



Funding for DNA Testing To Help Courtroom Battles Over Child Paternity

DNA testing may have become standard practice on ITV's notorious Jeremy Kyle Show, but in reality the cuts in funding for legal aid, which came into force in 2013, resulted in extended and often acrimonious court cases when parents could not afford to take DNA tests.

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service will provide between £500,000 - £1million per year to pay for the tests in England from September 2015..

[Siobhan Rooney](#), a Partner at leading regional law firm Pictons and a specialist in Family Law says "This funding will really help to save court time and money in difficult cases where parentage is an issue. It is always essential that cases involving children should be resolved quickly and wherever possible outside of a court, especially now that mediation procedures are an important part of dealing with separations.

"However some cases do end up in court and when that's the case you really want to ensure that the children of the two partners suffer as little as possible. Conclusive tests that confirm parentage often help to resolve the more difficult cases, such as when a mother claims that a man who believes he is a child's or children's father is not actually the biological parent.

"Equally, when a parent is trying to avoid supporting their children financially by claiming they are not the biological father can easily be proved or disproved."

The move follows two pilot schemes that took place in Taunton and Bristol, which were set up after evidence suggested that courtroom arguments, especially about parentage, caused delays in divorce or separation cases.

Findings from the pilots suggested the tests meant that judges were better prepared to make decisions about children and parents would be more likely to follow the court's orders.

If you find yourself going through any of the issues highlighted above or need help regarding Family Law please contact Siobhan Rooney on 0845 263 7505 or email info@pictons.co.uk