



Cafcass National Office
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Your ref: CAF 16-80
Our ref: Gov/CAF 16-80

Tel 0300 456 4000

27 June 2016

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email of 10 June 2016. You made the following requests for information:

1. What is causing this failure [for local authorities to meet the revised PLO target of 26 weeks] is a key target – I am wondering what is causing this?

Cafcass publishes [trend information for the duration of care and supervision applications](#). However, we have no recorded information on the cause of varied duration by local authorities.

2. Can you tell me what % of both “private law” and “care” cases involve the need for DNA testing?

This information is not held by Cafcass; it may be held by the court service (HMCTS).

In terms of Cafcass managing a new DNA testing service for private law cases under the Child Arrangements Programme 2014 where parentage is in dispute, the service is relatively new and may not be in full use throughout courts nationally. The number of referrals received by Cafcass December 2015 – March 2016 is 171.

3. It seems to me that some (if not all) of those authorities performing badly already have in place family courts to try and speed up the process. Can you confirm this is the case, and inform me of any plans there are to expand their availability?

The question is in the form of an expression of opinion, to which Cafcass can make no response. All local authorities and the family courts are subject to Practice Direction 12A and the time limit of 26 weeks is set out in legislation. It is not clear what data is being sought.

Baroness Tyler of Enfield Chair
Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive





4. Does Cafcass understand the reasons behind this trend [increased care applications in the past 6/7 years], and if so what are they?

Cafcass has no recorded information on this topic; care applications are made by local authorities, and Cafcass Guardians are subsequently appointed by the court within the proceedings.

There has been a recent All Party Parliamentary Group for Children looking at the changes in the level and nature of demand for children's social care services which may be of interest: <http://www.ncb.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/all-party-parliamentary-group/inquiry-2016-childrens-social-care>

5. What data is available to detail the performance of the current DNA provider?

Performance data is considered commercially sensitive and disclosure would prejudice the commercial interests of our supplier. We consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, in order to retain a service which provides the best value for money for Cafcass as a public authority.

43 Commercial interests

1. Information is exempt information if it constitutes a trade secret.
2. Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).
3. The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice the interests mentioned in subsection (2).

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

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Wycliffe House, Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
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SK9 5AF

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01625 524 510

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Baroness Tyler of Enfield Chair
Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive





Yours sincerely,

Governance Team

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Cafcass, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, is a non-departmental body of the Ministry of Justice
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