

Monday 16th June 2008

Press Release

CAFCASS LAUNCHES 'MY FAMILY'S CHANGING'

Cafcass, the organisation that looks after children's interests in the family courts, has launched new children's leaflets that provide help and advice to children whose parents are divorcing or separating.

The leaflets, called 'My Family's Changing' are available in two age ranges – younger, for children under 12; and older, for those over 12. They are designed to address the emotional impact that parental separation can have on children.

'My Family is Changing' leaflets are bright and colourful and include sections for children and young people to explore and write down their feelings. They also include advice, quizzes, stories from other children and details of organisations that could offer them further help and support.

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive says, "The 'My Family's Changing' leaflets provide an opportunity for children and young people to write down how they feel at an early stage in the process before they have a Cafcass worker. The leaflets help children to crystallise their feelings and builds an understanding of the process that lies ahead when their parents are divorcing or separating."

Christine Smart, Children's Rights Director commented, "The Cafcass Young People's Board played a central role in devising this publication and indeed continue to provide a major contribution on a wide range of our work including policy development and guidance to staff. We also received invaluable workshop feedback from over 50 school children."

Rebecca Musgrove, a member of the Young People's Board said, "Children and young people whose parents are splitting up might be feeling scared, unsure of what is going to happen or even worse they might think it was their fault. It was really good to work on the leaflets as the exercises can really help children to work things through and how to get more help if they need to."

The leaflets are available and can be downloaded free of charge from the Cafcass website at http://www.cafcass.gov.uk/publications/leaflets_for_children.aspx
Parenting Plans booklets can be downloaded from The Stationary Office (TSO) site at http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop/gempdf/CAFCASS_Parenting_Plan.pdf

To speak to Anthony Douglas or Christine Smart contact Takki Sulaiman on 07778 419218 in the first instance.

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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

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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 is engaged in a major improvement programme, which is intended to improve quality and consistency of frontline practice during 2008 - 2009.
- Cafcass' new National Standards are available for download at our new website www.cafcass.gov.uk

For further information:

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