Cafcass Health, Safety and Security Policy



Statement of Intent

Cafcass policies are designed to safeguard children, families, staff, and the reputation of Cafcass. They ensure that Cafcass complies with its legal duties and from what we learn from practice quality audits, significant incidents and learning reviews, feedback, and complaints. They set out what must be done. They are public documents against which we can be held accountable. If they are not adhered to, we can be subject to challenge through complaints, the Parliamentary & Health Services Ombudsman, Social Work England, or even a Judicial Review. A decision not to adhere to a policy must be supported by a compelling rationale and endorsed by a manager. Policies are, therefore, subject to monitoring compliance – with fair and reasonable consequences for non-compliance. Key policies that are new or updated are subject to attestation[1] by all employees or groups of staff where appropriate.

What is this policy for?

This policy sets out how Cafcass manages health, safety, and security across its operations. Cafcass is committed to complying with its legal duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated legislation, including fire safety requirements. Cafcass will take all reasonably practicable steps to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees, contractors, visitors, and others who may be affected by its activities. This includes maintaining safe premises, supporting safe systems of work, and ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for fire safety and emergency response. Compliance with this policy is monitored, and employees are expected to follow the arrangements set out within it. Where a decision is made not to follow policy, this must be supported by a clear rationale and appropriate management oversight

Who does it apply to?

All Cafcass staff, including bank workers, Cafcass Associates, external agencies and contractors carrying out work on behalf of Cafcass. A copy of the Policy must be provided to all contractors and/or external agencies working on behalf of Cafcass.

Why is this important for children?

This policy supports our commitment to maintaining health, safety and security as a key priority not only for colleagues and contractors who work for Cafcass but also the children and families that we work with. This policy outlines our responsibilities for the health, safety and security of the children and families that we work with, when they visit our offices, and we meet with them independently from the office and within the court







environment.

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1.0 Foreword

I am pleased to have been asked to offer a short introduction to this important Cafcass policy. Thank you for taking the time to read and attest to the content.

The document addresses a range of health, safety and security issues that need to be well understood, strongly led and regularly reviewed to make sure that we are focused on how to develop and sustain a working environment that enables us all to do our best for children and families because we feel supported and safe when we are at work.

Your safety and well-being are as important as the safety of the children we serve. The responsibilities we have regardless of our role here mean that on any day, we may be faced with a situation that is unpredictable and that could present a risk to our own safety and security. As your employer, we are responsible for health and safety arrangements whilst you are working. You all need to feel confident and supported.

This policy represents a commitment to managing the risks that are associated with the work that we do. We cannot remove those risks, but we can manage them if we work together and understand what needs to happen, when and why. To be the advocates we need to be for children, we must first be confident that we are safe and supported.

I hope the content presented here is both clear and effective. As with all our policies and your experiences at Cafcass, we would welcome your feedback so that we can learn and improve the way we do things. Please do speak to your manager if you have any questions or suggestions. They will be forwarded to a member of the corporate management team for us to consider and respond.

As ever, thank you for your commitment and work here in support of children, families and carers. A safe organisation is a strong one and that is what we intend to be!



2.0 Organisation

2.0.1 This section outlines who is responsible for what in the organisation.
2.0.2 Cafcass operates as an Arm's Length Body of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The MoJ Corporate Health and Safety Policy provides an overarching framework for managing health and safety across the department and its associated bodies.
2.0.3 In line with this framework, Cafcass is responsible for establishing, implementing and maintaining its own health and safety arrangements, and for ensuring compliance with relevant legal requirements. Accountability for health and safety sits with Cafcass leadership, supported by clear roles, responsibilities and monitoring arrangements.

2.1 Accounting Officers – Corporate Management Team, Directors and Senior managers

2.1.1 Responsible for:

- Creation and maintenance of a positive health and safety culture, leading by example and creating an environment where all can actively participate and take ownership of appropriate health and safety standards.
- Provision of policies and/or arrangements for their business areas of responsibility.
- Appointing competent people.
- Providing assurance to the Permanent Secretary via the annual Governance Statement providing a supplementary health and safety return to the Ministry of Justice for corporate oversight.
- Informing employees of the health, safety and security policy and arrangements.
- Managing risks within their business areas.
- Discharging statutory occupational health and safety obligations.

