



SPARTAN BROTHERHOOD
SPARTAN FAMILY MANUAL

SEPARATED FATHERS

Your Children. Your Responsibilities. Your Rights. Your Next Move.

"Your relationship ended. Your fatherhood didn't."

SPARTAN BROTHERHOOD
NO MAN FIGHTS ALONE

ENGLAND & WALES • FIRST EDITION • 2026

SPARTAN FAMILY MANUAL

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This manual provides general information for separated fathers in England and Wales. It is not legal advice and does not replace advice from a solicitor or another suitably qualified professional about your circumstances.

Family cases are fact-specific. Domestic abuse, safeguarding concerns, allegations of harm, international issues and existing court orders can substantially change what should happen next. Court forms, fees, Child Maintenance Service rules and financial thresholds can also change. Check the current official source before acting.

If a child or adult is in immediate danger, contact the emergency services. If there is an immediate risk of a child being removed from the jurisdiction or another urgent safeguarding issue, obtain urgent legal advice.

SPARTAN BROTHERHOOD

Important Scope

Spartan Brotherhood provides education, practical wellbeing information, peer-support information, signposting and support resources.

Spartan Brotherhood does not provide legal advice or legal representation, medical or psychological diagnosis, psychotherapy, clinical treatment, emergency mental-health intervention, occupational-health assessment, or financial or debt advice. This manual is not a substitute for advice from a solicitor or another suitably qualified professional about your circumstances.

If a child or adult is in immediate danger, call **999**. For urgent mental-health support, use **NHS 111** or call Samaritans on **116 123** (free, day or night). CALM: **0800 58 58 58**. Full routes are on the Support page at the back of this manual.

HOW CLAIMS ARE LABELLED

LAW

Legislation, rules and binding legal principles.

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

How HMCTS, Cafcass, CMS and other public bodies describe their processes.

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Organisational steps that may help you navigate the situation.

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

Grounded principles for responding with discipline, responsibility and a child-centred focus.

SPARTAN FAMILY MANUAL

THE SPARTAN FOUNDATION

Separation can turn an ordinary week into a fight over housing, money, school, contact, maintenance, allegations and fear. This manual exists to slow that chaos down.

It does not promise an outcome. It does not assume fathers are always right or mothers are always wrong. It does not turn a child into the prize in a dispute between adults.

The objective is simpler: establish what happened, understand what the law or official process actually says, preserve reliable evidence, identify what you can control, and make the next responsible move.

RULE 1 — DO NOT MAKE YOUR CHILD CHOOSE

Your child is not your messenger, witness, therapist or investigator. Do not interrogate them after contact, recruit them to your side, or ask them to collect evidence.

RULE 2 — MAINTENANCE AND CONTACT ARE SEPARATE

Paying child maintenance does not purchase contact. Being prevented from seeing a child does not create a right to stop maintenance. Challenge each problem through its proper route.

RULE 3 — WRITE AS IF IT MAY BE READ IN COURT

Keep difficult communication focused on what happened, what the child needs, what you propose, and when you need an answer. Avoid insults, threats, repeated messaging and social-media warfare.

SPARTAN FAMILY MANUAL · SEPARATED FATHERS

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PART I

WE HAVE SEPARATED

01 The First 72 Hours

02 Understanding Your Position as Dad

03 Parental Responsibility

A man with short dark hair, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt, is sitting at a dark table. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. His hands are clasped in front of him. To his right is a white mug. In the background, there is a kitchen area with a lamp and some kitchenware on a shelf.

CHAPTER 1

THE FIRST 72 HOURS

Stabilise first. You do not need to solve the next eighteen years in three days.

Start with safety

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Establish where the children are, whether they are safe, what they need tonight, and whether any medication, school or care arrangements require immediate attention.

- Separate anger from genuine risk.
- Use emergency services for immediate danger.
- Do not manufacture an emergency simply because separation is painful.

Preserve, do not weaponise

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

Create a secure folder for orders, CMS letters, school correspondence, relevant medical information, arrangements, payments and important messages.

