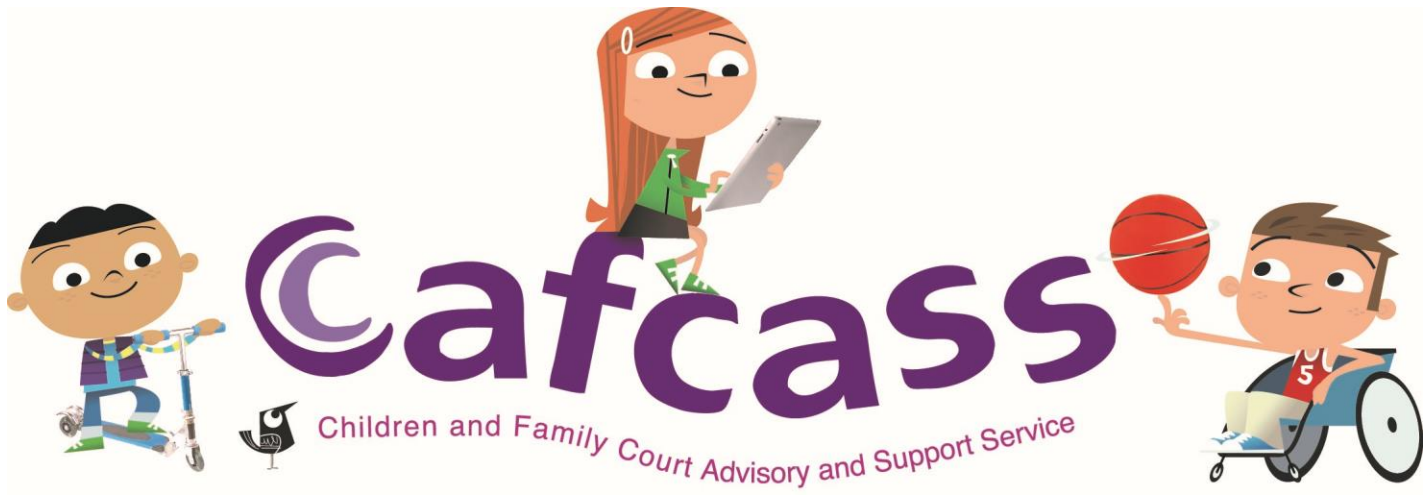


Governance Handbook



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Purpose of the Governance Handbook

