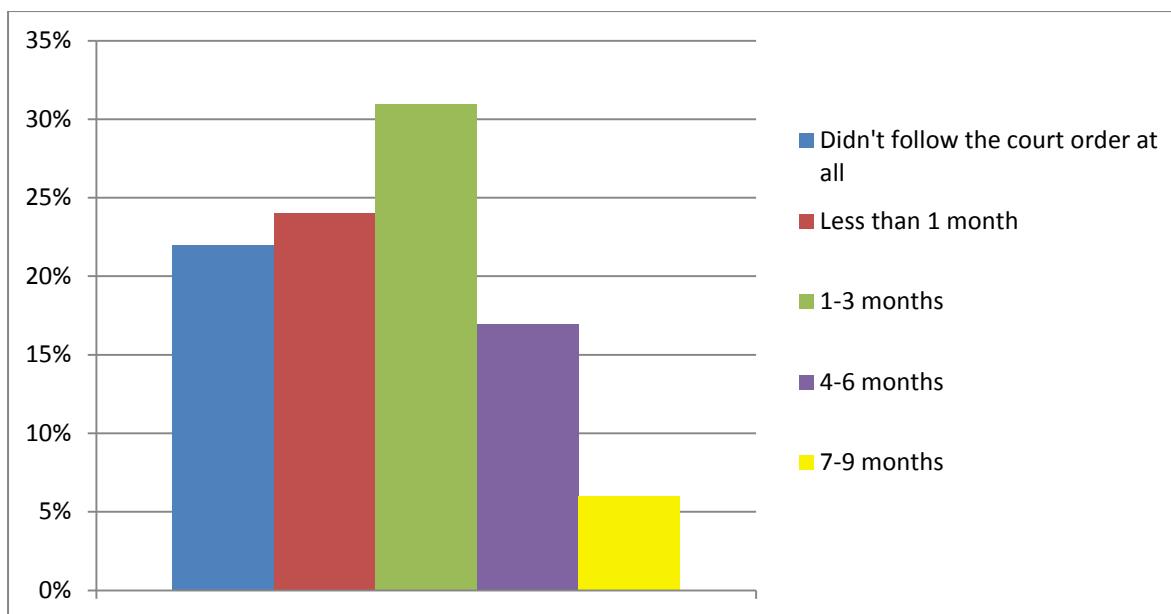
Participants were then asked: ***If there have been changes do you have any comments on the reasons for the changes?***

Key themes arising from this included:

- One parent stopping, cancelling or changing Spend Time With arrangements;
 - Examples were given of both the live with parent and the spend time with parent changing arrangements.
 - In some cases this was positive, e.g. one participant reported that they came to an agreement with the other parent for different spend time with arrangements than those set out in the court order, due to the working shifts changing for one of the parents.
- The arrangements have changed to suit the child better;
- Inconsistency of indirect contact;

Participants who said there had been a change were asked:

After the proceedings ended, for how long did you and the other parent follow the arrangements set out in the court order before the arrangements changed?



Of the 47% of participants that reported a change, 77% report that the arrangements changed within the first 3 months. Looking at the whole sample of 143 participants, this means that 36% (n=52) of arrangements changed within the first 3 months.⁸

Did you and the other parent both agree to the changes in the arrangements?

