

# Power Pack

**Information for children who have a case  
in a family court in England or Wales**





This pack is for children who have a case in a family court.

Don't worry. You have not done anything wrong.



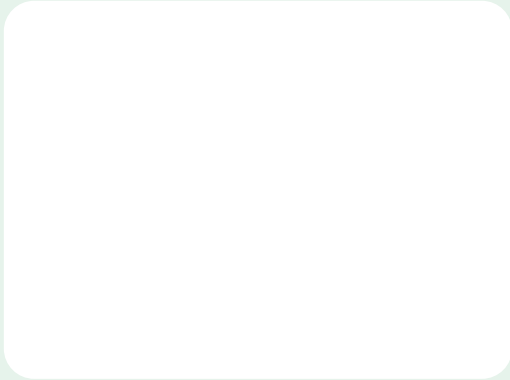
Different people will come to see you to talk about what is happening. They will help you read this pack.

### **This information pack is in different parts:**

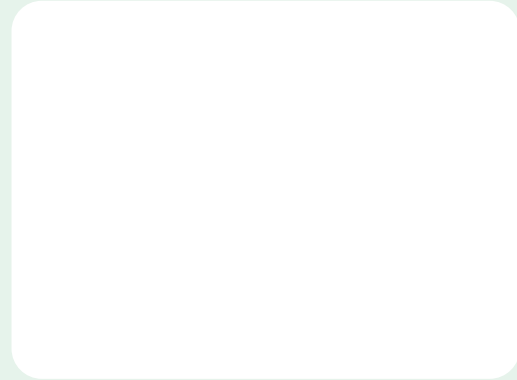
Important things about me

1. Useful words
2. The children's guardian
3. Your solicitor
4. The court
5. Your rights
6. Help

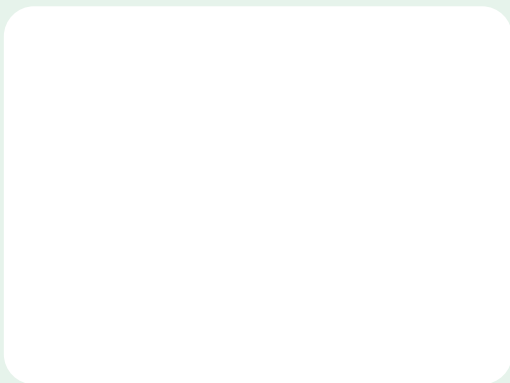
# Important things about me



My name



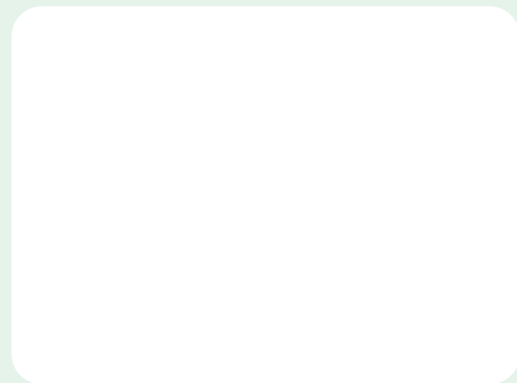
Who I live with



The children's guardian



\_\_\_\_\_

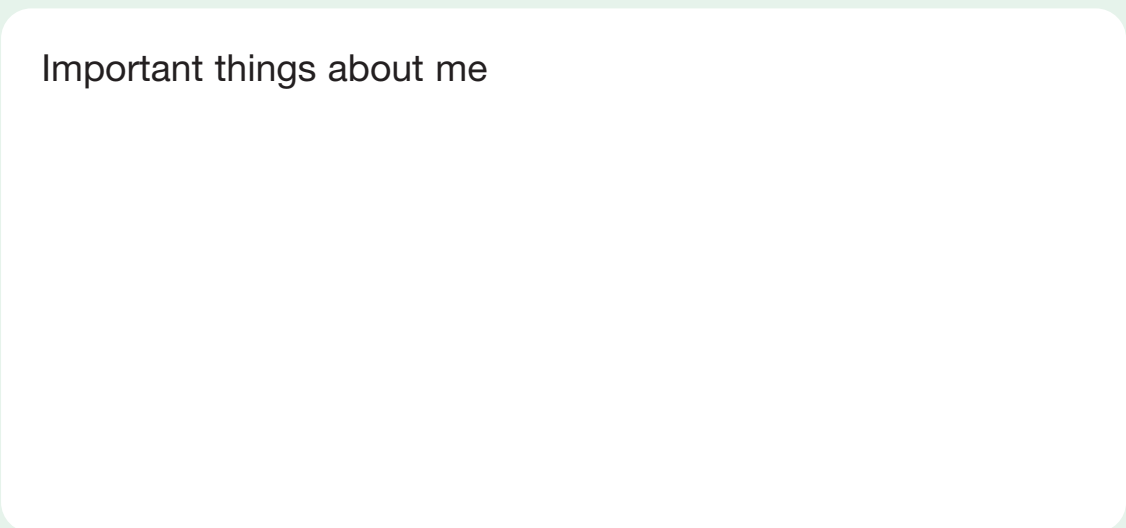


My solicitor



\_\_\_\_\_

Important things about me





# 1 Useful words

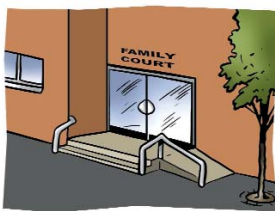
These are some of the words to do with the court.