2.2 Line Managers – all management grades

2.2.1 Must ensure:

- A positive health and safety culture within their teams, leading by example and creating an environment where all can actively participate and take ownership of appropriate health and safety standards.
- Risks are managed effectively in line with risk assessment.
- All members of their team, including themselves, are adequately trained to manage and mitigate health, safety and security risks.
- Adequate arrangements are in place to safeguard the health and safety of employees and others.
- Health, safety, and security incidents are reported in a timely manner through AssessNET.

2.3 Managers' responsibilities

2.3.1 All managers are responsible for ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable:

- Compliance with local policy and/or local arrangements on health and safety issues.
- Creation and maintenance of a positive health and safety culture, leading by example and creating an environment where all can actively participate and take ownership of appropriate health and safety standards.
- Control of risks under their business area, dealing with them sensibly, responsibly, and proportionately in accordance with the relevant risk assessment.
- Accidents, incidents, assaults and near misses within their business area are reported and investigated, and taking proportionate measures in accordance with risk assessment as is necessary to prevent recurrence of reported incidents.
- Staff at all levels receive the relevant training to an appropriate level of competence to control health, safety, and security risks. A suite of e-learning courses and associated guidance documents is available within Connect and Cafcass Learning.
- Relevant health and safety operating procedures and health and safety procedures are

provided where required and are communicated to all colleagues.

- Escalation of health, safety and security issues to the Health, Safety and Security Manager, when they cannot be resolved locally.
- Periodic workplace health and safety inspections, proportionate to the risk, are carried out within their business area, and Trade Union Representatives are invited to attend.
- Where appropriate, all plant, equipment, substances, and materials are safe and suitable for their intended use and are adequately maintained and controlled.
- Adequate arrangements are in place to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of colleagues and others at all times – this will include nominating and arranging training for fire marshals and first aiders for their areas of responsibility.
- All colleagues under their employed responsibility have read and understood the Health, Safety and Security Policy.
- The identification of colleagues whose personal circumstances or duties involve particular or significant health, safety and security risks and ensure the required risk assessments and safe working practices are in place. If in doubt escalate to the Estates and Health and Safety Team/Health, Safety and Security Manager.

2.3.2 Health, safety and security matters must be discussed as an agenda item in all team meetings; any issues arising that cannot be resolved at team meeting level should be forwarded to the appropriate senior management meeting and/or the Health Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG) via the Health, Safety and Security Manager.

2.4 Employees' responsibilities

2.4.1 Employees have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to take care of their own health and safety and that of others by ensuring that their actions or failures to act do not place themselves or others at risk of harm or injury.

2.4.2 Employees must also:

- Read and understand the Health, Safety and Security Policy and escalate any questions or concerns to their line manager.
- Co-operate with the reasonable requests of their manager in respect of health and safety matters.
- Notify their line manager, or other responsible person, of any shortcomings in health, safety and security arrangements.
- Complete all mandatory training courses.
- Complete all mandatory personal risk assessments, including DSE, PEEPs and lone working.
- Report all accidents, assaults, hazardous conditions, dangerous occurrences, or near misses to their line manager and support any investigation aimed at preventing reoccurrence.
- Never misuse or interfere with anything provided for health and safety purposes.

2.5 Consultation

2.5.1 The Health Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG) fulfils the role of Safety Committee as outlined within the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977, for Cafcass nationally.

3.0 Managing Unacceptable Behaviour

3.0.1 All Cafcass employees, contractors, board members, and volunteers have a right to work without fear of harassment, abuse, pestering, or violence in any form. Cafcass will not accept or allow any form of unacceptable behaviour from any individual encountered during the course of our work. Children, their families, and other individuals we work with can expect the same high standards of respectful behaviour from Cafcass employees. Where necessary and when the behaviour is of a criminal nature Cafcass will support staff to pursue protection via the police and in extreme circumstances, may also consider whether injunctive orders should be sought to protect staff.