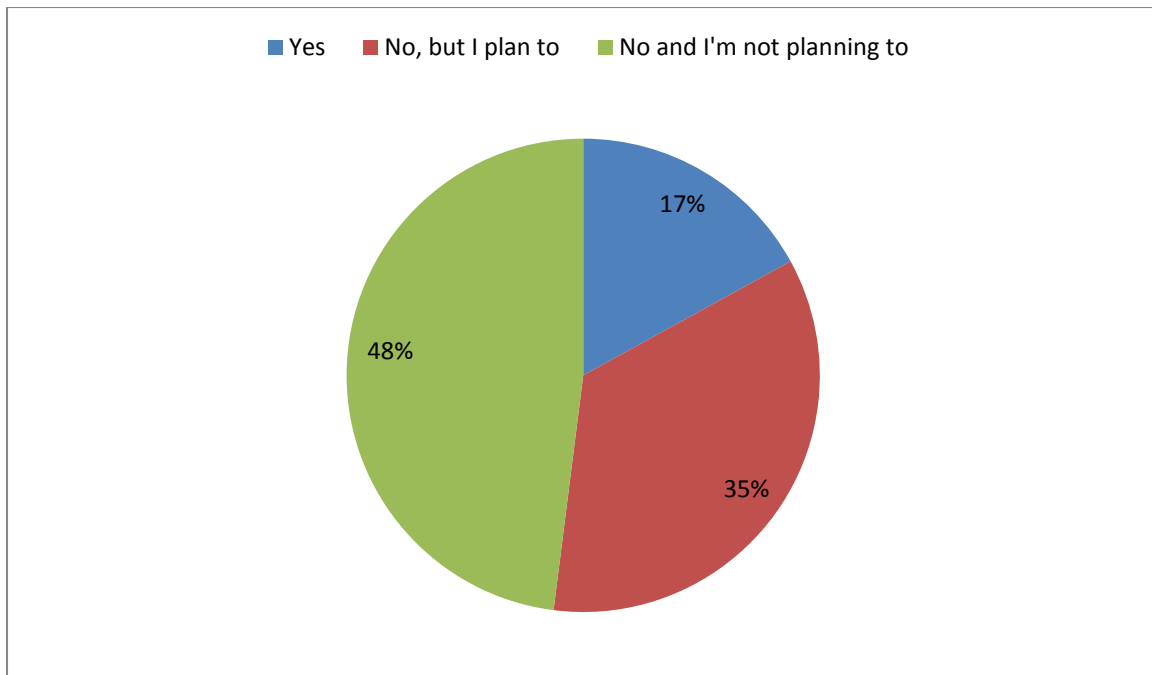
Of the participants who reported that there were changes in the arrangements, 39% (n=26) reported that both parents agreed to these changes, but 61% (n=40) did not agree.⁹

The 40 respondents who reported that both parents did not agree to the changes were asked:

Did you take any action to restore the court-ordered arrangements?

⁸ This sample was made up of cases that closed between six to nine months prior to the survey so we do not have information beyond 9 months. As not all cases had been closed 7+ months the proportion in the 7-9 month category is likely to be unreflective of the population.

⁹ There are 2 missing responses to this question where 2 people who reported there were changes in the arrangements did not state whether they agreed to them.



Of the 47% of participants who reported that there had been a change to the arrangements set out in the court order 17% (n=7) said that they did take action to restore the court-ordered arrangements. 35% (n=14) said that they haven't yet, but they do plan to and 48% (n=19) said that they haven't taken action and are not planning on doing so. Note that, as the question asked was whether **both** parents had agreed to the changes, the participant answering this question may have been in favour of the changes or even the parent who instigated the changes.

Those that answered 'no and I'm not planning to' skipped to the final question but those who answered yes or said they had not yet taken action but planned on doing so (21 participants) were asked:

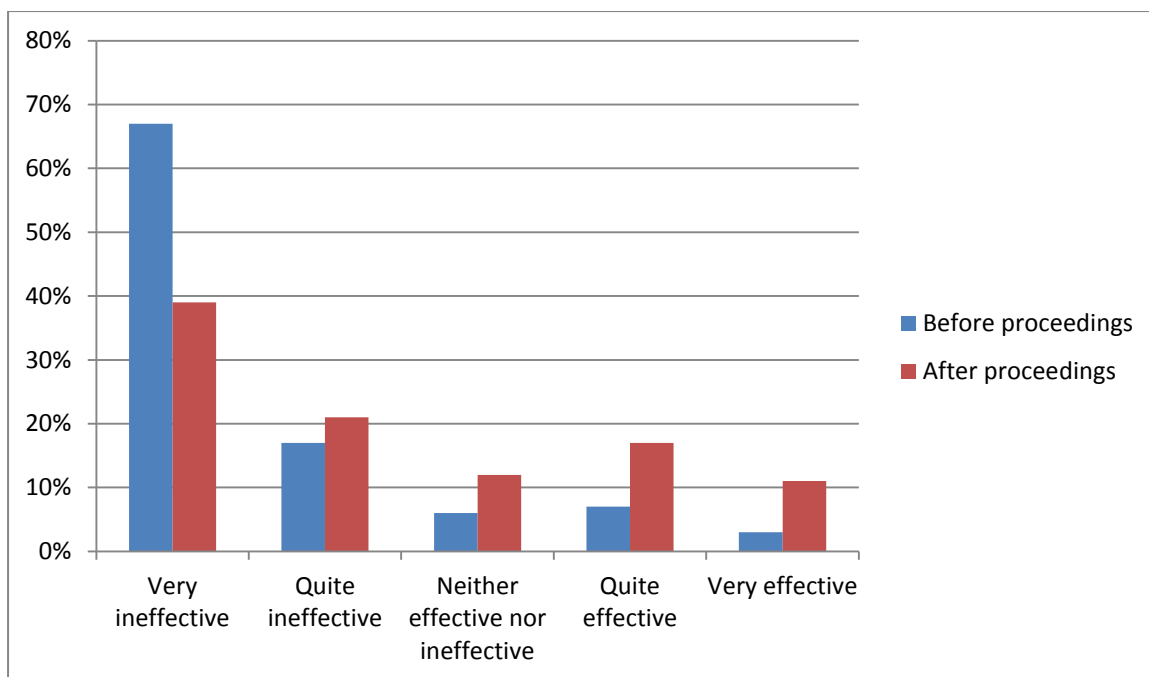
Please indicate what action you took or are planning to take. Participants were given a number of options of which they were able to select more than one:



- Making another application to court was the most common option (14 participants).
- Seeking legal advice was the second most selected option with 9 participants selecting this.
- 6 participants said that they would talk to the other parent about this.
- Going through a mediator was the least popular option (1 participant selected this). Reasons for this could be that mediation is compulsory prior to attending court and that the relationships between the parents in these cases are likely to be some of the least amicable as they could not follow the court order and could not agree changes which would not be conducive to mediation.

At the moment, how effective is communication between you and the other parent?

A chart to show the comparison of communication before and after court proceedings:



Of the 143 participants, 28% (n=40) of participants said that communication was effective after the court proceedings, and 60% (n=86) said that communication was ineffective.

In comparison to the effectiveness of communication before proceedings, participants reported a decrease in ineffective communication by 24 percentage points and an increase in effective communication by 18 percentage points. The most striking result is perhaps the 28 percentage point reduction in participants reporting that communication between them and the other parent is very ineffective after the court proceedings had ended.

5. Discussion

This section presents the key findings, together with some pointers for further enquiry and policy making.

Almost a quarter (24%) of participating parents reported that arrangements at the point the application was made were completely different from those in place before the proceedings. This suggests that in these cases something happened to ‘trigger’ the application, with participants identifying incidents such as safeguarding matters, child abductions¹⁰ or changes to spend time with arrangements.

The majority of participants (60% of the total) said that communication with the other parent was ineffective six to nine months after the court proceedings: compared with 28% of the total that described it as effective. This is not surprising given the heightened emotions and high levels of conflict commonly associated with private law cases, which are unlikely to abate in the short-term if at all. However, when comparing communication now to communication before the proceedings, there was a decrease of 24 percentage points in ineffective communication, and a rise in effective communication of 18 percentage points. The number of participants reporting very ineffective communication dropped by 28

¹⁰ We think it likely that this term was employed by participants to denote children who were not returned from contact.

percentage points. These are encouraging findings that imply an increased parental capacity in some cases to negotiate in the interests of the child.

Looking at what the court ordered in the sample cases, there was a marked drop in the number of cases where participants reported that no contact was taking place from 26% pre-proceedings to 2% on the conclusion, and a marked rise (22 percentage points) in regular and overnight contact arrangements. In some cases safeguards were put in place – either supervised or indirect contact. Nine per cent of participants said the child was living with one parent at the start of proceedings and another at the conclusion: a figure that we think may be influenced by some cases of child abductions as discussed above. In such a scenario the child would have: been living with one parent before the proceedings; moved to (or been 'kept by') the other parent, thus triggering the application; returned by the order of the court to the parent with whom they had lived before the application was made.

It is encouraging that 66% of participants said that the court order was in their child's best interests and 60% said they were happy with the order. A sizeable minority thought the order was not in their child's interests or were unhappy with the order (31% and 25% respectively).

It was also encouraging that 53% of participants said that the arrangements now were the same as set out in the court order, with a further 32% describing only minor/some changes. This suggests that many arrangements reached at court are reasonably stable. Further, it should not be assumed that all the changes have a negative impact. In 39% of cases where the arrangements changed, participants reported that these changes were agreed by both parents, with some participants describing making new arrangements in response to, for instance, new work patterns. It is interesting to note that, where changes are made, these tend to take place shortly after the proceedings. In just over a fifth of the cases where the arrangements changed the court order was not followed at all, suggesting that at least one party felt unable or unwilling to accede to the order. These are cases which pose immense challenges for courts where the dispute remains unresolved, notwithstanding the order. One tenth of participants said that they had made another application to court or planned to do so. Dispute resolution may have been ineffective in these cases, or circumstances may have changed for the worse.

