

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THE PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AGREEMENT

READ THESE NOTES BEFORE YOU MAKE THE AGREEMENT

1. About the Parental Responsibility Agreement

The making of this Agreement will affect the legal position of the mother or father. You should both obtain legal advice independently of each other from different solicitors. You may be eligible for legal aid.

2. Completing the Form of Parental Responsibility Agreement

Please use black ink (the Agreement will be copied). Put the name of one child only on the form - a separate form of Parental Responsibility Agreement must be completed for each child, if the father is to have parental responsibility for more than one child.

Do not sign the Agreement at this stage.

3. When you have completed the Agreement (before signing)

Take the form to a local court office or to the Office of Care and Protection in the Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, Belfast (see Contact Details on the Northern Ireland Court Service website www.courtsni.gov.uk). A Master (in the High Court) or a Lay Magistrate of the Family Proceedings Court or the Clerk of Petty Sessions (or the authorised Deputy of the Clerk of Petty Sessions) will witness your signature. He or she will require you to produce the following documents before witnessing your signature on the Agreement -

To the mother: you will need to prove that you are the child's mother, so you must produce the child's full birth certificate (**not** the short birth certificate). And you will also need evidence of identity showing a photograph or signature (for example a full or provisional Northern Ireland driving licence, official pass or passport).

To the father: you will also need evidence of identity showing a photograph and signature.

4. When the Agreement has been signed and witnessed

Make two copies of the Agreement (you do not need to copy these notes). Take or send the original of the signed and witnessed Agreement and the two copies to the Office of Care and Protection, Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 3JF.

The Office of Care and Protection will record the Agreement and keep the original. A copy will be sent to each parent at the address which that parent has given on the Agreement. A Parental Responsibility Agreement will not take effect until it has been recorded in the Office of Care and Protection. That date will appear on the copies sent to the parents.

5. Ending the Agreement

Once a Parental Responsibility Agreement has been made and has taken effect by being recorded in the Office of Care and Protection it can only be brought to an end:

- by an order of the court made on the application of any person who has parental responsibility for the child
- by an order of the court made on the application of the child with the leave of the court
- when the child reaches the age of 18.