3.0.2 It is very important that as a children's social work organisation with a legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of children in proceedings, we take seriously and will not accept any threatening, intimidating or violent behaviour from an adult party in proceedings because of the potential implications for children's safety and protection. Everyone must consider how the behaviour is making them feel and in the assessment of that, reflect on how children are likely to be feeling and what they will be experiencing in their family home. Action must be taken where this is required to protect children as well as our Cafcass colleagues.

- Cafcass' guidance (see link in Annex A) on Managing Unacceptable Behaviour sets out how to recognise, report, and respond to unacceptable behaviour from adults, whether in person, online, in telephone/video calls, by post or through third parties.

3.0.3 If you experience unacceptable behaviour, you must:

- Take any steps you feel necessary to ensure your immediate safety, including removing yourself from a location if the person is physically present.
- Immediately inform and discuss the incident with your manager (or covering manager if they are unavailable) – this should be in writing as soon as possible as well as on the phone/text message.
- Not engage further with the person involved unless you have agreed actions with your manager to mitigate risk as part of a risk assessment.
- Forward any correspondence to your manager.
- Consider whether a child linked to the adult may be at greater risk, following the child safeguarding policy if concerned about harm, particularly for incidents where you feel threatened.
- Complete an incident report on AssessNET, which will notify the Estates, Health, Safety and Security Team for any follow-up necessary.

3.0.4 Leaders and managers must approach incidents with kindness, support, safety and clarity about the next steps that must be taken to enable a colleague to remain safe at work. This is at the heart of what a leader or manager is expected to secure at Cafcass, providing oversight and monitoring of incidents so that learning is in place to mitigate further risk. Within 24 hours of any incident, managers, including those providing cover, must:

- Review the incident with the member of staff, provide appropriate support and complete a risk assessment and action plan. This review must take place face-to-face, in person or via Teams.
- Consider the child protection implications raised by the incident and take appropriate action.
- Involve the police for serious incidents of threatening behaviour or assault alerting the National Director of Operations and the Chief Executive. If legal advice is required, alert the Cafcass legal team. A plan of action must be immediately put in place focused on the safety of our employees and any associated children in the case.

- Notify the relevant Assistant Director, who will be required to sign off the risk assessment and action plan. Assistant Directors are required to lead on managing Cafcass' response to any violent, abusive, or aggressive behaviour, including the implications for live proceedings and children whose proceedings are concluded.
- Consider the arrangements to be made for continued involvement of the FCA or children's guardian in the proceedings
- Consider any further legal and protective actions needed such as a warning letter, a letter of cease- and-desist, or notification to the court (see below).
- Determine whether the case meets the criteria for a Significant Incident Report.

3.0.5 For demonstrations or protests, notify the police and consider closing the office or allowing staff to leave. Staff must never confront protesters directly and security protocols for the building must be followed. Further guidance on civil disorder is available here. The Chief Executive's office and core CMT members must always be alerted as soon as any protesting behaviour or activity becomes known or likely.

4.0 Lone working

4.0.1 It is not necessarily hazardous to work alone, and in most cases, there is no risk at all. The presence of any risk will depend on a variety of circumstances, such as the location, time of day, or the risk posed by the person being met. Cafcass employees can work alone and are responsible for taking reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work. Cafcass' guidance for lone working (see link in Annex A) provides advice on measures that can be used to reduce risk where there is an identified potential for harm when lone working.

4.0.2 Managers must ensure safe arrangements for lone working are in place and, where necessary, complete risk assessments, acting on any concerns identified. Managers and staff should agree the arrangements to use where staff work by themselves and should routinely check and monitor that this happens through Performance Learning Reviews (PLRs). Any incidents must be reported in AssessNET.

