



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

Your ref: CAF 15-55
Our ref: Gov/CAF 15-55

Tel 0300 456 4000

10 April 2015

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email of 8 April 2015, which was received by our office on 9 April 2015. You made the following requests for information:

- 1) I recently conducted a research study on the experiences of alienated parents in the UK (summary attached). The research findings suggest that Cafcass officers lack knowledge, understanding and training in Parental Alienation. This research is now being prepared for submission to a number of academic journals and I require clarification of the Cafcass position on Parental Alienation in order that I can accurately convey this in the articles.

Cafcass does understand and recognise the potential for implacable hostility by a party in high conflict private law cases. Our practitioners are aware of the potential for children to be influenced by parental views and will remain live to this issue throughout the progress of a case. We have a tool for use in direct work and a learning module, as well as access to resources and new research via our in-house library service, to assist practitioners in being able to assess the presence of implacable hostility in private law cases.

Implacable hostility will be assessed under Cafcass' framework of assessing the child's best interests, which includes application of the welfare checklist. More information on Cafcass' assessments can be viewed from paragraphs 1.11 onwards of [Cafcass' Operating Framework](#), with direct references to implacable hostility as outlined above

- 2) In 2012, there was clear reference to Parental Alienation in the Cafcass Operating Framework, yet this was removed from the Cafcass Operating Framework in 2014. However you do have a MySkills Knowledge Bite entitled Coached children – understanding the impact of parental alienation.

Baroness Tyler of Enfield Chair
Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive





Please could you confirm the evidence or reasoning behind the removal of the term “Parental Alienation” from your Operating Framework.

The current Cafcass Operating Framework makes three references to this issue, while the original Operating Framework contained four references:

- The key section has remained the same (paragraph 4.19 in the current version, and 4.10 in the previous version): *‘...excessive negative stereotyping and/or implacable hostility by an ex-partner and the consequential ‘alienation’ of a child from one parent. Such behaviour can be so severe it becomes emotionally harmful or abusive to an individual child. ‘Implacable hostility’ cases are particularly difficult to assess and resolve’.*
- The other two current references are in diagrams and remain the same (pages 28 and 29 in the current version, and pages 25 and 26 in the previous version).
- The additional reference in the 2012 version was contained within another diagram ‘the Cafcass casework process in stages’ (page 11). This was removed because the diagram was significantly amended due to changes in court processes. i.e. it was not a conscious decision to remove this reference.

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

Baroness Tyler of Enfield Chair
Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive





Yours sincerely,

Governance Team

Cafcass

Governance@cafcass.gsi.gov.uk

Baroness Tyler of Enfield Chair
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
Cafcass National Office, 3rd Floor, 21 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1B 3HF | DX Cafcass 310101 Bloomsbury 11