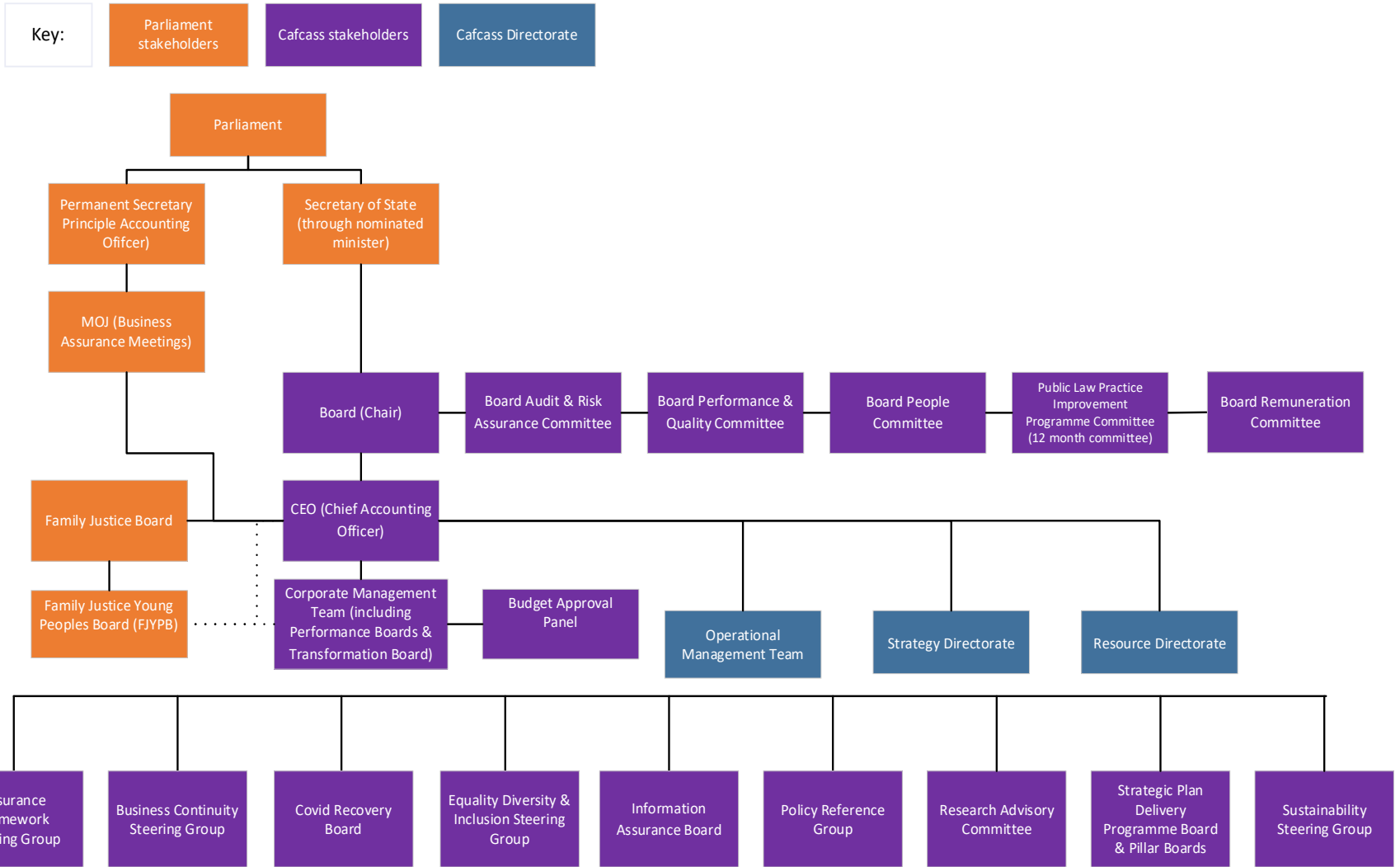
The purpose of the **Governance Handbook** is to bring together Cafcass' **key Governance documentation** in one easy and accessible place. In doing this, we hope to provide a clear picture of the core elements which make up the overarching Governance Framework, and to demonstrate how these elements connect and interact with each another.

Principles of Governance

As a public body, Cafcass adheres to the **Seven Principles of Public Life** (also known as the *Nolan principles*). The original principles can be found in the [Ministerial Code](#)

- Selflessness:** Cafcass will make decisions and act in the public interest.
- Integrity:** Cafcass staff and Board members will not place themselves under any obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence the performance of their official duties.
- Objectivity:** Cafcass will be free from interference in decision-making, and choices such as awarding contracts will be based on merit.
- Accountability:** Cafcass will be responsible and accountable to its stakeholders and to the public for its decisions and actions.
- Openness:** Cafcass will be as open as possible about all decisions and actions it takes.
- Honesty:** Cafcass staff and Board members have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts of interest.
- Leadership:** Cafcass will promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Cafcass Governance Structure



Key Governance Documents

Standing Orders

Cafcass is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body established under Section 11 of the **Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000**. As such, Cafcass is expected to adopt **Standing Orders** for the regulation of its proceedings and business. The Standing Orders are in accordance with provisions of the **Membership, Committee and Procedure Regulations (Statutory Instrument 2005 No 433)**.

Scheme of Reservations and Delegations

The **Scheme of Reservations and Delegations** details the powers reserved to the Cafcass Board and the duties delegated to other appropriate parties to ensure that Cafcass policies are effectively applied. The Board remains accountable for all of its functions, including those delegated to other committees or persons. It will therefore expect to receive information about the exercise of delegated functions to enable effective monitoring.

Board Code of Conduct

The **Board Code of Conduct** sets out the principles which govern Board members' behaviour and actions. It is Board members' responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with, and comply with, all the relevant provisions of the Code. In addition to the principles set out in this Code of Conduct, Board members must comply with the provisions relating to Board members contained in the Cafcass Framework Document drawn up by the Secretary of State and the guidance for Board members and staff, whose portfolio includes work in or for other organisations.

Key Documents

Standing Orders, Scheme of Reservations and Delegations and Board Code of Conduct can be viewed through the Cafcass website under the ['Transparency Information'](#).