5.0 Risk Assessment

5.0.1. Managers must ensure that any potential risks to the health, safety and security of colleagues, contractors and/or visitors are assessed using the Cafcass risk assessment form. The assessment should be signed off by the appropriate line manager of the working arrangements, task, individual being assessed on the risk assessment form.

5.0.2. Managers should assess risks presented by any new activity, task or the introduction of any new equipment or working arrangements.

5.0.3. Managers should re-assess the risk from any existing activity, task, equipment or working arrangement where there is reason to believe that the likelihood or severity of the risk of harm have increased.

5.0.4. The extent of a record of the assessments required above will depend upon the risk presented. Tasks, activities, equipment etc, that present a low or negligible risk will not require the completion of a full risk assessment record.

5.0.5. Control measures, safe systems of work or other actions to manage the risk from a task, activity, working arrangement or work equipment at a low level should be recorded if without those measures the risk would be higher.

5.0.6. Colleagues must follow any management instruction issued because of a completed risk assessment unless the individual believes this will place them at harm or imminent

danger. If an individual refuses an instruction because they believe they will be placed at risk of harm or imminent danger, they should discuss this with their line manager or with their manager's manager.

5.1 Incidents and accidents

5.1.1. Any colleague subject to an incident such as an accident, near miss, violent, threatening, or abusive incident whilst at work or associated with their work, must report it as soon as possible using AssessNET.

5.1.2. Any incident that is reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) will automatically be triggered within the AssessNET system and will be signed off and sent to HSE by the National Health, Safety and Security Manager.

5.1.3. Managers must support reporting of any incident that results in harm or, if a near miss, could have resulted in harm for investigation by the Health, Safety and Security Team and support the investigation where required. Investigation findings must be added to the relevant AssessNET incident report.

5.1.4. A reportable accident that results in specified injury must be investigated as soon as it is reported to ensure that any evidence and witness statements can be gathered in a timely manner. Estates and Health and Safety Team and relevant Assistant Director or senior manager**,** as well as the relevant Trade Union health and safety representative must be informed.

6.0 Health, wellbeing and stress

The Health and Wellbeing pages on the intranet provide links to information and resources on a variety of subjects to help improve and maintain wellbeing and health.

The HSE defines stress as:

"*The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them."*

Cafcass undertakes on organisational stress risk assessments to identify and manage work related stress risks, in line with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance and Ministry of Justice requirements. Findings are used to inform organisational actions and improvements to working practices.

Cafcass is committed to the following:

- Our mission at Cafcass is to continue to build a positive organisational culture that fosters a holistic approach to wellbeing, with the goal of supporting employees and enabling them to perform effectively in their role, maximising their capabilities to make lasting and positive differences to the children and families they work with.

- Colleagues are encouraged to raise concerns relating to stress with their line manager at an early stage so that appropriate support and adjustments can be considered.

- The Cafcass health and wellbeing commitment signposts resources to help colleagues deal with both work and non-work-related mental health issues.

- Cafcass provides access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which includes a confidential 24/7 telephone helpline service for colleagues who feel under pressure either due to work or non-work activities.

6.1 Display Screen Equipment

6.1.1 Cafcass is legally required to assess workstations and reduce risks for employees who regularly use display screen equipment for continuous periods of an hour or more as part of their normal work. Failure to do so may breach the following regulations:

Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended 2002), requires employers to analyse workstations, reduce risks, provide information/instruction/training, arrange eye tests on request, and review assessments when circumstances change.
Cafcass has guidance for working remotely with display screen equipment which should be referred to for further information on DSE.

6.1.3 All colleagues employed by Cafcass must complete the online DSE e-learning package and refer to Cafcass guidance as part of induction to enable them to carry out a DSE self-assessment. Colleagues should inform their line manager if further advice or support is required.

Completion of the electronic DSE self-assessment in AssessNET is mandatory for all Cafcass colleagues who are DSE users. Assessments must be reviewed whenever there is a significant change to equipment, workstation arrangements, work location or health circumstances and these conditions should be subject to an annual review. Colleagues with specialist equipment, reasonable adjustments or identified particular needs should ensure a detailed review of their assessment at least annually to ensure arrangements remain suitable and effective.