- Keep originals.
- Do not alter screenshots.
- Do not provoke the other parent to manufacture evidence.
- Never ask a child to gather evidence.

Control communication

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Short, factual and child-focused messages create a clearer record than arguments. Record cancelled arrangements with date, time, reason given and any alternative you proposed.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING YOUR POSITION AS DAD

Being a father, having parental responsibility, living with a child and having a court order are related concepts, but they are not the same thing.

Do not assume

LAW

Your legal position depends on facts such as parentage, marriage/civil partnership status, birth registration, agreements and court orders. Establish the position before making demands based on rights you may or may not hold.

Fatherhood is more than a legal status

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

Reliability, safe care, appropriate communication, school involvement, health awareness and keeping commitments matter in real life. Build the relationship you want your child to remember.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 3

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parental responsibility concerns legal rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority relating to a child.

How it can arise

LAW

A mother ordinarily has parental responsibility from birth. A father may have it through marriage/civil partnership in applicable circumstances, qualifying birth registration, a parental responsibility agreement or a court order. Rules depend on the facts and dates involved.

What it means in practice

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Parental responsibility is relevant to major decisions such as education, medical treatment and certain travel/passport issues. It does not mean one parent can use the child as leverage over the other.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

PART II

I WANT TO BE A DAD

-
- 04 Making Arrangements for Your Children
 - 05 When You're Being Prevented From Seeing Them
 - 06 When Your Child Doesn't Want Contact
 - 07 Mediation and Resolving Things Without Court
-



CHAPTER 4

MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR CHILDREN

A workable parenting arrangement should be built around the child's life, not adult symmetry.

Build the practical plan

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Consider ordinary weeks, weekends, school runs, holidays, birthdays, handovers, clubs, medical needs, travel time and how changes will be communicated.

- Be specific about times and locations.
- Plan school holidays early.
- Build in a method for genuine changes.
- Keep adult financial disputes outside handovers.

If agreement is possible

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

Write down what you have agreed in plain language. A calm, workable arrangement can be more useful than an informal understanding remembered differently by each parent.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 5

WHEN YOU'RE BEING PREVENTED FROM SEEING THEM

Blocked contact is painful. Your response still needs to be controlled, evidenced and lawful.

Record facts, not labels

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Record each arrangement, cancellation, explanation, your response and any alternative offered. Avoid automatically labelling the situation 'parental alienation'.

Escalate proportionately

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Depending on the circumstances, options may include direct resolution, mediation or other non-court dispute resolution, legal advice, and an application concerning child arrangements. Existing orders may have separate enforcement routes.

Do not retaliate

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

Do not stop maintenance, threaten the other parent, turn up aggressively, repeatedly message, or involve the child in the dispute.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 6

WHEN YOUR CHILD DOESN'T WANT CONTACT

A child resisting contact is a signal to understand, not a diagnosis to impose.

Multiple explanations are possible

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

A child may resist contact for many reasons: fear, loyalty conflict, ordinary developmental issues, past experiences, adult conflict, practical disruption, harmful behaviour, influence from others, or a combination.

Cafcass approach

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Cafcass uses a child-impact framework that considers the individual child, harm and risk, parenting capacity and family/environmental factors. The focus should remain on the child's lived experience.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

A photograph of three people (two men and one woman) sitting around a wooden table, engaged in a conversation. The man on the left is wearing a green shirt, the woman in the middle is wearing a dark blue shirt, and the woman on the right is wearing a blue cardigan over a white shirt. They are all looking towards the center of the table.

CHAPTER 7

MEDIATION AND RESOLVING THINGS WITHOUT COURT

Court is sometimes necessary. It should not become the automatic first weapon.

MIAM and NCDR

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Before many private-law children applications, a Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting is normally relevant unless an exemption applies. Current rules also place greater emphasis on non-court dispute resolution.

Safety comes first

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Mediation is not appropriate in every case. Domestic abuse, safeguarding, urgency or power imbalance may change the route. Use the exemptions and professional advice where applicable.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

PART III

FAMILY COURT

08 Going to Family Court

09 When a Child Arrangements Order Is Being Broken

10 Cafcass, Safeguarding and Section 7 Reports



CHAPTER 8

GOING TO FAMILY COURT

If court becomes necessary, prepare for a welfare process, not a contest for ownership of a child.

