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Your ref: CAF 15-5  
Our ref: Gov/CAF 15-5

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10<sup>th</sup> February 2015

## Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015. Please see below for responses to your requests for information. Please note that in some responses we refer you to answers previously given to similar requests you have made.

1) if Family Court Advisors (FCA's) are required to "keep (their) professional knowledge and skills up to date" please define and detail what CAF/CASS means by "up to date".

Cafcass does not hold further data defining this term.

1.1) How does CAF/CASS formally define "up to date" in relation to FCA's required professional knowledge and skills?

Cafcass does not hold further data defining this term.

1.2) What does CAF/CASS formally constitute and document as "up to date" in relation to FCA's required professional knowledge and skills?

Cafcass does not hold the requested data.

1.3) How, how often, and in what way does CAF/CASS review what is considered to be "up to date" in relation to FCA's required professional knowledge and skills?

Individual training needs are identified and reviewed in quarterly performance and learning reviews; individual training needs are then collated into a skills gap analysis by area, which defines commissioning of training such as workshops or e learning. National training needs are reviewed on an ongoing basis by the National Improvement Service and in line with corporate priorities. The Health Care Professionals Council will also identify and recommend training for all social workers, which Cafcass will incorporate into its training plans.

2) What information regarding professional knowledge and skills essential updates was disseminated to FCA's between January 2012 and July 2014

Baroness Tyler of Enfield Chair  
Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive





Please see the response to your previous request, reference CAF 940, for details of training given to FCAs nationally.

3) What does CAFCASS mean by the "expected standard" as referenced in Employee Relations policy, Section 4 – Performance Capability, 4.1?

The policy in section 4.1 refers to 'acceptable and effective standards of performance' as the expected standard, and further expectations are set out in that policy.

3.1) please define and detail what CAFCASS formally constitutes and documents as this "expected standard".

Please see the response to question 3 above.

3.2) How is this "expected standard" outlined to ensure FCA's meet it?

Please see the response to question 3 above.

3.3) What is in place to measure whether FCA's meet this "expected standard" in relation to keeping their professional knowledge and skills "up to date".

Please see our response to question 2 in CAF 964, for details of how compliance and conduct is monitored.

4) The HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics states on page 3 that registrants "must act within the limits of (their) knowledge, skills and experience and, if necessary, refer the matter to another practitioner". How is a judgement made that an FCA has the correct "knowledge, skills and experience" for any specific scenario in a case?

All of our Family Court Advisers are qualified social workers registered with the HCPC and have a minimum of three year's post qualifying experience in social work with children and families at risk. Please also see our response to question 2 in CAF 964, for details of how compliance and conduct is monitored.

4.1) What checks are in place, on a case by case basis, to ensure FCA's have the correct "knowledge, skills and experience" for any specific scenario in a case as the cases develop over time?

Please see our response to question 2 in CAF 964, for details of how compliance and conduct is monitored.

4.2) What checks are in place, on a case by case basis, to ensure FCA's adhere to this code of conduct and are operating within the bounds of their "knowledge, skills and experience"?

Please see our response to question 2 in CAF 964, for details of how compliance and conduct is monitored.

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4.3) How often are Performance and Learning Review (PLR) meetings between a manager and an individual FCA?

This is detailed in our [Operating Framework](#) section 6.18 – 6.23; PLR meetings are held quarterly.

5) If an FCA identifies that a matter is beyond their own "knowledge, skills and experience" what is the process for an FCA to refer the matter to another practitioner?

This is detailed in our [Operating Framework](#) Section 6.16; any issues would be raised with a manager.

6) the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics states in point 10 that registrants "must keep accurate records". What does CAFCASS mean by "accurate"?

Accurate is understood as it used in the [Data Protection Act Schedule 1](#), where the fourth data protection principle is: *Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date*. It gives the following clarification:

*The fourth principle is not to be regarded as being contravened by reason of any inaccuracy in personal data which accurately record information obtained by the data controller from the data subject or a third party in a case where—*

*(a) having regard to the purpose or purposes for which the data were obtained and further processed, the data controller has taken reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy of the data, and,*

*(b) if the data subject has notified the data controller of the data subject's view that the data are inaccurate, the data indicate that fact.*

6.1) How does CAFCASS define, constitute and document what it means by "accurate"?

Please see the response to question 6 above.

6.2) What specific checks are in place to ensure records are "accurate"?

Please see sections 2.2, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.5 of our [Case Recording Policy](#) which describes who is responsible for checking data accuracy. No further data is held on what form these checks take.

6.3) CAFCASS has a series of tools that FCA's are charged with utilising when assessing cases, in particular the "Impact of Parental Conflict Tool". CAFCASS's own guidance to FCA's states that "This final tool should be used post-interview to analyse the impact of parental conflict and the level of parental influence on a child's wishes and feelings. You should complete this tool after you have conducted your interviews with the parents and the child (if appropriate). It will help you to identify, and clarify,





any emotionally harmful influence of one or both parents on the child. Your findings can then be referenced in your report in the relevant section(s)." How does CAF/CASS record whether this tool has been used?

Please see our response to question 6 in CAF 940.

7) If the Employee Relations policy you reference was launched in December 2014, what constituted formal expectations of conduct for staff pre December 2014?

These were previously covered in the Performance and Conduct Policy (attached), which has been superseded by the Employee Relations Policy.

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

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