6.1.4 Colleagues working flexibly should follow DSE guidance when setting up a workstation at their home or other location, including completing a self-assessment of their workstation, and should inform their line manager if they are unable to meet the basic requirements for a safe workspace. Colleagues working from home should ensure that they follow good practice guidance in setting up their workstation and using their laptop.

Anyone who has a particular need identified through the completion of a DSE Assessment should raise this with their line manager in the first instance who may need to liaise with the Health, Safety and Security Manager and the local HR Business Partner. If unresolved, the next stage will be to arrange a meeting with a third-party provider to carry out an Occupational Health Assessment. The report produced will be for the colleague and line manager to review with a copy provided to the HR Business Partner. Together an agreed action plan will be produced to resolve any issues. Where necessary and agreed by the line manager and HR Business Partner, the Health, Safety and Security Manager, IT and the Health and Wellbeing Team can offer additional support. The report may identify specialist equipment required for colleagues to carry out their duties and whether this can be accessed by working from a Cafcass office**.** Funding for the provision of additional equipment will be agreed and managed through the process identified within the Particular Needs & Reasonable Adjustments Procedure.

6.2 Provision of Reasonable Adjustments

6.2.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the “Act”) requires us to provide reasonable adjustments for people who are disabled in circumstances including, if a provision, criteria or practice places that disabled person at a substantial (which is more than minor or trivial) disadvantage in comparison to someone who does not have a disability. A disability under the Act is if they have physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

6.2.2 A reasonable adjustment is a reasonable step which can be taken to avoid the disadvantage identified.

6.2.3 What is considered reasonable will depend on factors such as:

- The effectiveness of the adjustment in preventing the disadvantage.
- The extent to which it is practical to make the adjustment.
- The cost of the adjustment and availability of resources, including external assistance and finance.
- The extent of any disruption which the adjustment would cause the employer's activities.
- The nature of the employer's activities and the size of the undertaking.
- The impact on other employees.

6.3 First Aid

6.3.1 Health and Safety Executive guidance requires first aid provision to be adequate and appropriate, based on the nature of the work, workforce, and workplace risks.

6.3.2 Cafcass adopts a tiered emergency response model, recognising that levels of occupancy and on-site support vary across the estate. First aid arrangements are therefore determined on a risk-based and proportionate basis for each premises.

6.3.3 In higher occupancy locations (Core offices), a proportionate number of colleagues may be trained to provide first aid support. In lower occupancy or intermittently used premises, arrangements may rely on alternative measures such as local building provisions, emergency services, and staff awareness.

6.3.4 Business Services Managers must ensure that each office has a readily available first aid kit in place that is routinely checked and re–stocked as and when necessary.

6.4 New mothers and pregnant women

6.4.1 Cafcass has produced risk assessment templates for pregnant women and new mothers that must be used when a colleague informs their line manager or HR that they are pregnant. The risk assessment should also be used for colleagues returning to work after a period of maternity leave.

6.4.2 The AssessNET DSE self-assessment module should also be revisited for pregnant women and new mothers to ensure any additional needs are identified. Further advice is available from your local HR Business Partner and/or the National Health, Safety and Security Manager.

6.5 Manual handling

6.5.1 Manual handling means transporting or supporting a load by hand or bodily force. It includes the activities of lifting, loading, pushing, pulling, moving or carrying a load. A load is a movable object, such as a box or package, a person or something being pushed or pulled such as an piece of furniture or a sack barrow. Managers must assess any potentially harmful manual handling risks to employees to either eliminate or reduce them to a reasonable level.