Applications

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Form C100 is used for applications including Child Arrangements, Prohibited Steps and Specific Issue Orders. Urgent and without-notice requests require reasons and should not be treated casually.

Welfare focus

LAW

The child's welfare is the court's central consideration in decisions about upbringing. Evidence should therefore connect facts to the child's welfare rather than simply proving that the other adult behaved badly.

Prepare

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Create a chronology, identify existing orders, organise key documents, state what outcome you seek and why it serves the child, and keep allegations specific.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 9

WHEN AN ORDER IS BEING BROKEN

An order should be read carefully before deciding that a breach has occurred.

Enforcement

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

HMCTS provides an enforcement route for Child Arrangements Orders. The court can consider why arrangements were not followed and has a range of powers. Enforcement is not automatic punishment.

Your record

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Keep the order, a dated contact log, messages relevant to each alleged breach, and evidence of reasonable alternatives offered.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 10

CAFCASS, SAFEGUARDING AND SECTION 7 REPORTS

Cafcass is concerned with the child's welfare and the impact of the family situation on that child.

Safeguarding

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Cafcass may undertake safeguarding enquiries and provide information to the court. A section 7 report may be ordered where the court needs a fuller welfare assessment.

How to communicate

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

Answer the question asked. Be specific. Acknowledge your own mistakes where relevant. Do not rehearse children or use professional language you do not understand simply because you think it sounds persuasive.

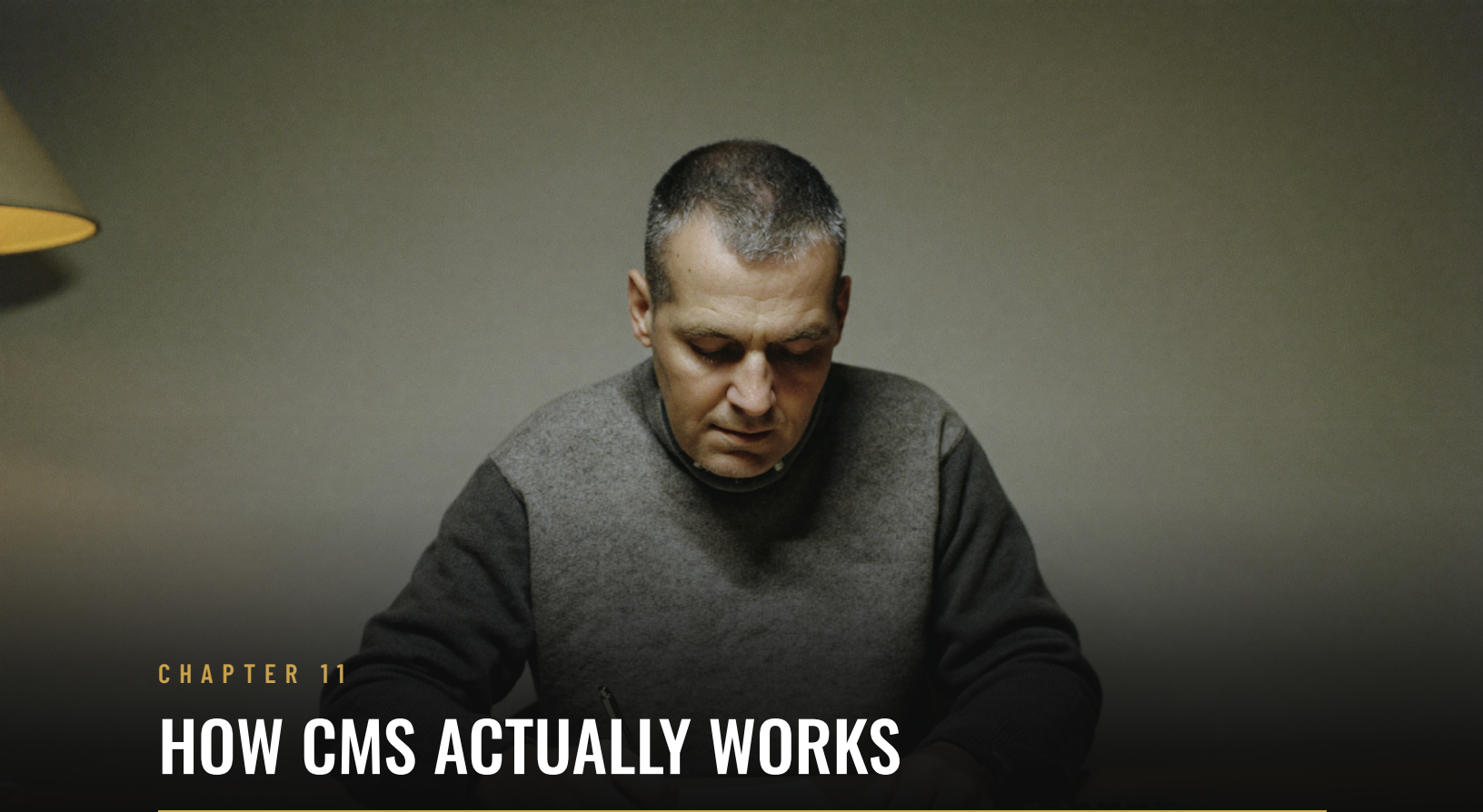
SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

