



JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

His Honour Judge Stephen Wildblood QC

Designated Family Judge for Bristol, Gloucestershire and North Somerset

“It’s your Family Court”- Debate to discuss the workings of the Family Court

Members of the Public and Professional Court users are invited to join an on-line debate to discuss the workings of the Family Court which will take place on the following date:

Wednesday 17 November 2021 from 4.30pm to 6.30pm via Microsoft Team.

Joining instructions:

[Click here to join the meeting](#) via Microsoft Teams or by telephone by dialing 020 3443 8791 then enter Phone Conference ID: 436 171 273#

In order to gauge interest in this event, please can you confirm your attendance to the Family Delivery Manager – Jerry Fowler by telephone to 0117 3664880 or by e-mail to jerry.fowler@justice.gov.uk

The Panel:

The debate will be hosted by the Designated Family Judge- His Honour Judge Stephen Wildblood QC with contributions from Guest Speakers:

1. Claire Molyneux - Family Mediator, of Mills and Reeve, solicitors.
2. Jeremy Thompson- Bristol Manager of Support Through Court.
3. Amanda Crutchley- University of Law and LIP scheme co-ordinator.
4. Jerry Fowler- Family Delivery Manager- Bristol Civil and Family Justice Centre.
5. Emma Whewell, solicitor, mediator and Senior lecturer in law – UWE.

The Topics

The debate will focus on some specific topics to be confirmed but will include:

1. The public’s view on the use of mediation in the Family courts as opposed to attending court. How can we increase the use of mediation and arbitration as a means of resolving disagreements in relation to children, finances and other issues?
2. How do you feel about hearings being carried out remotely (e.g. by Microsoft Teams) rather than by everyone attending a courtroom?
3. How can we improve the support that is available to litigants in person in dealing with the Family Court?
4. How can we reduce the number of cases that are coming into the Family Court?

Terms of reference for this debate- please read

The Family Court wishes to hear the view of the General Public and its perception on how the Family Court operates in this area and how we might serve the local population better. So, all comments will be welcomed. However, the debate **cannot** consider any issues relating to specific cases that have been or are currently in the Family Court system; not only would it be unfair for such issues to be discussed, it would also be illegal. We regret to say that if anyone begins to raise issues relating to a specific case, the chair of the debate (HHJ Wildblood QC) will have to intervene. Further, Judges cannot be asked to comment on political matters or whether the current law should be changed.