

Press Release



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NEW OFFICE PAVES WAY FOR BETTER SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Cafcass, the organisation that looks after children's interests in the family courts, has opened a specially designed office in Chesterfield to provide improved opportunities for interviewing families, family mediation and contact.

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive says, "We work with children in the family courts. Whether their parents are divorcing or separating or a child is going through care proceedings - it is a stressful time for all involved. So I am really pleased that we have been able to refurbish our offices to such a high standard.

The new Chesterfield office will provide an environment better suited to delivering modern family services and opportunities for children and families to maintain contact. The project has been brought to fruition through the work of many colleagues and I would like to thank the Chesterfield team and business support colleagues, who worked tirelessly to make it happen."

The new development in Chesterfield provides quality facilities for interviewing children and families as well as improved accommodation and security for staff. The multi-purpose building is designed for modern ways of working, and includes areas for contact and managing dispute resolution. Facilities include a family room and two multi-use rooms and were designed to meet the needs of children and families.

Service Manager, Janice Ward said, " The refurbished Cafcass office in Chesterfield is evidence of our commitment to improving the experience children and families have of using our services. The new building has good public transport links and excellent disabled access as well as providing a modern working space for practitioners. The new offices are already having a positive impact on our work."

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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 2007-2008 CAF/CASS promoted the interests of 77,134 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 has established a Young People's Board who have experience of our services. They advise us on matters of policy and practice.
- Cafcass' National Standards and other publications including our annual report are available for download at our new website www.cafcass.gov.uk
- For 2009-11 Cafcass is implementing a major practice improvement programme to improve the quality and consistency of frontline practice.

For further information:

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