



## LEGAL GUARDIAN

- \* If you are not married to the father of your child, then you are the legal guardian of your child (that means you can make decisions on behalf of your child).
- \* If you are under 21 the court may decide that your own guardian can also be your child's guardian, or else they may make some other person, who has the interests of your child in mind, the guardian.
- \* When you turn 21 you will automatically become the legal guardian of your child.
- \* No one, not even the father of the child, can take your child away without your permission. If they do, this is a crime for which they can be punished by a heavy fine or a jail sentence.
- \* The Police, or an official from the court, will help you find your child if you go to them for help.

## SURNAME

The child will normally take your surname, but if you want your child to take the father's surname he must agree to this and must go to register the child in person. If you want to change the surname of your child this can only be done before

## ACCESS

This means the right to visit a child. Sometimes the courts grant access to the father of the child but if this is not in the best interests of the child, he will not be granted access.

## MAINTENANCE

This is the money that the father must give you for the support of your child. You can claim for maintenance from the past as well if the father hasn't been paying you. Maintenance must also be paid to cover hospital fees and to support the mother while she is unable to work because of the birth. The amount is worked out according to how much each parent earns. The Maintenance Officer at the court decides this. If the father refuses to pay he can face a heavy fine or jail sentence. The court can even order that the father's employer must take the maintenance off his salary and give it straight to the mother.

## PROVING FATHERHOOD

If the father says that he is not the father of your child, but you can prove that you had sex with him at anytime before the birth of your child then it is up to him to prove that he is not the father. He can do this by proving his impotence or sterility OR that he was not having sex with the mother at the time when the child was conceived. He can also prove that he wasn't the father by having a blood test. Even if you had sexual relationships with other men this will not help prove that he is not the father.