

**Divorce** – Having fallen between 1992 and 2000 from 189,329 to 157,809, the number of petitions for divorce rose in 2001 and 2002 to 161,580 and 171,054 respectively.

\_ **Domestic Violence** - The total number of orders made increased in 2000, 2001 and 2002 after falling to a low of 26,784 in 1999.

\_ **Ancillary Relief** - A departmental survey into court proceedings that follow a divorce or judicial separation identified a reduction in the length of cases to 34 weeks on average from application to settlement.

\_ **Contact between children and their non-resident parent** - 14% of non-resident parents reported to never having direct contact with their children following relationship breakdown; whilst resident parents claimed that 27% of non-resident parents never have direct contact.

\_ **Private Law Children Act (including contact and residence applications)** - Most applications were made to the County Courts between 1992 and 2002, rising from 52,924 to 94,548.

\_ **Public Law Children Act** - Care orders almost tripled between 1992 and 2002, rising from 2,263 to 6,335.

\_ **Adoption** - There were 4,400 applications in 2002, and 4,120 orders made in the same period.

**2.2** In each year excluding 1998, the domestic violence orders total is larger than the applications total. This indicates that more than one order can be made as a result of a single application.

**2.4** Figure 2.1 shows that following the legislation change, the number of applications for domestic violence orders increased substantially from an estimated 17,064 in 1997 to 29,300 in 1998, an increase of 71.7%. This may have been due to changes in the methods for recording application statistics.

### **Frequency of direct contact**

**4.4** Figure 4.1 identifies how frequently non-resident parents have direct (face-to-face) contact with their children. 14% of **non-resident parents** who responded to this question stated that they never see their children. More positively, 11% of respondents saw their children every day, 48% at least once a week and 18% at least once a month.

**4.5 Resident parents** claimed that 27% of non-resident parents never see their children. This was noticeably higher than the proportion reported by non-resident parents. **Resident parents** also reported that 8% of non-resident parents saw their children every day, 34% at least once a week and 18% at least once a month.