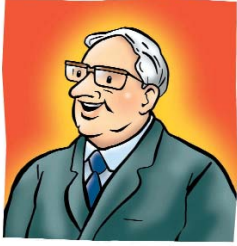
**Children's guardian:** someone who knows about children and their families. They help the judge or magistrates make their decision.



**Solicitor:** someone who knows a lot about the law. They will help you understand what is happening. They will speak for you in court and say what you want to happen.



**Court:** a building where people meet to sort out problems and the law. Your case at court is about deciding who you will live with.



**Judge or magistrate:** the person in charge at the court. They know a lot about the law. They listen to what everyone has to say and then decide what will happen.



**Law:** important rules for everyone to follow.



**Looked after:** if a child or young person is cared for by the local authority then they are 'looked after'.



**Social worker:** someone who helps children and families. They work for social services.



**Children's rights officer or advocate:** someone who can help you say what you think and how you feel. They will not speak for you in court.



The children's guardian knows about children and their families

## 2 The children's guardian



The children's guardian will talk to you and ask you about what you want to happen.



They will also talk to your family and other people who are important to you. Tell the children's guardian if there is someone you want them to meet.

## Getting to know the children's guardian



You can choose to talk to the children's guardian on your own



- or you can be with your solicitor



- or you can be with someone else. If you have brothers or sisters you can be all together if you want.



The children's guardian will write a report. This helps the judge or magistrates make a decision about who you will live with and who you will see.

Other people like your parents will read the report. Ask if you want to see the report.

## At court



There will be a meeting at the court.



The children's guardian will say what you want to happen. They will also say what they think is best for you. Sometimes this is not what you want.

## Who will tell me the decision?



The children's guardian must make sure you know what the judge or magistrates have decided.

## What if I am unhappy about the children's guardian?



If you are unhappy with the children's guardian tell your social worker or solicitor.



A solicitor knows a lot about the law. Your solicitor will speak for you in court.

## 3 Your solicitor



Your solicitor will come to talk to you and ask you what you want to happen.



You can choose to talk to your solicitor on your own

- or you can be with the children's guardian

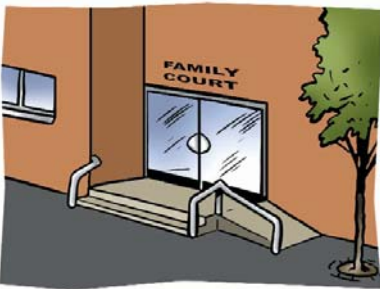


- or you can be with someone else. If you have brothers or sisters you can be all together if you want.



Tell your solicitor if you are not seeing someone you want to see or if you are worried about something.

## At court



There will be meetings at the court.



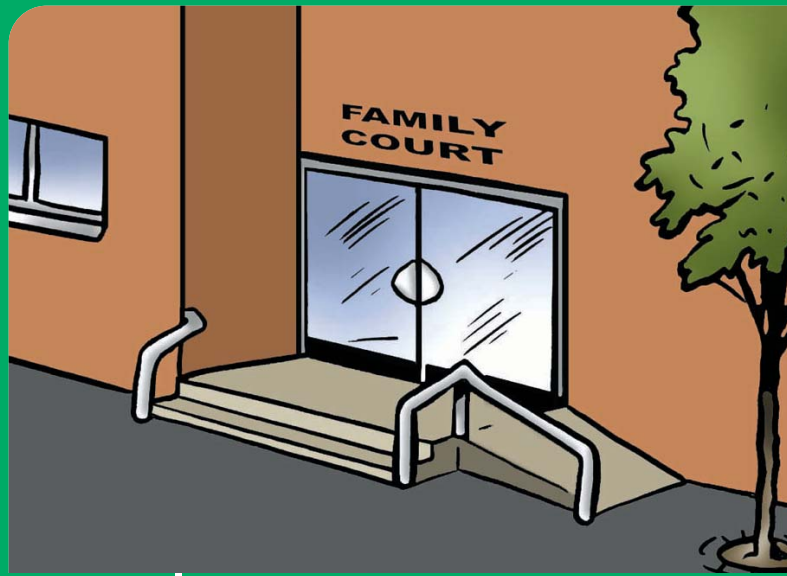
Your solicitor will say what you want to happen.

