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CAFCASS HEAR4U AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOARD, HONOURED WITH NEW DIANA AWARD

Cafcass is delighted to announce that its peer mentoring service, Hear4U, and the Young People's Board have been honoured with the new Diana Certificate of Excellence Group Award launched by UK charity, the Diana Award. The Diana Award gives public recognition to young people aged 12 – 18 who go that extra mile to make a profound difference to the lives of their friends, families, schools and communities.

Hear4U have been chosen for the award because of their selfless contribution and the commitment they have shown in helping to improve the lives of others, demonstrated through the support, advice and reassurance they give to children and young people via a website link - http://www.cafcass.gov.uk/cafcass_and_you/peer_mentoring.aspx. They have dedicated their time to offer support and advice to other young people who are experiencing family breakdown. All members of Hear4U are trained and have committed themselves to attaining qualifications to further aid their mentoring service. The support and advice they offer compliments and enriches the service as a whole.

The Young People's Board has been chosen for the award because of the huge amount of time, energy and compassion its members have invested to improve the lives of others. This is demonstrated through the way in which they have contributed to the service development and strategy of the organisation and through actively helping to embed the practice of child informed decision-making in family court proceedings.

There are over 25,000 Diana Award Holders in the UK and they include fundraisers, campaigners, carers and young people who, despite their own personal difficulties or tragedies, continue to contribute to their communities. The Diana Anti-Bullying Award, which is in addition to the main Diana Award, recognises the work by young people of all ages to tackle bullying in schools and communities.

Christine Smart, Children's Rights Director for Cafcass said, "We at Cafcass are very proud of our new Diana Certificate of Excellence Group Awards holders. The young people involved with Hear4U have made a unique contribution that has informed and influenced the way we offer services to young people going through family breakdown. Their insight in supporting others, despite their own life challenges, has been remarkable. This is why the two awards are just that much more special."

Maggie Turner, CEO of the Diana Award, says: "This new award gives public recognition to young people who work together as a team to make a difference to other people, without seeking reward for themselves. Within communities and schools across the UK, there will be young people who have done something wonderful and we welcome nominations".

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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 1st 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 operates 21 service areas across England.
- 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 2006-07 Cafcass 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.
- In 2006 Cafcass established a Young People's Board who have experience of our services. They advise us on matters of policy and practice.
- Cafcass is engaged in a major improvement programme, which is intended to improve quality and consistency of frontline practice during 2008-09.
- Cafcass' 2007-08 annual report and other publications can be downloaded from our website www.cafcass.gov.uk
- For more information about the Diana Award or to make a nomination visit www.diana-award.org.uk

For further information contact:

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