PART IV

CHILD MAINTENANCE

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- 11 How CMS Actually Works
 - 12 Shared Care and the 50/50 Question
 - 13 When You Cannot Afford the Maintenance
 - 14 Variations, Challenges and Arrears
 - 15 Paternity and DNA
 - 16 Living Abroad and International Maintenance
-



CHAPTER 11

HOW CMS ACTUALLY WORKS

Child maintenance is a financial responsibility for a child, not a fee for contact.

Calculation

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

CMS uses a staged calculation based principally on gross weekly income, relevant adjustments, the applicable rate, qualifying children and shared care. HMRC income information is commonly central to the calculation.

Check the inputs

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

When you receive a calculation, check the income figure, number of qualifying children, relevant other children, shared-care nights and effective dates. Keep the decision letter.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 12

SHARED CARE AND THE 50/50 QUESTION

Shared care can affect maintenance, but slogans like '50/50 means no maintenance' are unsafe.

Overnight care

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

CMS rules include reductions where qualifying overnight shared care reaches specified bands. The number of nights and the evidence for them matter.

Equal day-to-day care

LAW

Cases involving genuinely equal day-to-day care can raise additional statutory questions. Do not assume a calendar split automatically determines the CMS result.

Evidence

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Keep an honest overnight-care calendar and supporting arrangements. Never bargain for extra nights merely to manipulate maintenance.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 13

WHEN YOU CANNOT AFFORD THE MAINTENANCE

Ignoring CMS rarely improves the problem.

Report relevant changes

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

If circumstances materially change, use the official process to report the change rather than simply cancelling payments. Some changes affect calculations only under specified rules or thresholds.

Budget without hiding income

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

List essential housing, utilities, food, travel, debts and child costs. Seek debt advice if necessary. Do not hide income, divert earnings or create artificial arrangements to evade maintenance.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 14

VARIATIONS, CHALLENGES AND ARREARS

A decision you disagree with should be challenged through the correct route and within the applicable deadline.

Challenge the decision

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

CMS decisions can have reconsideration and appeal routes. Read the decision notice for the current process and deadline. Keep proof of when you acted.

Enforcement

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Unpaid maintenance can lead to enforcement action. Available mechanisms can include deductions from earnings or accounts, liability-order based enforcement and, in serious cases subject to legal safeguards, further court sanctions.

Do not wait

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

If arrears are growing, engage early. Separate 'I cannot pay the current amount' from 'I disagree with the calculation' and address both properly.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 15

PATERNITY AND DNA

Parentage disputes need evidence, not accusation.

CMS disputes

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

CMS has procedures for disputed parentage and may arrange DNA testing in relevant cases. Costs and refund rules can change, so check the current official figure before acting.

