
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2005 No. 2795

The Family Procedure (Adoption) Rules 2005

PART 17

EXPERTS

Duty to restrict expert evidence

154. Expert evidence shall be restricted to that which is reasonably required to resolve the proceedings.

Interpretation

155. A reference to an “expert” in this Part—

- (a) is a reference to an expert who has been instructed to give or prepare evidence for the purpose of court proceedings; and
- (b) does not include—
 - (i) a person who is within a prescribed description for the purposes of section 94(1) of the Act (persons who may prepare a report for any person about the suitability of a child for adoption or of a person to adopt a child or about the adoption, or placement for adoption, of a child); or
 - (ii) an officer of the Service or a Welsh family proceedings officer when acting in that capacity.

(Regulation 3 of the Restriction on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 (S.I. 2005/1711) sets out which persons are within a prescribed description for the purposes of section 94(1) of the Act.)

Experts – overriding duty to the court

156.—(1) It is the duty of an expert to help the court on the matters within his expertise.

(2) This duty overrides any obligation to the person from whom he has received instructions or by whom he is paid.

Court’s power to restrict expert evidence

157.—(1) No party may call an expert or put in evidence an expert’s report without the court’s permission.

(2) When a party applies for permission under this rule he must identify—

- (a) the field in which he wishes to rely on expert evidence; and
- (b) where practicable the expert in that field on whose evidence he wishes to rely.

(3) If permission is granted under this rule it shall be in relation only to the expert named or the field identified under paragraph (2).

(4) The court may limit the amount of the expert's fees and expenses that the party who wishes to rely on the expert may recover from any other party.

General requirement for expert evidence to be given in a written report

158. Expert evidence is to be given in a written report unless the court directs otherwise.

Written questions to experts

159.—(1) A party may put to—

- (a) an expert instructed by another party; or
- (b) a single joint expert appointed under rule 160,

written questions about his report.

(2) Written questions under paragraph (1)—

- (a) may be put once only;
- (b) must be put within 5 days beginning with the date on which the expert's report was served; and
- (c) must be for the purpose only of clarification of the report,

unless in any case—

- (i) the court gives permission;
- (ii) the other party agrees; or
- (iii) any practice direction provides otherwise.

(3) An expert's answers to questions put in accordance with paragraph (1) shall be treated as part of the expert's report.

(4) Where—

- (a) a party has put a written question to an expert instructed by another party in accordance with this rule; and
- (b) the expert does not answer that question,

the court may make one or both of the following orders in relation to the party who instructed the expert—

- (i) that the party may not rely on the evidence of that expert; or
- (ii) that the party may not recover the fees and expenses of that expert from any other party.

Court's power to direct that evidence is to be given by a single joint expert

160.—(1) Where two or more parties wish to submit expert evidence on a particular issue, the court may direct that the evidence on that issue is to be given by one expert only.

(2) The parties wishing to submit the expert evidence are called "the instructing parties".

(3) Where the instructing parties cannot agree who should be the expert, the court may—

- (a) select the expert from a list prepared or identified by the instructing parties; or
- (b) direct that the expert be selected in such other manner as the court may direct.

Instructions to a single joint expert

161.—(1) Where the court gives a direction under rule 160 for a single joint expert to be used, each instructing party may give instructions to the expert.

(2) When an instructing party gives instructions to the expert he must, at the same time, send a copy of the instructions to the other instructing parties.

(3) The court may give directions about—

(a) the payment of the expert's fees and expenses; and

(b) any inspection, examination or experiments which the expert wishes to carry out.

(4) The court may, before an expert is instructed, limit the amount that can be paid by way of fees and expenses to the expert.

(5) Unless the court otherwise directs, the instructing parties are jointly and severally liable for the payment of the expert's fees and expenses.

Power of court to direct a party to provide information

162.—(1) Where a party has access to information which is not reasonably available to the other party, the court may direct the party who has access to the information to prepare and file a document recording the information.

(2) A court officer will send a copy of that document to the other party.

Contents of report

163.—(1) An expert's report must comply with the requirements set out in the relevant practice direction.

(2) At the end of an expert's report there must be a statement that—

(a) the expert understands his duty to the court; and

(b) he has complied with that duty.

(3) The expert's report must state the substance of all material instructions, whether written or oral, on the basis of which the report was written.

(4) The instructions referred to in paragraph (3) shall not be privileged against disclosure.

Use by one party of expert's report disclosed by another

164. Where a party has disclosed an expert's report, any party may use that expert's report as evidence at the final hearing.

Discussions between experts

165.—(1) The court may, at any stage, direct a discussion between experts for the purpose of requiring the experts to—

(a) identify and discuss the expert issues in the proceedings; and

(b) where possible, reach an agreed opinion on those issues.

(2) The court may specify the issues which the experts must discuss.

(3) The court may direct that following a discussion between the experts they must prepare a statement for the court showing—

(a) those issues on which they agree; and

(b) those issues on which they disagree and a summary of their reasons for disagreeing.

Consequence of failure to disclose expert's report

166. A party who fails to disclose an expert's report may not use the report at the final hearing or call the expert to give evidence orally unless the court gives permission.

Expert's right to ask court for directions

167.—(1) An expert may file a written request for directions to assist him in carrying out his function as an expert.

(2) An expert must, unless the court directs otherwise, provide a copy of any proposed request for directions under paragraph (1)—

- (a) to the party instructing him, at least 7 days before he files the request; and
- (b) to all other parties, at least 4 days before he files it.

(3) The court, when it gives directions, may also direct that a party be served with a copy of the directions.