



Victoria Soeder
request-549474-3095bfbd@whatdotheyknow.com

Cafcass National Office
3rd Floor
21 Bloomsbury Street
London
WC1B 3HF

Your ref: CAF 19-043
Our ref: Gov/CAF 19-043

Tel 0300 456 4000

20 March 2019

Dear Ms Soeder

Re: Freedom of Information Request - Internal Review

Thank you for your email of 23 February 2019. You requested an internal review of the response to your Freedom of Information request (CAF19-043) which was sent to you on 22 February 2019. An internal review involves a review of the decision on disclosure in the original response and the way in which the request was handled. The internal reviewer can either uphold or overturn the original decision.

Melanie Carew, Head of Legal who was not party to the original decision on whether to release the information, has now conducted the internal review. Please see their response below.

Public authorities remain free to refuse a request as vexatious based on their own assessment of all the relevant circumstances. When assessing whether a request is vexatious, the FOI Act permits public authorities to take into account the context and history of a request, including the identity of the requester and any previous contact with them.

Your request is considered to be vexatious, as we believe that a response would cause an unjustified level of disruption to Cafcass. This decision is based on the fact that it forms part of a series of frequent requests which has contributed to an aggregated burden on Cafcass.

Based on the nature of your requests, we believe that you are pursuing a personal matter of your complaint against Cafcass through your use of Freedom of Information requests. Although this can be a legitimate way to request information for a valid grievance, this request in regards to the wording of the CIAF has no obvious relevance to this complaint. Cafcass has provided you with information about the Child Impact Assessment Framework (CIAF) in response to several Freedom of Information requests including information about the stakeholders Cafcass worked with when developing the CIAF and about how the CIAF was developed and the wording of the CIAF. Cafcass has also provided you information

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about our anti-discriminatory practice as outlined in our Operating Framework in several FOI responses and has no further policies, procedures or information in regards to anti discriminatory practice to disclose. Appropriate complaints avenues have already been provided to you and any issues with professional judgement must be raised with the court who make the final decisions in cases.

The context and history of the relationship between Cafcass and yourself can be taken into consideration in relation to this request. You have made 55 requests to Cafcass in less than 4 months, many of which contained multiple separate questions. Furthermore, you have submitted frequent correspondence in the form of new requests before Cafcass has had an opportunity to address your earlier enquiries within the statutory twenty working day limit. A number of your requests relate to the same or similar issues and they repeat queries which have already been addressed. Previous experience of handling your requests suggests that irrespective of our response you will submit follow up enquiries or statements. Your frequent and overlapping requests are causing a strain on the resources of Cafcass and this request forms part of a series of frequent requests which has contributed to an aggregated burden on Cafcass.

The balance of your request was considered to be vexatious based on the fact that it forms part of a series of frequent requests which has contributed to an aggregated burden on Cafcass. The response to your Freedom of Information request is therefore upheld.

We hope that you feel your question has been answered effectively. 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

Cafcass

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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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