Court powers

LAW

The Family Law Reform Act 1969 contains provisions concerning scientific tests in civil proceedings relating to parentage.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 16

LIVING ABROAD AND INTERNATIONAL MAINTENANCE

An international element changes the route; it does not automatically remove financial responsibility.

CMS jurisdiction

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

CMS eligibility has territorial rules and limited overseas-employment exceptions. Where CMS cannot deal with a case, court or reciprocal enforcement routes may still be relevant.

REMO

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders can provide a route for maintenance across participating jurisdictions. Family Procedure Rules Part 34 governs relevant reciprocal enforcement procedure.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

PART V

WHEN THINGS GET SERIOUS

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- 17 Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding
 - 18 Allegations and Disputed Allegations
 - 19 Emergency Applications and Protective Orders
 - 20 Passports, Relocation and International Removal
-

CHAPTER 17

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SAFEGUARDING

Domestic abuse can affect adults and children and must be addressed as a safety issue, not a litigation tactic.

Definition and children

LAW

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provides the statutory framework for domestic abuse and recognises circumstances in which children are victims in their own right.

Family proceedings

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Practice Direction 12J governs how domestic abuse allegations and risk are addressed in relevant child-arrangements proceedings, including the safety of contact.

Men can seek help too

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

A father experiencing abuse should document safely, seek appropriate specialist support and obtain legal advice where necessary. Do not minimise abuse because you are male.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 18

ALLEGATIONS AND DISPUTED ALLEGATIONS

Use accurate language. An allegation is not automatically proven, and a disputed allegation is not automatically false.

Respond factually

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Identify exactly what is alleged, when it is said to have happened, what evidence exists, what you accept or dispute, and whether there is relevant independent material.

Fact-finding

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Where disputed allegations are relevant to child welfare and cannot properly be determined another way, the court may consider whether a fact-finding hearing is necessary under the applicable rules and PD12J.

No retaliation

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

Do not contact witnesses to pressure them, publish family-court material, threaten the complainant or coach a child. Obtain legal advice where allegations are serious.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 19

EMERGENCY APPLICATIONS AND PROTECTIVE ORDERS

Urgency should be based on risk or genuine procedural necessity, not impatience.

Children orders

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

C100 includes routes for Child Arrangements, Prohibited Steps and Specific Issue applications and provides for urgent/without-notice information where applicable.

FL401

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

FL401 is used for applications for non-molestation and occupation orders. These are protective remedies under the Family Law Act framework.

Without notice

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Without-notice applications have serious fairness implications. Give the court accurate information and obtain urgent legal advice where possible.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 20

PASSPORTS, RELOCATION AND INTERNATIONAL REMOVAL

Travel, relocation and removal are different issues. Do not collapse them into one rule.

Travel abroad

LAW

Taking a child abroad can require consent from everyone with parental responsibility or permission from the court, subject to statutory exceptions such as the limited rule applicable to certain 'live with' Child Arrangements Orders.

Passports

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Passport consent rules are specific and can be affected by court orders. A dispute about a passport may require a Specific Issue Order or other Family Court intervention depending on the circumstances.

Internal relocation

LAW

There is no safe blanket rule that every move within England and Wales automatically requires the other parent's consent. Major disputes can be brought before the court through section 8 mechanisms, with welfare central.

International abduction

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

International child-abduction cases can engage the Hague Convention, ICACU and specialist court procedures. If removal is imminent or has occurred, obtain urgent specialist advice.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

PART VI

REBUILD

21 Schools, Doctors and Important Decisions

22 Building Your Evidence File

23 Money, Housing and Rebuilding Stability

24 Your Mental Health

25 New Relationships and the Long Game



CHAPTER 21

SCHOOLS, DOCTORS AND IMPORTANT DECISIONS

Parental responsibility can matter long after the parents stop living together.

Education

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Government education guidance explains how schools should understand parental responsibility and separated parents. Disputes over major educational decisions may require court resolution.