6.5.2 A generic manual handling risk assessment and supporting guidance is available on the Cafcass intranet.

6.6 Chemical and physical hazards

6.6.1 Chemical and physical hazards comprise both substances and physical phenomenon. The physical hazards referred to here are hazards that can impact the body due to work activities. These include activities that may damage a colleague's hearing due to excessive and prolonged noise levels or high vibration levels when using certain tools could damage nerve ends. Predominantly these types of hazards are associated with construction or on occasions manufacturing environments. Due to the nature of Cafcass' business, it is unlikely that anyone will be affected by a physical hazard, such as noise or vibration, however there is the potential to come into contact with a chemical hazard such as cleaning fluids if they are not correctly stored.

6.6.2 Chemical hazards will be managed to meet the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH Regs). As such, Cafcass will ensure the cleaning contractor provides COSHH risk assessments and associated Safety Data Sheets for all chemical products accessible to colleagues within Cafcass premises. Cafcass will ensure that required controls such as the issue and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) when using certain products, and provisions of lockable storage solutions are in place to prevent accidental exposure to chemicals within the office environment. Guidance is available on the Connect pages for staff intending to use potentially hazardous substances.

6.7 Infectious diseases and other microbiological hazards

6.7.1 Microbiological hazards are organisms that have the potential to cause harm if they come into contact with the human body. As Cafcass colleagues work with members of the public and use public spaces and transport there is a general risk that colleagues may be exposed to microbiological hazards and infectious diseases, although this could occur at any time and is not confined just to periods when colleagues are at work.

6.7.2 Any colleague who has contracted an infectious disease or who has been in contact with someone who has an infectious disease must report it to their line manager as soon as they become aware. Colleagues are also advised to discuss any such occurrence with their GP.

6.7.3 Cafcass colleagues should be alert to the risks of infectious diseases when dealing with children and families and take action when noting warning signs of potential infection.

6.7.4 Cafcass has an emergency plan that can be invoked where either an epidemic or pandemic occurs.

7.0 Driving for work

7.0.1 Colleagues who are likely to be required to drive while at work should refer to the online eLearning course for more information and discuss with their Line Manager on requirements and options available when driving for work.

7.0.2 Colleagues who use their own vehicle for business purposes must ensure that:

- They maintain their vehicle in good working order.
- The vehicle is suitable for everyday use in the course of their duties.
- Their vehicle receives an annual MOT (where required)
- Their vehicle is serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- The vehicle has valid road tax
- The driver is appropriately insured to use the vehicle for business purposes
- The driver has a full licence which permits them to drive the specific vehicle.
- They notify their manager of any driving sanctions and the impact on driving for work that this may have.
- They have completed the driver safety e-learning module on Cafcass Learning.

7.0.3 Use of a vehicle is in accordance with road traffic legislation, compliance with which requires the driver to be familiar with and follow the Highway code.

7.0.4 Guidance relating to carrying children and adult passengers is available on the Driving for work Intranet Page.

8.0 Premises Safety & Welfare provision

8.01 Cafcass will ensure that all statutory estates compliance requirements, such as electrical

systems, gas installations, asbestos, water systems, lifts, and fire warning and protection systems are managed through competent external contractors and supported by routine internal monitoring. This will extend to colleague welfare facilities such as toilets, drinking water provision and hearing loops.

8.1 Emergency Provisions

8.1.1 All premises will have at least one emergency evacuation drill each year, however, will be conducted on a 6-month basis wherever feasible. Fire drills will provide a practical test drill of current evacuation procedures relating to fire or other emergencies such as bomb alerts or gas escapes.

8.1.2 All test drills will be recorded on the health and safety office compliance app, with the report filed within the individual office. Electronic health and safety premises files which are managed by the Estates and Health, Safety and Security Team, and posted on relevant notice boards. The file will be maintained by the Business Services Manager of the premises to which it relates.

8.1.3 Business Services Managers will complete and routinely review their plans for maintaining business continuity for each office.

8.1.4 Cafcass' Business Continuity Steering Group ensures that arrangements are in place to deal with incidents that disrupt the continuity of services, and where necessary Cafcass will invoke the Incident Management Team (IMT) to manage large scale incidents.

