

Cafcass responds to rise in care demand

Immediate Release: Monday 28th September
2009



RISING CARE DEMAND: CAFCASS TO PROTECT FRONTLINE SERVICES

Cafcass, the organisation that represents children's interests in the family courts, is to protect frontline services from the effects of rising care demand by reducing back office posts and changing ways of working.

Anthony Douglas, CBE, Cafcass' Chief Executive commented, "Cafcass has a duty to protect the frontline services we offer children and families in need of support. Rising demand in both care cases and latterly in private law has meant that costs have escalated. We need to safeguard more children and families as well as balance our budget. This unfortunately means that we will need to cut some posts in our corporate centre."

By delivering £2.703m of efficiency savings from national/corporate costs by mid-way through the 2010-11 financial year, Cafcass will be placing the maximum percentage of its budget into frontline service delivery. This offers the best means of protecting frontline services and programmes to children and families, which would otherwise need to be cut back to balance the budget. Cafcass will also be simplifying internal systems and processes.

Anthony Douglas concludes, "This restructure and our new operating priorities, along with the President's Interim Guidance, will help us to offer a safe minimum service to every child referred to us. We would love to do more, but as it is, the independent oversight of vulnerable children going through the family courts we offer in England and Wales (via Cafcass Cymru) remains the strongest such system in the world. Even if we have less time per case, we will do our utmost to make the time we do have count."

For further information 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 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)

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- 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 2008-2009 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 - 2011.
- Cafcass' new operating priorities were launched internally on August 10th 2009
- Cafcass' 2008-09 annual report was published on July 16th 2009. All publications can be downloaded from our website <http://www.cafcass.gov.uk/publications.aspx>

For further information:

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