



## UK grandparents' right to see grandchildren could be protected by law

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Grandparents who have sent birthday cards to their grandchildren have found themselves being accused of harassment, an MP says.

A grandparent's right to have contact with their grandchildren after a divorce could become protected by law.

**A change to the Children's Act which would refer to a youngster's right to have a relationship with close members of their extended family is being backed by MPs from all parties.**

The amendment would include aunts and uncles having access to their nephews and nieces, the Daily Telegraph said.

Currently, a relative must go through the time consuming and often costly process of applying to a court for access rights and then for a Child Arrangement Order (CAO) to be put into place.

During a debate into the matter in the House of Commons last week, Conservative MP Nigel Huddleston said he had heard stories of grandparents who have tried to send birthday cards or Christmas gifts to their grandchildren

and found themselves being visited by the police and accused of harassment.

He said: "Divorce and family breakdown can take an emotional toll on all involved, but the family dynamic that is all too often overlooked is that between grandparents and their grandchildren.

"When access to grandchildren is blocked, some grandparents call it a kind of living bereavement."

Fellow Conservative Tim Loughton said it was widely believed that parents should both be as involved as possible in their children's upbringing.

He asked if "it would be equally appropriate to have a presumption that grandparents should be involved as much as possible in the upbringing of those children, unless - and only unless - there is a problem with the welfare of that child?"

It is understood that Justice minister Lucy Frazer QC would consider a change in the law.