The judge or magistrates will listen to what everyone has to say before making a decision.

## What if I am unhappy about my solicitor?



If you are unhappy with your solicitor tell the children's guardian or your social worker.



Courts are buildings where people meet to sort out problems and the law.

## 4 The court

Your case will be at a family court. It is not a criminal court because you have not done anything wrong.

### The judge or magistrates



The judge or magistrates are in charge. They listen to what everyone has to say. Then they make a decision about what should happen.

### Who will go to court about my case?



Your parents will go to the court with their solicitor and say what they want to happen.



A social worker or someone from social services will go to court with their solicitor and say what they want to happen.



The children's guardian will go to court and say what they want to happen.



Your solicitor will go to court to say what you want to happen. Tell your solicitor or the children's guardian if you want to go to court.



Sometimes other people go to court, like your teacher or doctor or some other members of your family. Ask the children's guardian or your solicitor about this.

## The welfare checklist



The judge or magistrates have to think about a list of things before they make a decision.



These include

- your wishes and feelings



- important information about you, your family and things you need



- if you have been hurt or harmed



- if your parents or someone else in your family can look after you



- what would happen if anything changed for you.



Children have rights

## 5 Your rights

People have to let you do some things. It is the law. This part is about your rights when there is a case about you in court.

### Children's guardian



You have the right to see the children's guardian. They will listen to you. They will ask you about

- what you want to happen
- who you want to live with
- who you want to see.

### Solicitor



You have the right to your own solicitor. They will also ask you about what you want to happen. They will speak up for you in court.

## The court



You can say if you want to go to court or not. Talk to the children's guardian or your solicitor about this.

## What is written down?



The children's guardian will write a report about what everyone wants to happen.



Tell the children's guardian if you want to read this report. You can ask them to read it to you.



You can ask for the report to be in large print, on a tape or have someone sign for you. Or ask for it in another way that helps you.

## Knowing what is going on



The children's guardian and your solicitor must tell you what is going on.

## Knowing what has been decided



You have the right to know what the judge or magistrates have decided. The children's guardian must make sure you are told.

## What if things don't happen?



If things the judge or magistrates have decided don't happen you can still tell your solicitor. Make sure you know how to contact your solicitor. Get someone to help you. Your solicitor may take your case back to court.

## What if I have a right to something and people say no?



Talk to the children's guardian or your solicitor if you think this is happening.



There are phone numbers at the end of this pack. Your social worker can help you.



The children's guardian,  
or your solicitor or social  
worker can help you.

## 6 Help page

### People who can help you speak up for yourself

#### National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

☎ Freephone 0800 61 61 01

Textphone 0777 333 4555

Email [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)

[www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)

#### The Voice for the Child in Care (VCC)

☎ Freephone 0808 800 5792

Email [help@vcc-uk.org](mailto:help@vcc-uk.org)

[www.vcc-uk.org](http://www.vcc-uk.org)

### People who can help you if you have any problems or worries

#### NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

☎ Freephone 0808 800 5000

Textphone 0800 056 0566

Email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

## **NSPCC Cymru/Wales Child Protection Helpline**

 Freephone **0808 100 2524**

Textphone **0808 100 1033**

Email [helplinecymru@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:helplinecymru@nspcc.org.uk)

## **NSPCC Asian Child Protection Helpline**

 Freephone **0800 096 7719** to speak to an Asian adviser in English

## **ChildLine**

 Freephone **0800 1111**

Textphone **0800 400 222**

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## **People the government has asked to make sure your rights are respected**

### **In England: The Children's Rights Director**

 Freephone **0800 528 0731**

Email [TheTeam.rights4me@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:TheTeam.rights4me@csci.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.rights4me.org.uk](http://www.rights4me.org.uk)

### **In Wales: The Children's Commissioner for Wales**

 Telephone **01792 765 600**

Email [post@childcomwales.org.uk](mailto:post@childcomwales.org.uk)

[www.childcom.org.uk](http://www.childcom.org.uk)

# People who have helped us with Power Pack

Power Pack Easy Read Version has been developed by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and Children's Rights, Birmingham (ROC).

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It has been supported by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS).

The NSPCC would like to thank everyone who has helped. This is who they are

- the young people and advocates from the Saturday disabled ROC group of Children's Rights, Birmingham
- other young people in focus groups
- the advisory group and sub-groups
- focus groups of foster carers and children's guardians.

Several organisations helped us write Power Pack. This is who they are

City of Bradford Social Services Department; Inner London Family Proceedings Court; Makaton Vocabulary Development Project (MVDP); National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS); RNID for deaf and hard of hearing people; Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB); SCOPE; Voice UK.

The NSPCC believes that all children have the right to be happy and safe, and to have their rights respected by adults.

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