



## CAFCASS OPEN BOARD MEETING 2009

**Cafcass, the organisation that represents children's interests in the family courts is holding its annual Open Board Meeting in Bristol on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009.**

Cafcass is committed to strengthening its work with service users and stakeholders. This event is an opportunity for families and professionals to meet members of the Cafcass Board and the Corporate Management Team who together are responsible for the running of the organisation. Members of our Young People's Board will also be in attendance to talk about the ways in which they have contributed to the development and improvement of Cafcass' service in the past year.

The theme for this year's meeting is, 'The progress in developing joint work with the Judiciary' and will feature presentations from Cafcass regional teams on the ways in which they are working with the courts to ensure a more timely and safe service to the children and families with whom we work. There will also be a Q&A session in which members of the public will be able to put questions to the panel and discuss in further detail topics raised throughout the course of the day.

Speaking in advance of the event, Anthony Douglas, CBE, Cafcass' Chief Executive said, "The Open Board meeting is an invaluable opportunity for us to listen and respond to the views of the children and families we work with. It also allows us to give members of the public and stakeholders up to date information on our service and the ways in which we are all striving to improve. It is always a vibrant affair and I look forward to meeting this year's attendees."

The meeting will take place at the Bristol Marriot Royal Hotel, Bristol from 10am to 2pm on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December. The event was first advertised in the Western Daily Press on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009.

**To attend it is vital that you register in advance by emailing [mberwicksayers@cafcass.gov.uk](mailto:mberwicksayers@cafcass.gov.uk) or call 0844 353 3350.**

**For further information about Cafcass contact Takki Sulaiman on 07778 419218.**

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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<sup>st</sup> 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

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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 2008-09 Cafcass promoted the interests of 79,000 children in new cases. This does not factor in the work we do with children and their families in dispute resolution, our support of contact centres or ongoing cases across financial years.
- 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 2009-11.
- Cafcass' new operating priorities were launched internally on August 10<sup>th</sup> 2009
- Cafcass' 2008-09 annual report was published on July 16<sup>th</sup> 2009. All publications can be downloaded from our website <http://www.cafcass.gov.uk/publications.aspx>

**For further information:**

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