

## **Consultation on: Children and Adoption Act 2006 – Financial Regulations for Contact Activity Directions and Conditions.**

Most parents, when they separate, make arrangements between themselves for the care of and contact with their children. Those who seek resolution through courts have found their experiences to be slow or adversarial and many find the contact arrangements prescribed dissatisfactory. This is acknowledged by the Welsh Assembly Government and the Senior Judiciary.

The Children and Adoption Act 2006 in terms of the provision for contact activities is aimed at helping separating parents to make arrangements in the best interests of their child. New provisions propose to provide information and advice at the time of separation to help parents reach agreement more effectively.

For parents who still decide to use the judicial system, more flexible powers will be put in place to separate parents and minimise the harmful effects on the child.

Courts will also be able to impose a requirement for unpaid work on individuals who breach their contact order.

The consultation discusses financial subsidy using the legal aid model for those who have enforced contact activity orders placed upon them. The Act also provides the courts with powers to:

- make a direction requiring parents to undertake activities before a contact order is made
- attach a condition to a contact order which may require attendance at a given activity
- when a contact order is breached, enforce unpaid voluntary work
- award financial compensation from one party to another.

### **Implications for CVS:**

- There may be potential for the Volunteer Centre to publicise the range of voluntary activities to the courts and work in partnership with them to allocate activities to parents who have breached contact orders (similar to the Youth Offending Panel).

- There is a need to raise awareness to parents, volunteers and others of support organisations in the Voluntary Sector such as Barnardo's Parenting Matters or the Parent Network and also of any courses available that may be useful to the parents in question.
- If the financial subsidy is agreed, there will be a need for CVS to make organisations working with parents aware of the criteria. Communities First staff will need to be aware too.