

The Safeguarding Process

An application is made for a step-parent adoption under the Royal Court (Adoption) (Guernsey and Alderney) Rules, 2006



The Court appoints a Safeguarder



The prospective adopter completes the Adoption Forms, Authorisation Forms and Referee Contact Form and returns them to Safeguarder Services



The allocated Safeguarder will interview the prospective adoptive parents individually and together, will conduct a wishes and feelings meeting with the child, will make contact with the birth parents to clarify permissions, and will interview the referees.



The Safeguarder prepares an advisory report for the court with recommendations



Court hearing and final decision/Order.
End of Safeguarder's involvement



Parental Responsibility

From January 2010 step-parents can acquire parental responsibility by:

- Being appointed as a guardian to care for a child if their parent dies
 - Obtaining a residence order from the court for a child to live with them, or
 - Adopting the child
- see Parental Responsibility leaflet for further details

Safeguarder Services 
Putting children and young people first

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Safeguarder Services

STEP-PARENT ADOPTIONS



**Putting children and young
people first**

Contact Tel: 743700

Safeguarder Services – Putting children and young people first

Who are we?

The Safeguarder Service was set up in January 2008, bringing together the services previously provided by the Court Welfare and Guardian ad litem services.

We work for the courts, independently of Health and Social Services, Education Department and other agencies.

The legal basis of the Safeguarder Service is The Children (Guernsey and Alderney) Law 2008.

What do we do?

Our role is to:

- Safeguard and promote the interests of children and young people involved in family court proceedings and ensure that children's views are heard
- Make recommendations to the courts on the best arrangements for children's care
- Provide Guardians ad litem (now called Public Law Safeguarders) when requested to do so by the court
- Offer a free mediation service to attempt to resolve disputes or disagreements outside of the court environment.

We become involved:

- When parents or carers are separating or divorcing and have not reached agreement on the care of their children
- Or when social services have become involved and children's safety is potentially at risk
- Or when children are being adopted

How do we work?

Once the Court has appointed a Safeguarder we will write to you enclosing the relevant forms for you to complete. We will then arrange to meet with you jointly and individually, focussing on your life history and approach to parenting. We will also contact your referees, as well as the birth parents to clarify permissions. We will conduct an age-appropriate 'wishes and feelings' interview with each child, or observe them in your care. We may also contact other agencies such as Education and Health & Social Services so we have all the relevant information. We will then write a report and share it with you prior to the final hearing. The birth parents will also see the parts of the report relevant to them.

What about confidentiality?

All the relevant information you provide will be included in our report which is confidential to the court and all parties involved.

However, if the Safeguarder Service believes that a child is at risk of harm it is our responsibility to contact Health and Social Services. As we believe in the importance of working in an open and honest way we will if possible inform you before doing so.

Will my children go to Court?

No – children are not usually asked to go to Court, it is the role of the Safeguarder to ensure that their views are passed on to the Judge. If they wish to, however, they may attend the final hearing.

Charges:

Safeguarder Services may charge a fee for step-parent adoptions..

Our Values

We respect the needs, dignity and rights of all individuals in a non-discriminatory way

We work in a non-judgemental, fair and honest manner

We are committed to a high quality child-centred service

Private and Public Law

Mediation and Conciliation

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