



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

Your ref: CAF 16-58  
Our ref: Gov/CAF 16-58

Tel 0300 456 4000

19 April 2016

## Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email of 15 April 2016. You made the following requests for information:

I would also like to have a copy of your procedures into how a Guardian should properly conduct proceedings as soon as possible, particularly in regards to ensuring the child's true voice is heard without parental influence

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, taking account of the child's ascertainable wishes and feelings (as set out in [Welfare Checklist](#)). In private law work, Cafcass works within the parameters of the national [Child Arrangements Programme](#).

Please see the Cafcass [Operating Framework](#) which sets out guidance for our practitioners in completing this role. In particular:

- Sections 4.19 – 4.24 set out what Cafcass practitioners should have regard to when working on private law cases which continue after the first hearing;
- Sections 1.16 – 1.22 set out how Cafcass works with children and young people;
- Specific information on actions to be taken by Guardians after appointment under rule 16.4 can be seen in sections 4.31 – 4.32.

Cafcass understands and recognises the potential for implacable hostility by a party in high conflict private law cases (section 4.19 of the Operating Framework). 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. All Cafcass Guardians are qualified social workers with at least three years post qualifying experience in social work with children and families. We also have a tool for use in

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direct work (['Impact of parental conflict tool'](#)), as well as access to resources and new research via our in-house library service and training site, to assist practitioners in being able to assess these cases.

All recommendations are based on professional judgement of what is assessed to be in the child's best interests in each specific case. Please note that it is the court, and not Cafcass, that makes final decisions in the family court proceedings.

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)):

**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](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,

Governance Team

Cafcass

[Governance@cafcass.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Governance@cafcass.gsi.gov.uk)

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Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive

