



Samantha Kerr
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Your ref: CAF 18-148
Our ref: Gov/CAF 18-148

Tel 0300 456 4000

19 December 2018

Dear Ms Kerr,

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email of 05 December 2018. You made the following requests for information:

How does Cafcass “check” an FCA has

1. Correctly identified risk ?

Cafcass practitioners are required to assess risk in two ways: when the court orders a risk assessment as part of a Section 7 report if it feels that there is some risk to any child subject to proceedings; and under [s16A](#) of the Children Act 1989 Cafcass practitioners are under a duty to undertake a risk assessment whenever they have cause to suspect a child subject to proceedings is at current risk of harm and to pass this information to the court.

Please see section 5.41 of our [Operating Framework](#) for more information about risk assessment.

As stated in our [Operating Framework](#), FCAs should demonstrate zero tolerance of safeguarding risks and threats when there is evidence of continuing child impact.

Every Cafcass report which is filed with the court is subject to a quality assurance check. All practitioners also have at least an annual management observation of practice with service users, whilst the National Improvement Service perform regular case audits on a service area, team and individual level.

Please see our [Supervision Policy](#) for general information on how Cafcass practitioners' work is monitored. Cafcass monitor performance through routine

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performance management processes, including structured Performance and Learning Review (PLR) meetings between the manager and the individual, management observation of practice, and from feedback from service users and other relevant stakeholders.

2. Used available risk assessment tools correctly?

Cafcass has a 'Evidencing Private Law assessment tools' eLearning module on Private Law Assessment Tools, which includes guidance on the use of [My Needs, Wishes and Feelings](#) tools. Competent use of tools is covered by supervision processes and the manager quality assurance check of every report that is filed to court.

Cafcass has brief guidance for staff on the use of each tool. These can be seen on our [website](#) next to the link to each individual tool.

Guidance for the use and choice of tools which are relevant to individual case is also set out in the Cafcass [Operating Framework](#) section 10.

3. What nationally recognised qualification does an FCA have to identify and certify risk ?

All Cafcass Family Court Advisers (which includes those acting as Children's Guardians) are qualified social workers with a Diploma in Social Work (or recognised equivalent) and at least three years post qualifying experience in social work with children and families at risk.

All social work staff are required to complete six core in-house training modules upon joining the organisation, which will be completed within the first six months:

- Risk and Harm in Cafcass;
- Legal Context and Court Skills;
- Case Work Start to Finish;
- Interviewing Skills in Cafcass;
- Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Introduction to Private Law/Public Law.

Increasingly, Cafcass is modernising its approach to learning, encouraging self-directed learning and the use of 'resources'. This can involve bite size and creative solutions delivered at the point of need using new technology, rather than always requiring face-to-face events. These alternatives, such as bulletins, knowledge bites and webinars, allow individuals to access learning more in accord with their personal learning style.





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

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Fax

01625 524 510

Tel

0303 123 1113

E-mail

casework@ico.org.uk

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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