Whilst this study is essentially descriptive and provides only a basic picture of interim outcomes following private law proceedings, it highlights several areas which may be of interest for debate and follow up. The research demonstrates the importance of ensuring that court orders are workable in the short-term and flexible enough to withstand changes in families' lives in the medium to long term. Further research to explore the reasons for changes in child arrangements in practice from those set out in court orders could contribute valuable information to help in achieving this aim. The research also suggests that court proceedings may have a positive effect on the effectiveness of communication between parents, although in over half the cases where the arrangements changed from those ordered by the court following the court proceedings, the changes were not agreed between the parties. This suggests that more needs to be done to equip parents with the tools to manage the arrangements for their children between themselves and it may be of benefit to provide additional information about sources of support following proceedings. Further research in this area could potentially bring substantial benefit to the family justice system and to children and families in the future.

We conclude with the following reflections upon the methodology and the implications for any future study:

- We decided to conduct the survey 6 to 9 months after the proceedings concluded to allow participants to reflect upon then and now, and to allow time for arrangements to become stable/unstable. This facilitated the collation of some interesting data but it did have disadvantages, specifically the high number of people who could not be contacted, some we believe as a consequence of changing their contact details
- An option was given for participants to complete the survey online, but only 11 participants did this. Telephone remains the most effective method for achieving a good response rate. An option that may be useful to consider if this survey was to be repeated is sending out e-mails instead of letters to participants which have a direct link to the survey to see if this generates a larger response. Participants may be less likely to change e-mail addresses than telephone numbers so this might be a valid route to explore.
- Changing the methodology from the 2013 and 2014 service user feedback survey to one that used survey monkey worked very well. As with the previous years, the delivery stage was resource intensive for the call handlers during the month that the telephone calls took place. We estimate that approximately 90-100 hours were spent in total during this time on the fieldwork.

Appendix A: the survey

Thank you for choosing to complete the 'Cafcass service user feedback - what happened next' survey online. You have been selected to complete the survey as someone who has had contact with Cafcass in relation to court proceedings about your child and whose case ended 6-9 months ago. The survey consists of mainly multiple choice questions about: the arrangements for your child before the court proceedings; satisfaction with the court order(s); and what has happened since the proceedings ended. The survey should take around 10-15 minutes to complete. If you have any questions about the survey or need help to complete it, please contact us using the contact details on the letter we sent you.

1. Please enter your survey number - this can be found at the top right of the letter we sent you:
2. Please enter your child's current age (if the application related to more than one child, please pick one child, it doesn't matter which, and answer all of the questions in the survey in relation to that child only)

Before the court proceedings

3. Who did your child live with before the application?

- Me **Skip to question 5**
- The other parent
- Both parents (living separately) in a shared care arrangement **Skip to question 6**
- Both parents in the same house **Skip to question 6**

4. Before the application, what were the arrangements for you to spend time with your child?

- I saw my child face to face regularly and my child stayed with me overnight sometimes
- I saw my child face to face regularly but they did not stay with me overnight
- I saw my child face to face only whilst supervised by another adult
- I had contact with my child only indirectly, for example, by letter, cards or phone calls
- I did not have any contact with my child
- Other (please specify) _____

For all responses, now skip to question 6

5. Before the application, what were the arrangements for your child to spend time with their other parent?

- My child's other parent saw my child face to face regularly and my child stayed with their other parent overnight sometimes
- My child's other parent saw my child face to face regularly but my child did not stay with them overnight
- My child's other parent saw my child face to face only when supervised by another adult
- My child's other parent had contact with my child only indirectly, for example, by letter, cards or phone calls

- My child's other parent did not have any contact with my child
- Other (please specify) _____

6. When the application was made were the same arrangements you have just described in place?

- The same arrangements were in place
- The arrangements were slightly different
- The arrangements were different
- The arrangements were very different
- The arrangements were completely different

If the arrangements weren't the same please could you describe in what way(s) they were different?

