



Your ref: CAF 16-159
Our ref: Gov/CAF 16-159

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25 January 2017

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email of 11 January 2017. You made the following requests for information:

[1. Are all Cafcass officers aware of Parental Alienation?](#)

'Parental alienation' it is a term more commonly used in the United States than in the United Kingdom, where the term 'implacable hostility' is more common. Cafcass understands and recognises the potential for implacable hostility by a party and the potential for the 'alienation' of a child from one parent in high conflict private law cases. Section 4.19 of the Cafcass [Operating Framework](#) makes reference to "implacable hostility" which may lead to "alienation" of a child from one parent, and sets out how we assess such issues in our cases.

Cafcass also has 'knowledge bites' available to all staff on 'Coached Children' and a 'Post-Separation Control: the impact on the child', which provide a succinct summaries of key issues with references to source materials that can be obtained from the Cafcass library. We also encourage staff to use the ['impact of parental conflict tool'](#) in their direct work with children, where this is relevant.

[2. Are all Cafcass officers trained and have expertise in Parental Alienation?](#)

Cafcass has a training module on 'Expertise in intervention with families to reduce impact of high conflict on children', which explores the risk to contact and the key elements in high conflict contact disputes and the impact on children and a range of resources are available to staff to inform their assessments. Training for practitioners does not specifically focus on implacable hostility as an issue, as every case is individual and depends on many factors including, but not limited to, the child's age, personality, stage of development, relationship with the parent, as well as the relationship between parents. All of our training revolves around being child centred, and taking into account risk factors, evidence-based assessments, and diversity issues. All practitioner recommendations are case specific and are based on their professional judgement of the child's welfare.

Baroness Tyler of Enfield Chair
Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive





3. What accredited qualifications do they have and from which governing body?

All Cafcass Family Court Advisers are qualified social workers with a Diploma in Social Work, or Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) recognised equivalent, and at least three years post qualifying experience in social work with children and families at risk. Family Court Advisers are registered with the HCPC and as a condition of their employment, Family Court Advisers must maintain their registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

4. Please supply me with copies of all guidelines and assessment tools used to assess the presence of Parental Alienation.

Please see the response to question one. Practitioners also have 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.

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 (<https://ico.org.uk/>):

Post

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Yours sincerely,

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