**Legal Support**

The local authority has the power (it is not a duty) under Reg 6 SGO Regs 2005 to provide financial support to a special guardian/prospective special guardian. This includes, where the local authority consider that it is appropriate, contributing to any legal costs, including court fees, of a special guardian or prospective special guardian, associated with–

(i) the making of a special guardianship order or any application to vary or discharge such an order;

(ii) an application for an order under section 8 of the Act;

(iii) an order for financial provision to be made to or for the benefit of the child.

Where the local authority are supporting the application for a SGO, the authority will provide the prospective SG with funding to cover the cost of one hour’s worth of legal advice so they can discuss the options with a solicitor before the final hearing.

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| NB: Please refer to PLO listing of solicitors or Family Law Assistance programme for listing of pre-approved solicitors, where applicable. |

**The Finance Panel**

If Finance Panel decline to provide support for legal costs, Panel must give written reasons within 7 days of the decision.

Request for Financial Support for legal costs



* SW completes (attached) Financial Request Form and obtains approval from relevant Manager
* SW submits to Finance Panel along with any other supporting documentation that is relevant to the request.
* The panel administrator confirms the outcome of panel decisions to the admin within the relevant teams who then process the payments where appropriate and relay decisions to the SW/TM.

Payment of legal fees will only be provided upon receipt of the appropriate quotes and invoices.

DCC will only pay legal costs where the solicitor instructed is on the applicable listing of ‘Approved Solicitors’.