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Cafcass

To children and young people

Inspection of Cafcass – findings for children

In February 2024, Ofsted inspectors visited Cafcass. They looked at children and young people’s experiences of the support that workers at Cafcass have given them during family court proceedings. This includes how children’s rights are being considered and how children’s wishes and feelings are taken into account. They also looked at what leaders at Cafcass do to make these services better.

We have asked the workers at Cafcass to share this letter with you. It tells you the main things that inspectors found. There is a more detailed report on our website that you can read if you want to.

What grades did inspectors give Cafcass?

Judgement	Grade
The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass private law practice with children and families	Outstanding
The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass public law practice with children and families	Outstanding
The impact of leaders on private and public law practice with children and families	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding

What did the inspectors find

- The service children and families receive from Cafcass when they are involved in court proceedings is excellent.
- The service has improved since the previous inspection in 2018. A big reason for this improvement is because senior leaders have listened to children who have been involved in court proceedings and learnt from what children have told them about their experiences.
- Personalised letters written to children by family court advisers and children's guardians at the start of court proceedings help children to understand what will happen during court proceedings, when and where they will be visited, and how they can have their views heard.
- Family court advisers and children's guardians really want the best for children. They listen carefully to what children say so that they can understand what life is like for them.
- Family court advisers and children's guardians are also very good at listening to parents and other important people in children's lives. They then work out the best ways to help children and improve their lives.
- Family court advisers and children's guardians are good at keeping children informed of what is happening during court proceedings. They keep in touch with children and they share what they are thinking, and why they are making certain recommendations to the court.
- Children have told senior leaders at Cafcass that court proceedings take too long. This means that some children are living with uncertainty about their living arrangements for longer than they should. The family justice young people's board have told Cafcass leaders that they must not normalise delay for children. In response to this, senior leaders, family court advisers and children's guardians are doing all they can to make sure court proceedings end as soon as possible.
- When court proceedings end, family court advisers and children's guardians write to children to say goodbye and explain what the judge at court has said should happen. This helps children to understand the decisions made on their behalf so that children can have the best opportunity to be happy and secure throughout their childhood and beyond.
- Although Cafcass services have been judged as outstanding, senior leaders want to continue to improve children's experiences during court proceedings. It is their aim to make sure that every child, everywhere and every time receive an exceptional experience when they are involved with Cafcass. Senior

leaders know that they need to continue to hear from as many children as possible about their experiences in order to achieve this.

Yours faithfully

Lead inspector / QAM / ND

His Majesty's Inspector / Senior His Majesty's Inspector / National Director