



2019 relationship property survey

We are pleased to advise members of the publication of the 2019 relationship property [report](#) (and associated [media statement](#)) which follows on from the survey conducted earlier this year. The results in this year's report build on those provided in the 2017 survey. From this information we are able to build a snapshot of the practise of relationship property law in New Zealand. We thank all those practitioners who have taken part in both surveys – we appreciate the time you have given to providing this information. Once again, the FLS thanks Grant Thornton for its original instigation of, and continuation of, this important research. We look forward to conducting a similar survey in two years' time.

Change to standard initial allocation of hours for lawyer for child

The Ministry of Justice has asked for the following information to be circulated to the family law profession:

From 21 November, the initial commitment hours for s7 (Care of Children Act 2004) and s159 (Oranga Tamariki Act 1989) Lawyer for Child appointments have been increased to 22 hours nationwide.

All other Lawyer for Child commitments will remain at the current hours.

Why is this change happening?

Commitment amounts for Lawyer for Child have been reviewed. Analysis has shown that the average appointment length for s7 and s159 appointments is 22 hours (excluding

Oranga Tamariki Reviews). This will be applied as the standard nationwide initial commitment hours going forward.

What does this mean for me?

From 21 November letters of appointments under s7 (Care of Children Act 2004) and s159 (Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 – excluding Reviews) will show the new initial commitment of 22 hours.

This should reduce the amount of appointments for which Lawyers for Child are required to apply for an extension.

Appointments made before this change are still subject to the financial commitment made at the time of appointment. The increased commitment hours will not apply retrospectively, and extensions will need to be applied for as per current practise.

To further help us with our management of financial commitments, please ensure to mark invoices as 'Final' when your appointment is completed. Please make sure this is indicated on the invoice itself, rather than in the accompanying email.

Further information

If you require further information, please contact your local Family Court Co-Ordinator.

*Kirsty Swadling
Chair*