Healthcare

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Consent to treatment and access to health information have their own rules, including the child's age, competence, confidentiality and safeguarding. Do not assume parental responsibility creates an unlimited right to every record.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 22

BUILDING YOUR EVIDENCE FILE

A useful evidence file is organised, proportionate and capable of being understood by somebody who was not there.

What to keep

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Keep orders, applications, official letters, a chronology, contact records, relevant messages, school/health correspondence, payment evidence and a record of important expenses.

What not to build

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

This is not a revenge file. Do not collect intimate or irrelevant material merely to embarrass the other parent. Do not secretly involve children in evidence gathering.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 23

MONEY, HOUSING AND REBUILDING STABILITY

Your child benefits when your own basic life is stable enough to parent safely.

Prioritise essentials

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Secure safe housing, understand household bills, open and read official correspondence, create a realistic budget, and seek regulated debt or benefits advice when necessary.

Court fees and legal aid

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE

Help With Fees may be available depending on circumstances. Civil legal aid can be available in qualifying family cases, subject to scope, evidence and financial rules. Check current eligibility rather than assuming.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

CHAPTER 24

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

The pressure of separation can be severe. Getting support is part of staying functional for your child.

Use support early

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Speak to your GP or an appropriate mental-health service if you are struggling. Tell someone you trust. Maintain sleep, food, movement and routine as far as you can.

Crisis

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

If you are at immediate risk of harming yourself or someone else, seek emergency help now. Do not try to carry an acute crisis alone.

Identity

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

A court case, CMS calculation or failed relationship is not the whole of your identity. Your task is to remain a safe, reliable father while rebuilding the rest of your life.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

A photograph of an older man with grey hair and a young boy with dark hair, both seen from the back, sitting on a boat and fishing on a calm lake. The man is wearing a brown jacket, and the boy is wearing a blue and tan jacket. The background shows a peaceful lake with trees on the far shore under a soft, hazy sky.

CHAPTER 25

NEW RELATIONSHIPS AND THE LONG GAME

The goal is not to survive one hearing. It is to build a stable life your child can safely remain part of.

New partners

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Introduce change at a pace appropriate for the child. Keep new partners out of unnecessary parental conflict. Do not use a new relationship to provoke the other parent.

Long-term fatherhood

SPARTAN GUIDANCE

Children grow. Arrangements change. What lasts is whether you were dependable, emotionally safe, honest, present and able to put their needs ahead of winning an adult argument.

SPARTAN CHECKPOINT

Stay child-centred. Stay factual. Keep records. Use the correct process. Do not turn conflict into retaliation.

SPARTAN FAMILY MANUAL

THE SPARTAN EVIDENCE FILE

THIS IS NOT A REVENGE FILE.

Its purpose is to create a clean, factual record that helps you remember dates, meet deadlines, explain events accurately and obtain professional advice efficiently.

CORE FOLDERS

- 01 — Court orders and applications
- 02 — Cafcass / safeguarding
- 03 — Child arrangements and contact log
- 04 — School and healthcare
- 05 — CMS decisions and calculations
- 06 — Maintenance payments and arrears
- 07 — Child expenses
- 08 — Key communications
- 09 — Chronology
- 10 — Legal advice and deadlines

CONTACT LOG

DATE	PLANNED ARRANGEMENT	WHAT HAPPENED	REASON GIVEN	ALTERNATIVE OFFERED

DATE	PLANNED ARRANGEMENT	WHAT HAPPENED	REASON GIVEN	ALTERNATIVE OFFERED

OVERNIGHT-CARE TRACKER

DATE	OVERNIGHT?	COLLECTION	RETURN	EVIDENCE/REFERENCE

CMS DECISION & DEADLINE TRACKER

DECISION/DATE	AMOUNT	ISSUE	DEADLINE	ACTION TAKEN

COMMUNICATION LOG

DATE/TIME	METHOD	CHILD-RELATED SUBJECT	OUTCOME	EVIDENCE

SPARTAN FAMILY MANUAL

COURT PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Read every current order in full.
- Know the next hearing date, time, format and deadline.
- Prepare a short chronology.
- Identify the specific order or outcome you are asking for.
- Organise only the documents that matter.
- Separate proven facts from allegations and disputed allegations.
- Explain how your proposal serves the child's welfare.
- Be ready to acknowledge relevant mistakes or concerns.
- Do not coach your child.
- Do not publish restricted family-court material.
- Check current HMCTS forms, fees and filing instructions before submission.

