

MACROBERTS

LLP

Glasgow | Edinburgh | Dundee

Coping with COVID-19:
Guidance & Support from MacRoberts

Personal & Family Matters –
FAQs & Practical Steps

1. Resources for your family

Being in the same household for an indeterminate period of time may see new or existing strains on your own family. If these worries start to get too much, there are some useful online resources to help you to stay calm and practice mindfulness:

CALM:
[Take a Deep
Breath](#)

Mind:
[Information
on
Mindfulness](#)

NHS:
[Every Mind
Matters](#)

Additional support with communication with your partner will be available through family therapists. We can put you in touch with recommended family therapists or mediators who may be able to offer a remote or Skype service at this time.

Mediation services can still operate, similar to shuttle mediation but with using remote rather than face to face meetings, and [Jacqueline Stroud](#) would be pleased to discuss this with you.

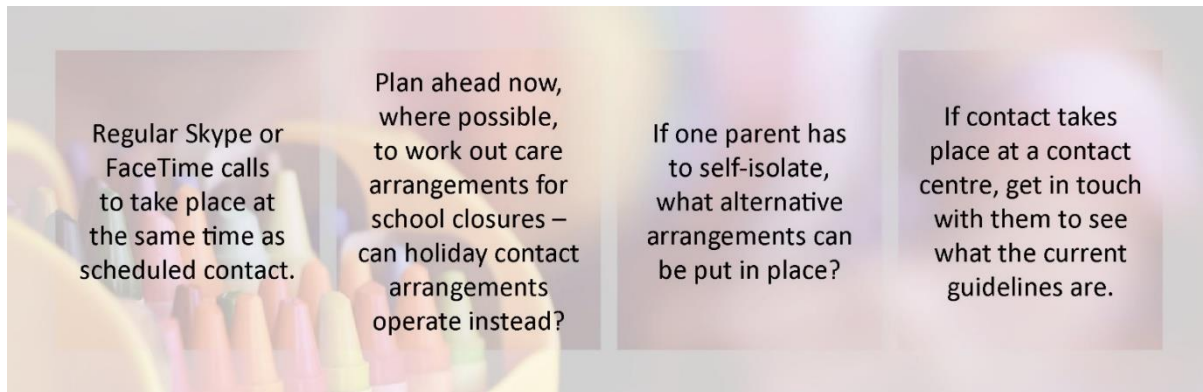
2. Children

These uncertain times have impacted on absolutely everyone, no matter their age, stage and location. We are seeing an increasing amount of queries from separated families about a parent's legal obligations relating to a child or children's contact with the other parent. Equally, contact arrangements may be in place for grandparents, siblings and other family members.

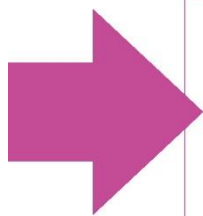
If you have an arrangement in place then, as far as possible, that arrangement should be followed. Continuity will be in the best interests of the children. At the moment "essential travel" is considered to include contact arrangements. That, of course, needs to be balanced against evolving Government guidelines, and health considerations for the families involved.



If contact cannot take place, then you should think about the following:



There may also be parents currently abroad with their children who are unable to return due to current travel restrictions. Whilst it is hoped no one would take advantage of these restrictions, the Courts are still open and if emergency orders are required, there are capabilities to manage this.



Any action taken for failure to comply with Court orders will no doubt rely on the facts and circumstances of each particular case.

You should speak to a solicitor if you are unsure of your obligations, or if arrangements need to be made where direct communications with the other parent are not possible.

These are uncertain times and it is hoped that all can take a sensible approach in keeping communications open between children and their parents, not least as it is in the children's best interests.

3. Protective orders

It is recognised that restrictions on movement may directly impact on those persons and children that unfortunately are exposed to domestic violence.

- Regular Skype or FaceTime calls to take place at the same time as scheduled contact.
- The police should always be contacted if you have immediate concerns for your safety. If legal advice is needed on issues which may arise within the household, please contact us.

4. Financial impact

We have already seen in the press that the financial landscape is changing and this is having a knock-on effect on many investments. There have been changes to a number of interests that can be a crucial part of settlement negotiations if they are considered matrimonial property, or a resource available for a capital sum, pensions share, aliment or maintenance payment.

The best advice we can give at the moment is speak to us or your financial advisor on best steps to manage these changes or how best to approach this in ongoing negotiations.

Linked to financial strains is the job uncertainty for many at the moment, particularly for those unable to work from home, or those who work on a consultancy basis or are business owners.

Please see our [COVID-19: Guidance for Businesses in Scotland](#) which has employment advice in this area.

Information on benefits and other financial help can be found here:

Citizens Advice:
[Coronavirus: What it means for you](#)

Johnston Carmichael:
[Money advice](#)

Our specialist Family Law team advises on all aspects of family law, from separation, divorce and child law to pre- and post-nuptial agreements, civil partnerships and mediation.

Our lawyers are on hand to provide advice and assistance, so please do not hesitate to get in touch with [our team](#).