Section 3: Key Governance Documents

Terms of Reference for Cafcass Board and Sub-Committees

The [Statutory Instrument for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service \(Membership, Committee and Procedure\) Regulations 2005](#) outlines the requirements of the Cafcass Board. The Board is specifically responsible for establishing and taking forward the strategic aims and objectives of Cafcass consistent with its overall strategic direction and within the policy and resources framework. It has established various sub-committees which have delegated authority to support the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities. These Committees include an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee which is a requirement under the Regulations.

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee: has responsibility for issues of risk, control and governance and associated assurance.
- People Committee has delegated authority to oversee the policy and strategy frameworks for the recruitment, retention, reward and development of people
- Performance and Quality Committee: has responsibility for scrutinising matters of performance of services, the quality of casework and the impact of that work on children and families.
- Remuneration Committee: It has delegated authority from the Cafcass Board to review arrangements for the executive directors' remuneration structure.

Terms of reference for the **Board's sub-committees** can be viewed through the Cafcass website under '[Transparency Information](#)'.

Role of the Corporate Management Team (CMT)

The Corporate Management Team (CMT) is made up of the Chief Executive Officer, Director of Resources, Director of Strategy, National Director of Operations, Deputy Director for Improvement and Principal Social Worker, Deputy Director of Operations and Chief People Officer.

CMT meets formally on a weekly basis and works to a six-weekly schedule of meeting types to create a structured rotation of themed discussions and decision-making. Within every 6-weekly cycle of meetings the Extended CMT will meet to consider and discuss data from performance and learning, audit, children and family feedback and impact. Regional Performance Boards will also be held within the cycle as part of the performance and accountability framework.



Financial Governance

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable to Parliament for putting strong financial management arrangements in place, that ensure Cafcass spends in accordance with the principles of regularity* and propriety* and:

- Uses its resources efficiently, economically and effectively
- Carries out procurement and project appraisal objectively and fairly
- Uses management information systems to gain assurance about value for money
- Avoids over defining detail and imposing undue compliance cost
- Has practical documented arrangements for controlling or working in partnership
- Uses internal and external audit to improve its internal controls and performance

Key Documents

- [Managing public money guidance](#)
- [Annual Report and Accounts](#)

***Regularity:** Compliant with the relevant legislation, delegated authorities and following the guidance in this document.

***Propriety:** Meeting high standards of public conduct, including robust governance and the relevant parliamentary expectations, especially transparency.



Information Governance

Information Assurance

Cafcass processes a large volume of sensitive case information and personal data daily. Therefore, it is essential that all Cafcass information is handled securely and in accordance with the principles outlined in the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#). The **Information Assurance Programme Board** meets quarterly to review and update information assurance policies and procedures to reflect current practice and guidance.

Key document and policies can be viewed through the Cafcass website under the '[Policies](#)'.

Key Documents

- Information Assurance Policy
- IT Security Policy
- Subject Access Request Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Case recording and retention policy

Access to Information

Cafcass is committed to providing an open and transparent service, and there are a variety of ways in which members of the public can access information.

Children and Families may access their own personal information by making a [Subject Access Request \(SAR\)](#). Subject Access Requests are free for each data subject and requestors will receive a full response from our Customer Services Team within one calendar month of receipt of the request.

Anybody can make a [Freedom of Information \(FOI\) Request](#) for recorded information held by Cafcass. [FOI requests](#) are provided free of charge and will be responded to within 20 working days by our Governance team. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides a number of exemptions, which are detailed on the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) website.



Strategic Plan 2019-23

Strategic Plan

Our Strategic Plan 2019-23 sets out the direction for Cafcass. The plan was informed by the views of staff and partners and sets out a collective vision and values, the strategy looks outwards, with the aspiration of working more closely with partners and families to improve the experiences and outcomes for children, parents and carers involved with the family justice system.

Key Documents

- [2019 -23 Strategic Plan](#)

Delivery Plan

Delivery of the Strategic Plan is managed through an annual Delivery Plan. The **Strategic Delivery Programme Board** has delegated responsibility from CMT to deliver the Programme; providing leadership and ensure strong governance is applied. At an operational level delivery is governed through **3 Delivery Boards** (Practice, People and Partners).



National Commissioning Team

The National Commissioning Team works with the Ministry of Justice to commission services from partner organisations that assist families and children. These services support the work of Cafcass Operational Teams working in private law cases.