8.2 Evacuation of people with a disability

8.2.1 Line managers should ensure that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is produced for any colleague with a disability within their office which should always be put together in consultation with the individual. The PEEP must be shared with the Business Services Manager.

8.2.2 Business Services Managers should produce a Generic Emergency Evacuation Plan (GEEP) for members of the public and visitors.

8.2.3 Business Service Managers will ensure co-ordination of PEEPs within the emergency evacuation arrangements. All PEEP holders should be provided with the opportunity to test their PEEP arrangements.

8.2.4 Guidance on PEEPs and GEEPs is available on the Fire Safety Intranet pages.

8.3 Fire safety

8.3.1. All colleagues must complete the mandatory online fire safety e-Learning course available on Cafcass Learning at least once every year.

8.3.2. Cafcass is the 'responsible person' for fire safety legislation in the areas it occupies. Business Service Managers support this role by implementing and overseeing fire safety arrangements within the offices they manage. In multi occupied buildings, responsibility for fire safety may be shared with the landlord or other duty holders, particularly in relation to common areas.

8.3.3. Estates, Health, Safety, and Security Team are responsible for strategic oversight and legal compliance. They have a responsibility to:

- Ensure suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments are undertaken for all premises occupied by Cafcass.
- Ensure significant findings from fire risk assessments are acted upon and tracked to completion.

- Develop and maintain fire safety arrangements, standards and guidance.
- Provide competent advice and support to the organisation on fire safety matters.
- Monitor compliance and performance, including audits and reporting.
- Liaise with landlords, managing agents and enforcing authorities where required.
- Ensure appropriate emergency arrangements, including evacuation procedures, are in place.

8.3.4. Business Service Managers are responsible for local implementation and oversight. They have a responsibility to:

- Implement and maintain fire safety arrangements within the offices they manage.
- Ensure local fire procedures are in place and communicated to staff and visitors.
- Confirm that a current fire risk assessment is in place for their premises.
- Ensure actions arising from fire risk assessment are addressed or escalated appropriately.
- Support and coordinate evacuation arrangements, including any local roles (e.g. Fire Marshals where applicable).
- Maintain relevant local records (e.g. drills, checks, issues).
- Escalate fire safety concerns to the Estates, Health, Safety and Security Team.

8.3.3 Line managers are responsible for people level assurance. They have a responsibility to:

- Ensure team members complete mandatory fire safety training.
- Reinforce awareness of local evacuation procedures, particularly for staff attending offices intermittently.
- Support staff who may require assistance to evacuate, including initiating PEEP discussions where needed.
- Escalate fire safety concerns or issues raised by staff.

8.3.4 All employees have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care for their own safety and that of others.
- Familiarise themselves with local fire evacuation procedures when attending any Cafcass premises.
- Follow all fire safety instructions and evacuate immediately when the alarm sounds.
- Assist visitors they are hosting to evacuate safely.
- Not misuse or interfere with fire safety equipment.
- Report fire safety concerns, defects or incidents promptly via line management or AssessNet.
- Inform their line manager if they require assistance to evacuate (e.g. mobility, health or sensory needs) so appropriate arrangements can be put in place.

8.3.5 Cafcass adopts a risk-based and proportionate approach to evacuation arrangements in line with its tiered emergency response model. In higher occupancy locations, designated Fire Marshals may be appointed to support evacuation and coordination. In lower occupancy or intermittently used premises, evacuation will rely on all occupants responding promptly to the alarm and following established procedures.

8.3.3 Where Cafcass occupies space within multi-occupied premises, it will cooperate and coordinate with landlords, managing agents and other occupiers to ensure fire safety arrangements are aligned and effective, particularly in relation to common areas and building-wide systems.

8.3.4 Further guidance on fire safety arrangements, including evacuation procedures, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) and fire drill arrangements is available on the Cafcass intranet.

8.3.5 Fire safety requirements are outlined in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005,

further details of which can be found on Gov.uk and the Health and Safety Executive website.

8.4 General housekeeping

8.4.1 Colleagues should take sensible everyday precautions such as keeping the office tidy, wiping up spillages, preventing trailing cables, blocking access routes etc.

