



CAFCASS: CARE APPLICATIONS CONTINUE TO RISE

Figures released today by Cafcass, the organisation that looks after vulnerable children's interests in the family courts, show that care applications remain at record levels.

There were 832 care applications in March 2010, the highest care demand figure ever recorded for a single month since Cafcass began collecting this data. Comparing the whole of 2009-10 to last year's figures, care demand was up by 34% (2188 cases). Concurrently, Cafcass saw a 16% increase in private law (divorce and separation) cases when compared to 2008-09.

Commenting on the latest figures, Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive said, "I fully support the actions that local authorities are taking to protect these children, most of whom have complex long-term needs and for whom there are no easy options or solutions, either at home or in the care system."

He went on to say, "There is no doubt though that the sustained increase in care cases has placed all of us working in the care system under pressure. However, where agencies are working together collaboratively, as outlined in the renewed President's Interim Guidance, we have found that backlogs in cases have fallen and we are providing a more timely service to vulnerable children.

"Our new proportionate ways of working, and the introduction of duty schemes in some areas have allowed us to provide a service to an increased number of children. It is a great credit to our staff that in March 2010 they were working on 11,509 care cases – a 26% increase on the 9,128 cases they were working on in July 2009."

**For further information please contact Naomi Lawson,
Interim Head of Communications on 0844 353 3320.**

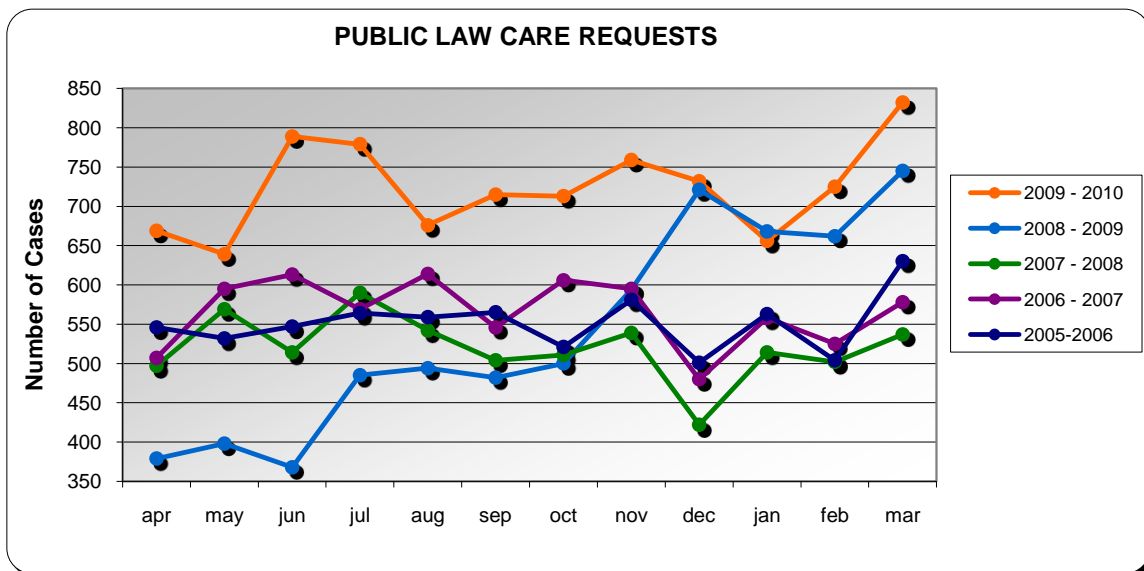
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CAFCASS CARE DEMAND - LATEST QUARTERLY FIGURES (Quarter 4: 2009-10)

2008-09: Cafcass experienced a 27.3% drop in demand for care cases across the country April to June 2008, in comparison to the same period in the previous year. Demand levelled off for the period of July to October 2008 but then rose sharply as a result of a significant increase in applications. The second half of the 2008-09 year saw nearly 50% more care applications than the first half. Overall, care demand for 2008-09 was up 4% compared to the previous year.

2009-10: Quarter 4 care demand has continued to remain at unprecedentedly high levels. Comparing the whole year of 2009-10 to last year, care demand is up by 34% (2188 cases). March 2010 (832 cases) was the highest care demand figure ever recorded for a single month since Cafcass began collecting this data.



Month	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
apr	546	507	497	379	669
may	532	595	569	398	639
jun	547	613	514	368	789
jul	564	569	590	485	779
aug	559	614	542	494	676
sep	565	546	504	482	715
oct	521	606	511	500	713
nov	581	595	539	594	759
dec	501	480	422	721	732
jan	563	558	514	668	656
feb	504	525	502	662	725
mar	630	578	537	745	832
Total	6,613	6,786	6,241	6,496	8,684

Note: Figures in the above table and graph are provided from our national case management system (CMS) [April 2006 to present] and historical manual systems. The unit of measurement is a case and is counted upon receipt of the application from the Court and entry into CMS. A case can involve multiple children and multiple application types. A care case specifically includes a care (section 31) application. CMS is a live system and any late entries will be accounted for upon the release of subsequent updates to this data. Updates to this monthly information will be quarterly, week commencing the third week of the following months each year: July, October, January and April.

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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' 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 Education and is a non-departmental public body.
- In 2008-09 Cafcass worked with around 150,000 children and young people across England.
- 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' 2008-09 Annual Report and Accounts and other publications can be downloaded from our website www.cafcass.gov.uk