The services commissioned are

- **Improving Child and Family Arrangements (ICFA)**
- **Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP)**
- **DNA Testing**

All services listed in the National Commissioning Team Directory are approved and contracted to work with Cafcass and are funded by Cafcass. All contracts with partners are subject to procurement governance as set out in the Procurement Manual.

Key Documents

- [Directory of Commissioned Services](#)



Steering Groups

Steering groups act with delegated responsibility from the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and are responsible for overseeing, co-ordinating and advising on work programmes particularly where responsibility for delivery is delegated across organisational functions.

Steering Groups will be led by a member of the Corporate Management Team.

These cover:

- **Business Continuity**
- **Assurance Framework**
- **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**
- **Sustainability**



Governance Behaviours

Cafcass policies

Our policies and procedures set out what should or must be done within different parts of our service to meet the needs of staff and the families and organisations that we work with. They help ensure consistency and promote good practice across our work. Service users and professionals may find them helpful to know what to expect from our service.

A policy reference group supports the Corporate Management Team in ensuring that policies remain up to date and that changes to policy are subject to the appropriate consultation.

Key Documents

[Key Policies.](#)

Transparency

In June 2010, the Prime Minister wrote to all Government bodies setting out the Government's commitment to 'set free' government data. In line with this commitment, Cafcass regularly publishes up to date information on its website in a range of accessible formats.

Key Documents

[Transparency Information](#)



Governance Behaviours

Evidence-Based Management

Evidence-based management involves asking challenging questions about current practices and using the best available evidence to inform future decision making. Cafcass uses evidence from a range of sources to make decisions about improving its services for children and young people. This evidence may include:

- Academic research
- Service user feedback
- Practitioner knowledge and expertise
- Statistical information

Emotionally Intelligent Leadership

Self-awareness: The ability to understand your own strengths and limitations, and appreciate the impact they have on others.

Self-management: The ability to conduct yourself in ways that are helpful and positive, particularly in stressful situations.

Social awareness: The ability to empathise with a diverse range of people and understand what response will bring out the best in them.

Relationship management: Bringing together self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness to:

- Influence and inspire others
- Establish strong networks
- Build trust to produce positive changes



Governance Behaviours

Together

Cafcass' relationship-based practice framework is called Together with children and families (or Together). Together applies to the work of every individual in Cafcass, no matter your role or function. Together is made up of values, how these values work in practice, the tools to use to incorporate these values in our work and the impact this will have on the children and families we serve.

Values

Together is built around our Cafcass values and must therefore be at the heart of the work we do across the organisation. This framework encourages us to be pro-active and to look for the strengths in ourselves and others, to build positive relationships with our colleagues, our partners and with the children and families that we work with.

- **Always looking for the strengths and risks**
- **Believing in respectful relationships**
- **Decision making is clear and reasoned**
- **Wanting to know more about you and what is important in your life**



Expenses and Health & Safety

Expectations of staff are set out in relevant policies

Expense Claims

Members of staff may incur costs as part of carrying out their role effectively. All expense claims must be made in accordance with the Expense Reimbursement Policy and must be approved by the claimant's line manager.

Key Documents

- Expense Reimbursement Policy
- Gifts and Entertaining Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Key document policies can be viewed through the Cafcass website under the ['Policies'](#).

Gifts and Entertaining

Cafcass staff must not accept or give any gift or other personal benefit that is likely to influence their judgement, be construed as bribery, or conflict with their professional duties.

Health and Safety

Cafcass has a duty under health and safety legislation to promote the health, safety and welfare of its employees. Cafcass is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for service users, staff and contractors.



Governance and the Family Justice Young People's Board

The **Family Justice Young People's Board** (FJYPB) is a group of over 40 young people who have used Cafcass' services, either directly or indirectly. The Board was established by Cafcass in 2006 and has since expanded its work to cover the family justice system on a national scale. The Board's remit is to help ensure that the work of the Family Justice Board is child centred and child-inclusive.

The FJYPB are an integral part of Cafcass' work, and members are regularly invited to participate in meetings of the Cafcass Board and other important events. This is just one of the ways in which Cafcass ensures that the voice of the child remains at the very centre of its priorities and its work.

The Role of the Family Justice Young People's Board

