



Cafcass National Office
3rd Floor
21 Bloomsbury Street
London
WC1B 3HF

Your ref: CAF 15-87

Our ref: Gov/CAF 15-87

Tel 0300 456 4000

26 May 2015

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email of 8 May 2015 which was received by our office on 11 May 2015. You made the following requests for information:

Please can you answer when Cafcass are asked by the courts to carry out checks on lets say a partner of one of the parties what rules and procedure do you adhere to is Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (previously CRB checks) and could you supply me with the relevant zip file or information on this and the policy Cafcass would follow when ordered by the court to check this information or to check on the parties if also asked.

Please see below for our response.

As part of the work undertaken prior to first hearing in new private law cases, information is sought from local authorities, and police checks are carried out for parties. The information required for these safeguarding assessments is obtained in line with the arrangements set out in the [Child Arrangements Programme](#) (see paragraph 13.3). In some circumstances we are also asked to provide this information about individuals who are not parties; in such cases we require the consent of the individual or a court may order the checks to be undertaken.

- A request is sent to the relevant local authority seeking confirmation about whether the family is known to them and they then return the requested information.
- There are two levels of police checks available to Cafcass officers.
 1. PNC checks ('level 1') are carried out by our specialist unit within the National Business Centre as part of the work undertaken prior to the first hearing, in new private law cases. Other than in limited circumstances,

Baroness Tyler of Enfield Chair
Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive





Cafcass will perform Level 1 checks on all parties named in a C100 application form in private law proceedings.

2. An enhanced police check ('level 2') is a request by Cafcass for the disclosure, and provision by Police, of any information held on the databases of a local force(s) including local intelligence, call out logs and domestic violence records. A request to the local police force for enhanced information should only be made when a FCA determines, upon consideration of information received, that it is necessary to check with local force(s) whether additional information pertaining to one or more of the parties is held in order to provide the court with the information it needs to make an informed decision about how to deal with the case. The decision to request an enhanced check is an exercise of professional judgment

The outcome of these checks will form part of the safeguarding letter (previously known as a Schedule 2 letter) sent to the court prior to the First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointment.

Where work is undertaken after a first hearing, the Cafcass officer should decide on the need for wider safeguarding checks with relevant agencies other than the police and local authority (e.g. schools, health visitors, probation). The prior consent of the subject of the wider check should be obtained and, if refused, a court direction sought.

Please see the following sections of our [Operating Framework](#) for more information on when checks are made with other agencies: sections 2.4, 4.1, 4.7, 4.21, 8.23, 8.24 and Appendix 4 are relevant.

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):

Post

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Fax

01625 524 510

Tel

0303 123 1113

E-mail

casework@ico.org.uk

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Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive





Yours sincerely,

Governance Team

Cafcass

Governance@cafcass.gsi.gov.uk

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Cafcass, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, is a non-departmental body of the Ministry of Justice
Cafcass National Office, 3rd Floor, 21 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1B 3HF | DX Cafcass 310101 Bloomsbury 11