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**The information on these pages is only provided for general guidance. If you do have a legal problem you must ensure that you obtain individual independent legal advice to protect your interests and rights**

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## ***Children***

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The philosophy behind the Children Act 1989 is that wherever possible the parents should try to reach agreement about what is to happen to the children. Indeed, the Court will only make an order about children if it feels that it is necessary to do so in the child's best interests. The types of order that the Court can make include :

- A Residence Order - saying where a child will live
- A Contact Order - telling the person who the child lives with, who the child shall see or correspond with
- A Prohibited Steps Order - preventing someone from taking certain steps, eg taking the child abroad
- A Specific Issue Order to resolve a particular dispute between parents (for instance whether a child should receive private or state education)

The Court CAN NOT in general make a maintenance order for children. That is now done by the Child Support Agency unless certain special circumstances exist. The Court can also make special orders such as Emergency Protection Orders or Care Orders where children are being abused or are at risk of harm.

### ***It is also that court which makes Adoption Orders***

Whenever a Court has to take a decision about children, it will give paramount consideration to what is in the child's best interests. It is the child's well being which is the most important thing. If there is a genuine dispute between the parents which they are not able to resolve by agreement, it would be sensible to consult a Solicitor.