

## Using the Child Impact Assessment Framework

1. The approach taken in the CIAF builds on that taken in our current Evidence Informed Practice Tools Matrix and in the Domestic Abuse Pathway.
2. As this approach has been successful we are now extending it to cover other forms of harm to children in private law proceedings. This will help us keep in mind all potential aspects of a child's experience.
3. The CIAF updates our current guidance and introduces some new material but is not a change of direction.
4. As with the Domestic Abuse Pathway, it is expected you will use the framework proportionately at all stages of private law assessments and in all relevant cases, but it's not specified which tool should be used as this will differ case by case and is a matter for professional discretion.
5. The framework establishes from the outset that our key focus is on the impact on the child, the child's voice and safeguarding and this again is familiar to us. There is no change to these foundations of our practice in Cafcass.
6. The framework brings together into one place all the tools and guidance for use in private law cases. The organisation and presentation has been brought up to date and is now more interactive, and on a web page.
7. The material is organised into four colour coded 'folders'. Each folder can be clicked to take you to the key guidance, tools and resources. Each case factor is colour coded (purple, orange, green and blue). When the FCA clicks into a case factor the framework will take them to all relevant tools and guidance for that factor, the other three remaining case factors will be greyed out whilst they explore that section.
8. You will notice that the pink box for 'direct work with children' appears under every case factor. If the FCA clicks on this box it will take them to all of the relevant tools and guidance for direct work with children, such as 'How It Looks To Me'.
9. Due to the complex circumstances that many children experience, it is likely that that the FCA will need to use tools and guidance from various case factors. The case factors are not designed to be linear pathways and FCAs should navigate fluidly between the different sections depending on the risks present within the case.
10. The only exception to this (moving fluidly between factors), is where there are features of domestic abuse and/ or harmful conflict. Domestic abuse and harmful conflict are two distinct behaviours and should not be conflated or referenced interchangeably. Where cases feature allegations or indicators of both domestic abuse and harmful conflict FCAs must prioritise the assessment of domestic abuse and ensure that the risk is adequately reduced/ resolved before addressing harmful conflict. A screening tool has been devised to help practitioners distinguish between the two
11. The Domestic Abuse Pathway has been retained in the format of a 'pathway' as we are familiar with this, the pathway has been updated as part of this work to bring it up to date.
12. The new guidance and tools on harmful conflict and child resistance / refusal, have not been set out as pathways to avoid them being overly 'linear' and repetitive.
13. These folders contain a small number of new tools and make use of existing tools from the Evidence Informed Practice Tools matrix.
14. The case plan document on ECMS will contain a hyperlink to the CIAF. This supports you to apply the guidance and tools as you consider your case plan and as you update it.