SPARTAN FAMILY MANUAL

WHEN TO GET SPECIALIST HELP

Seek qualified legal advice promptly where the case involves serious allegations, domestic abuse, safeguarding, threatened or completed international removal, complex jurisdiction, disputed parentage, enforcement with serious consequences, or uncertainty about an existing order.

If cost is a barrier, check current legal-aid eligibility and Help With Fees. Where appropriate, consider mediation or another recognised non-court dispute-resolution process.

If there is immediate danger, call 999. For urgent but non-emergency police matters use the appropriate police route. For immediate mental-health crisis support, use current NHS emergency/urgent mental-health guidance.

SPARTAN FAMILY MANUAL

EVIDENCE & OFFICIAL SOURCE REGISTER

The manual should always be checked against the current versions of these authorities before publication or a major update. URLs and procedures can change.

AUTHORITY	USE IN THIS MANUAL
Children Act 1989	Primary legislation — parental responsibility, section 8 orders, welfare framework.
Children and Families Act 2014, section 11	Statutory provisions concerning parental involvement.
Domestic Abuse Act 2021	Statutory domestic-abuse framework.
Family Law Reform Act 1969, Part III	Scientific testing and parentage.
Family Procedure Rules 2010 and Practice Directions	Current family-court procedure, including PD3A, PD12J and PD12F.
HMCTS Form C100 and guidance	Child Arrangements, Prohibited Steps and Specific Issue applications.
HMCTS Form C1A	Allegations of harm and domestic abuse in children proceedings.
HMCTS Form FL401	Non-molestation and occupation order applications.
HMCTS enforcement forms/guidance	Enforcement of Child Arrangements Orders.
Cafcass Child Impact Assessment Framework	Child impact, safeguarding, risk and assessment framework.
GOV.UK Child Maintenance Service guidance	Eligibility, calculations, payments, changes, shared care and parentage disputes.
DWP / GOV.UK CMS enforcement material	Deductions, liability orders and enforcement routes.
Family Procedure Rules Part 34 / REMO guidance	Reciprocal enforcement of maintenance.
DfE parental responsibility guidance	Separated parents and education/school issues.
NHS consent to treatment guidance	Consent involving children and young people.
HM Passport Office guidance	Consent and authority relating to child passports.

AUTHORITY	USE IN THIS MANUAL
ICACU / Ministry of Justice guidance	International child abduction and contact.
Legal Aid Agency guidance	Private family legal aid, evidence and financial eligibility.
HMCTS EX160 / EX160A	Help With Fees.

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Publisher: Spartan Brotherhood

NO MAN FIGHTS ALONE

For Spartan Brotherhood support resources, use the current Spartan Brotherhood Support route.

SPARTAN BROTHERHOOD

Support

Support details checked: 2 October 2026. Organisations have their own eligibility rules and opening hours. Check their websites for current arrangements.

Immediate danger or risk to life

Call **999** if a child or adult is in immediate danger, there is a serious injury, an overdose or an immediate risk to life. Listening services do not replace emergency response.

Urgent mental health help

- England: call NHS 111 and select the mental health option for urgent help that is not a 999 emergency. <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/urgent-support/>
- Wales: call 111 and press option 2 for urgent mental health support. <https://111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/m/article/mentalhealthandwellbeing>

Someone to talk to

- Samaritans: call 116 123 free, day or night, for listening support. <https://www.samaritans.org/>
- Shout: text SHOUT to 85258 for free UK mental health text support, available 24 hours a day. <https://giveusashout.org/>
- CALM: call 0800 58 58 58 or use the website's chat options, 5pm-midnight every day. <https://www.thecalmzone.net/suicide-prevention-helpline>

Spartan Brotherhood Support Directory

spartanbrotherhood.org/support





SPARTAN BROTHERHOOD

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