8.4.2 Colleagues must:

- Wear suitable footwear that is appropriate for the weather conditions at the time.
- Use handrails when ascending or descending staircases.
- Be aware of hazard warnings and proceed accordingly with caution.
- Not climb on any furniture or equipment to reach anything at height.
- Use suitable and appropriate steps if necessary to access items stored at height.
- Report or immediately clean up spillages.
- Not leave items in circulation routes that could cause a person to slip or trip.
- Dispose of waste in the appropriate container.

8.5 Use of electrical equipment

8.5.1 Electrical equipment, including portable electrical items fitted with plugs, fixed wired items such as plug sockets, lighting and equipment such as wall mounted hand dryers will be maintained in safe working order.

8.5.2 Colleagues must carry out a visual check of any portable electrical appliance prior to using it – guidance is available on the intranet.

8.5.3 Colleagues must ensure all portable electrical appliances provided for use at work are made available for testing at least once every two years as reasonably requested.

8.5.4 Further guidance on electrical safety can be found on the Health and Safety Executive website.

9.0 Information and training

9.1 Induction

9.1.1 Any new colleagues must receive ‘suitable induction’ training within the first four weeks of their employment by following the HR Induction framework available on the HR intranet page. Line managers will ensure employees receive an induction.

9.1.2 All new colleagues must complete a series of mandatory **health and safety** eLearning courses within the first month of employment. Please discuss with your Line Manager if you have any problems accessing the training.

9.2 Information, instruction, and training (e-Learning and guidance)

9.2.1 The provision of information, instruction and training is a key requirement of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

9.2.2 To ensure the required level of information, instruction and training is provided to all colleagues, Cafcass provides:

- Mandatory Health and Safety modules available on the Cafcass learning portal, that all new colleagues should complete as part of their induction.
- A mandatory fire safety refresher course which all colleagues must complete annually.
- A mandatory health and safety refresher course which all colleagues must complete

annually.

- A page on the Cafcass intranet that contains the Cafcass Health, Safety and Security Policy.
- A health and safety page on the Cafcass intranet that provides procedures and guidance for all colleagues, and which also contains links to forms and generic risk assessments.
- Staff and Visitors handbooks for all offices detailing fire evacuation procedures and other safety arrangements.

Policy owner	Chief Information Officer
Approved by	CMT
Approved on	September 2026
Attestation	
Version	2.0
Amended	April/May 2025 - refresh of policy in formatting and updating links. • Added information on Fire Safety and Emergency Provisions. • Amendments made following CMT Feedback. September 2025 – updated to align with updated guidance on managing unacceptable behaviour and lone working guidance. Fire safety has been expanded to include roles and responsibilities. September 2026 Clarified DSE assessment requirements and annual review expectations. Updated First Aid and Fire Safety arrangements using a proportionate, risk-based approach. Improved clarity of the Reasonable Adjustments process. Strengthened Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) requirements for colleagues requiring evacuation support.
Next review	September 2027

Annex A – useful links

Health and Safety Executive

- HSE: Information about health and safety at work
- Lone working: Protect those working alone - HSE
- Five steps to Risk Assessment'
- First aid at work: The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981. Guidance on Regulations L74
- AssessNET

General Health and Wellbeing

- Health and Wellbeing pages
- Risk Assessment Guidance
- My Learning Cafcass
- Cafcass Associates

Health and Wellbeing offer

- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) (sharepoint.com)
- BHSF Health Plan

DSE/Occupational health

- Display Screen Equipment Connect Page
- Particular needs equipment and furniture (sharepoint.com)
- Employee Guide to Occupational Health Assessments

Manual Handling

- Manual Handling Guidance

Managing unacceptable behaviour

- Managing Unacceptable Behaviour Guidance
- Staying Safe Online

Fire Safety

- Fire Safety Arrangements

Lone Working

- Lone Working Guidance
- Personal Safety Advice
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Driving

- ROSPA - Safer Driving Handbook