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Your ref: CAF 15-92  
Our ref: Gov/CAF 15-92

Tel 0300 456 4000

5 June 2015

## Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email of 12 May 2015. You made the following requests for information:

Could you please provide me with all your policies /staff guidance /processes etc on decision making in relation to child arrangement orders

Please see below for our response.

The role of Cafcass is to assess children's needs and write reports or a case analysis to the court recommending how a child's welfare can best be promoted and safeguarded, with reference to the [Welfare Checklist](#). In private law work, Cafcass works within the parameters of the national [Child Arrangement Programme](#).

All practitioner advice and recommendations are case specific and are based on their professional judgement of the child's welfare. Please note that it is the court, and not Cafcass, that makes final decisions in the family court proceedings.

Please find links to policies and guidance documents relevant to how Cafcass practitioners make recommendations in relation to child arrangement orders below:

- Section 4 of the [Operating Framework](#) (pages 25 – 34) sets out the work of Cafcass in private law cases. The following documents mentioned within this section are also relevant:
  - *Standard Operating Principles and Standards for Work to First Hearing (attached)*
  - [Police Checks Handbook](#): this handbook set out how safeguarding information should be obtained in private law applications from the Police National Computer at the National Business Centre, local police forces, international police forces, military police and SSAFA.

Baroness Tyler of Enfield Chair  
Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive





- *Telephone script*: this is a guidance document for telephone interviews during work to first hearing in private law cases to help consistency within Early Intervention Teams (attached).
- [Tools to support work in private law cases](#), and a matrix for how and when to use them: Cafcass has developed tools to support staff in evidence informed analysis when writing reports. The approach taken, and the therefore the tools used, will reflect the unique circumstances of the case.
- [Child Protection Policy](#): this document sets out the requirements placed by Cafcass on its staff and contractors relating to its statutory function of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It details the procedures to be followed when completing a section 16a risk assessment; making a child protection referral; taking urgent action to protect a child; and responding to an allegation against a person who works with children.
- [Reporting to court policy](#): this policy sets out:
  - The standards to be met when attending court and reporting to court;
  - The implications of including information in a report to court;
  - Resolving differences of opinion about the contents of reports to the court;
  - Expectations for sharing court reports with parties.
- Section 1.16 – 1.29 of the [Operating Framework](#) sets out how Cafcass practitioners work with children, young people, parents and carers (pages 6 – 8).
- Supporting guidance for Work to First Hearing for practitioners (attached); as set out above, please note that all practitioner advice and recommendations are case specific and are based on their professional judgement of the child's welfare.

For more information about Child Arrangement Orders, please see our website: <https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/grown-ups/professionals/child-arrangements-orders.aspx>

We hope that you feel your question has been answered effectively. If you are unhappy with the decisions made in relation to your request, you may ask for an internal review to be undertaken. If you are dissatisfied with the way the internal review is handled or with the final decision made at that review about the information released, you are free to contact the Information Commissioner's office ([www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)):

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Yours sincerely,

Governance Team

Cafcass

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Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive



Cafcass, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, is a non-departmental body of the Ministry of Justice  
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