



Cafcass National Office
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21 Bloomsbury Street
London
WC1B 3HF

Your ref: CAF 15-109
Our ref: Gov/CAF 15-109

Tel 0300 456 4000

19 June 2015

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email of 8 June 2015. You made the following requests for information:

- 1) the current cafcass guidelines policies and procedure for Customer Services and Policy
- 2) a customer charter
- 3) Policy about FOI and requesting policies and accessing information
- 4) another issue has arisen in respect of CAF/CASS workers contacting agencies without seeking permission or informing parents of the need or intention or gaining permission. please can you advise which part of the guidance that I would find this in?

Please see below for our response.

- 1) Please see our [Operating Framework](#) which sets out how we meet our responsibilities as a family court social work service to children and young people, to courts and to family members, as required by legislation. For more information, please see our other [policies](#) and [tools for practitioners](#) for more information.

Please see our [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#) which sets out some of the work completed by the Customer Services team. More information about complaints can be seen on our [website](#) and in the [Concerns and Complaints Factsheet](#) (section: 'what will the complaints team do?').

- 2) Customer Care Standards are set out at 8.5 of the Cafcass [Operating Framework](#); these minimum standards make clear that in all interactions with services users we will:

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- provide a friendly, professional service and treat you with respect at all times
- treat everyone fairly and allow everyone to access our services
- be helpful, give you the information you need and work hard to get things right for your children
- provide clear information on our services that you can access easily
- use plain English, avoid jargon, translate information and put it into other formats when you need it
- use your comments and feedback to improve our services
- make sure that our complaints process is clear, easy to understand and fair, and that we solve problems quickly

- 3) Please see our [Freedom of Information Policy](#) (for requests about Cafcass information) and our [Subject Access Request Policy](#) (for requests about your personal information held by Cafcass).

For further details please see our [Freedom of Information pages](#) on our website.

- 4) Please see our [Privacy Notice](#) which sets out how Cafcass collects and processes service users' personal information.

As part of our child protection responsibilities, Cafcass provides information regarding parties in family proceedings to the court which has been provided by other agencies. Work undertaken prior to first hearing in new private law cases includes seeking information from local authorities, and carrying out [police checks](#) for parties. The information is required for safeguarding assessments and 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.

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.

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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

Yours sincerely,

Governance Team

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