

Statutory definition of child sexual exploitation: Cafcass response

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) is an arm's length body within the Ministry of Justice. The role of Cafcass within the family court is to: safeguard and promote the welfare of children; provide advice to the court; make provision for children to be represented; and provide information to children and their families.

Cafcass welcomes the proposed definition of child sexual exploitation. The new definition will provide greater clarity amongst agencies and organisations working in partnership to protect children from child sexual exploitation and promote joined up working.

Cafcass encounters cases featuring child sexual exploitation in its work with children and families. Cafcass developed a child exploitation strategy in 2014/15, analysing cases featuring child sexual exploitation and sharing the learning as part of a report on our work on serious case reviews. We have established a national network of Ambassadors from our frontline teams to work with Service Managers to raise the profile of child exploitation, and disseminate both local and national information within teams in their area. The revised definition will assist in defining and shaping our work nationally and locally.

Our strategy will continue to develop, and is currently being extended to include trafficking and radicalisation. Cafcass would welcome a discussion with the Home Office about our strategy and experience of child exploitation through the family courts, and how this could support the Government's national strategy to tackle child sexual exploitation.



Anthony Douglas, Chief Executive

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