

Press Information

Immediate Release: 0900 Tuesday 24th June 2008



CAFCASS CHAIR'S FIVE YEAR TERM TO END IN DECEMBER 2008

Cafcass, the organisation that looks after children's interests in the family courts, today announces that the five year term of office of our Chair, Baroness Jill Pitkeathley, comes to an end in December 2008.

An advertisement for a new Chair will appear in the national press shortly.

Jill said, "It has been a huge honour to be Chair of Cafcass at such a key stage of its development although it has certainly been challenging. I have every confidence that Cafcass will continue the tremendous progress we have made and meet our shared ambition of delivering high quality services to the children and families with whom we work.

It has been a privilege to be involved with such a unique organisation and dedicated staff, and with such an experienced and committed Board. While there is still much to do, we now have a strong platform from which further progress can be made. I shall miss Cafcass very much and will always watch the progress of the organisation with the greatest of interest."

Chief Executive Anthony Douglas says, "Jill has been Chair of Cafcass for five of its eight years. She stabilised the organisation and has made a major contribution to all the improvements we have been making. Life is never dull in Cafcass and Jill has always approached the trials and tribulations of a front-line organisation - in which we are no different to any other - with grace, wisdom, fortitude and the experience that comes from her own social work, campaigning and parliamentary background.

She has been fantastic to work with and will be a very hard act to replace. Knowing Jill, she will be working as flat out as she always has, with a total commitment to Cafcass, to the very last day of her contract in December, so this is not a goodbye yet, just notice of goodbye."

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Notes for Editors:

- The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) was formed as a new service for England and Wales on 1 April 2001 as part of the Government's commitment to supporting families and children. It brought together the services previously provided by the Family Court Welfare Service, the Guardian ad Litem Services and the Children's divisions of the Official Solicitor's Office.
- Cafcass has a statutory responsibility to ensure that children and young people are put first in family proceedings, that their voices are heard, the decisions made about

them by courts are in their best interests and that they and their families are supported throughout the process. We operate within the law set by Parliament and under the rules and directions of the family courts.

- Cafcass' role is to work with Children and Families in the family courts. The following list provides some examples of the types of cases we work with:-
 - Adoption (public law)
 - Care Orders (public law)
 - Emergency Protection Orders (public law)
 - Residency and contact following divorce and separation (private law)
- Cafcass is sponsored by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and is a non-departmental public body.
- For the year 2006-2007 CAF/CASS promoted the interests of 80,536 children. This does not factor in the work we do with children and their families in dispute resolution and our support of contact centres.
- Cafcass recently established a Young People's Board who have experience of our services. They advise us on matters of policy and practice.
- Cafcass' new National Standards are available for download at our new website www.cafcass.gov.uk
- For 2008-09 Cafcass is implementing a major practice improvement programme to improve the quality and consistency of frontline practice.

For further information:

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