

**COURSE TITLE: COURT SKILLS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES (1)**  
*(First of two linked courses)*

**Trainer:**

**Gillian Geddes** is a barrister of over 11-years' call, who has worked both in independent practice and as an in-house lawyer for two local authorities. As a practitioner in public and private family work, she has appeared at both higher and lower levels of Court. From October 2000 – September 2003, she was also instructed by the Treasury Solicitor's office to train caseworkers in the Immigration Service and the Immigration Casework Directorate in applied Human Rights law.

**Aims and Objectives:**

To raise awareness of and to familiarise participants with:

- the applicable components of Court Skills
- an understanding of why Court Skills are necessary in social work
- "Best Prep" guidelines
- attending and giving oral evidence in Court

Participants should at the end of the two days' training be able to:

- Describe the different stages of the revised Public Law Outline process
- Identify the impact of the PLO on their own court work practice
- Understand how best to prepare their social work documents for Court
- Understand how to instruct Experts when in the PLO process
- Illustrate how to work productively with Children's Guardians and parents during Court proceedings
- Prepare effectively for and after Court hearings
- Give effective oral evidence at Court

**Duration of course:**

Court Skills (1) is the first of two linked one day courses. Both are whole day courses, starting at 0930 and going through to 1600 (with breaks).

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quality health and social care training

**Numbers:**

Between 12 and 20 participants

**Target Audience:**

The course is designed specifically for social workers in Children's Services undertaking statutory child care work. The course will provide a thorough grounding for those preparing to undertake work in the Court arena, or for more experienced practitioners the chance to further develop their skills.

**Teaching Method:**

The course is designed in seminar format on both days to enable maximum interaction between the trainer and the participants. On day one there is a comprehensive Powerpoint presentation, combined with hard copy course material.

**Course Synopsis:**

- Looking at what exactly "Court Skills" are
- Best Preparation: establishing best practice for social workers before issuing court proceedings and attending at court
- Comparison of the court processes under the "old" Protocol and the "new" Public Law Outline"
- Best Evidence – looking at witness statements, social work chronologies, "threshold" documents, Children Act 1989 Sections 7, 37, and 47 reports, Core Assessments, risk/viability/kinship assessments, and Care Plans: initial, interim and final
- Consideration of the instruction of Experts for court proceedings
- Looking at working with Children's Guardians and parents in the context of court proceedings