7. How effective was communication between you and the other parent before the court proceedings?

- Very ineffective
- Quite ineffective
- Neither effective nor ineffective
- Quite effective
- Very effective

The court proceedings

8. Did you have any legal advice or representation in the proceedings?

- Yes - throughout all the proceedings
- Yes - for some of the proceedings
- No - not at all

9. At the end of the court proceedings what did the court order about where your child should live?

- The court ordered my child should remain living with the other parent
- The court ordered that my child should move to live with the other parent
- The court ordered my child should remain living with me **Skip to question 11**
- The court ordered my child should move to live with me **Skip to question 11**
- The court ordered my child should live with me and the other parent under a shared care arrangement **Skip to question 12**
- The court did not make an order about where my child should live, my child was living with me at the end of proceedings **Skip to question 11**
- The court did not make an order about where my child should live, my child was living with the other parent at the end of the proceedings
- The court did not make an order about where my child should live, me and the other parent were caring for the child under a shared care arrangement at the end of the court proceedings **Skip to question 12**

10. At the end of the proceedings, what did the court order about you spending time with your child?

- The court ordered that I should see my child face to face regularly and they should stay with me overnight sometimes
- The court ordered that I should see my child face to face regularly but that they do not stay with me overnight
- The court ordered that I should see my child face to face only when supervised by another adult
- The court ordered that I should only have contact with my child indirectly, for example, by letter, cards or phone calls
- The court ordered that I should not have any contact with my child
- The court did not make any order
- Other (please specify) _____

For all responses, now skip to question 12

11. At the end of the proceedings what did the court order about your child spending time with their other parent?

- The court ordered that my child should see their other parent face to face regularly and should stay with them overnight sometimes
- The court ordered that my child should see their other parent face to face regularly but that they do not stay with them overnight
- The court ordered that my child's other parent should see my child face to face only when supervised by another adult
- The court ordered that my child's other parent should only have contact with my child indirectly, for example, by letter, cards or phone calls
- The court ordered that my child's other parent should not have any contact with my child
- The court did not make any order
- Other (please specify) _____

12. Was the order made by consent (this means did you and the other party both agree to the order being made)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

13. Did you feel that the order made by the court was in your child's best interests?

- Completely
- Mostly
- Not sure
- Not really
- Not at all

Do you have any comments on why you feel this way?**14.** How happy were you with the order at the time it was made?

- Very happy
- Quite happy
- Neutral
- Quite unhappy
- Very unhappy

After the court proceedings

15. Is the way you and the other parent care for your child now the same as the arrangements set out in the court order?

- The same **Skip to question 20**
- Minor changes
- Some changes
- Significant changes
- Not at all like the order

If there have been changes do you have any comments on the reasons for the changes?

16. After the proceedings ended, for how long did you and the other parent follow the arrangements set out in the court order before the arrangements changed?

- We didn't follow the court's arrangements at all
- Less than 1 month
- 1 to 3 months
- 4 to 6 months
- 7 to 9 months

17. Did you and the other parent both agree to the changes in the arrangements?

- Yes **Skip to question 20**
- No

18. Did you take any action to restore the court-ordered arrangements?

- Yes
- No, but I plan to
- No and I'm not planning to **Skip to question 20**

19. Please indicate what action you took or are planning to take - select all that apply:

- Talk to other parent
- Seek advice from friends and family
- Seek advice from a relevant organisation (e.g. family lives)
- Go to a mediator
- Seek legal advice
- Make another application to court

- Other (please specify) _____

20. At the moment, how effective is communication between you and the other parent?

- Very ineffective
- Quite ineffective
- Neither effective nor ineffective
- Quite effective
- Very effective

Appendix B

Table 1: Breakdown in numbers for the reported contact taking place between the parent the child does not live with, reported by both the parents.

	Child lives with me but has the following contact with the other parent (41%):	Child lives with the other parent but has the following contact with me (48%):
Face to face regularly including overnight	46% (27)	43% (30)
Face to face regularly but not overnight	24% (14)	15% (10)
Face to face supervised	8% (5)	7% (5)
Indirect contact e.g. letters etc.	3% (2)	3% (2)
No contact at all	19% (11)	32% (22)
Total	100% (59)	100% (69)

Table 2: Breakdown in numbers for the Spend Time With contact taking place before the application to court and the Spend Time With contact ordered by the court

Court order	Spend time with contact before the court application	Spend time with contact ordered by the court
Face to face regularly including overnight	44% (57)	66% (87)
Face to face regularly but not overnight	19% (24)	15% (20)
Face to face supervised	8% (10)	5% (7)
Indirect contact e.g. letters etc.	3% (4)	7% (9)
No contact at all	26% (33)	2% (3)
The court did not make any order	N/A	5% (7)

Total	100% (128)	100% (133)
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Table 3: the breakdown of service users who participated in the survey by service area

Service Area	Participants
A1	6
A2	4
A3	3
A4	9
A5	6
A6	7
A7	19
A8	9
A9	13
A10	9
A11	16
A12	7
A13	2
A14	13
A15	11
A16	3
A17	6
Total	143