



Accessing Cafcass Information: Freedom of Information



Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'), you have a right to request recorded information which is held by Cafcass. Cafcass is committed to being open and transparent and aims to disclose information requested, unless there is a good reason for it to be withheld.

What can I request?

You can request any information 'held' by Cafcass, which includes information on computer systems, printed or handwritten documents, emails, as well as images, video and audio recordings.

If the request requires Cafcass to give an opinion or judgement that is not already recorded, or to create new information, it is not a valid request.

Some information is exempt, for example because it would unfairly reveal personal details about somebody else. You can request the information and we will let you know whether it can be disclosed.

How do I make a request?

Your request needs to be made in writing by email or post. Please send your request, along with your name and an address for our response to be sent by email or post to:

✉ governance@cafcass.gov.uk

☰ FOI Administrator

Cafcass National Office

3rd Floor, 21 Bloomsbury Street

London

WC1B 3HF

What should I do before I make a request?

You can ask for any information at any time, but it may be helpful to consider the following questions:

- * **Is the information already available?**
Cafcass publishes a lot of information about who we are, what we do, and how we do it in our [Publication Scheme](#). This is to ensure that our work is as transparent as possible, and it may mean there is no need for you to make a formal request for information as it could already be available.
- * **Is the information personal information?**
If the request is for information about yourself, such as your case records, you should make a [Subject Access Request](#). If the request is for information about someone else, this will usually be exempt from disclosure.
- * **Is the request too general or information too large?**
If the request is too general or information too large we may need to ask you for clarification to narrow the request, or may not be able to complete the request within the available time limit (2.5 days of staff time, which equates to £450 in value).



Is there a fee to access this information?

Requests are free, although all requests place some degree of demand on our resources in terms of costs and staff time, and Cafcass reserves the right not to process requests which cost over £450. This is in keeping with the central government provisions and the Act as it safeguards against requests which exceed cost limits for compliance.

How long will it take?

Cafcass aims to respond to requests within 20 working days from the date the request was received.

What if I am unhappy with the FOI response?

Our policy is to be as open as possible and supply the information you have requested, but we may withhold information if we consider an exemption applies. If we refuse to supply all or part of any information you have asked for we will write to you giving our reasons for refusal. The reasons will be based on the exempted categories under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

If you are not satisfied with the reasons you have the right to an internal review undertaken by a senior member of staff. You may request an internal review by contacting us via email or post.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome of the review, you can contact the Information Commissioner for a decision as to whether we dealt with a specific request in accordance with the provisions of the Act. This can be done via email or post to:



✉ casework@ico.org.uk

📄 Wycliffe House
Water Lane, Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

For more information on how Cafcass complies with the Freedom of Information Act, please see our [Freedom of Information pages](#) on our website or contact governance@cafcass.gov.uk.



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