

In Confidence  
L S Palmer  
By email only



3 March 2011

Dear L S Palmer

I write in response to your emails of 19 January 2011, in which you ask further questions about the work of this Office. I shall respond to each of your questions in turn.

1) In your first email of 19 January 2011, you say: "I am unclear as to why the numbers do not add up. For example regarding complaints made about CAFCASS in 2009/2010 you have stated that you received 148 complaints about CAFCASS and declined 120 for investigation and accepted 1 case for investigation but upheld 0. Are you able to explain what happened to the other 27 complaints?"

As I explained in the second page of my letter to you of 19 January 2011, the investigations resolved in any one year are not necessarily those complaints that were accepted for investigation that year. For this reason, the number of complaints declined and accepted for investigation in 2009/2010 do not add up to the number of complaints that were received that year. That is to say, the investigations that were declined in 2009/2010 were not necessarily also received in 2009/2010; some of them may have been received earlier (eg 2008/2009).

2) In your second email of 19 January 2010, you ask whether this Office makes "a record as to why a complaint has been denied an investigation? ie. Not referred by an MP, not completed the complaints process" and you ask "Other than the reasons given above what other reasons do you deny an investigation into a complaint?" The reasons why we may decline a complaint for investigation are set out on page 18 of our Annual Report 2009/2010. Please see the below link to the Annual Report 2009/2010:

[http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/4263/Annual-Report-2009-10-low-res-with-appendix-as-spread.pdf](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/4263/Annual-Report-2009-10-low-res-with-appendix-as-spread.pdf)

3) In your second email you also ask us to explain "why in 2005/2006 71% of complaints re CAFCASS were investigated but the following year less than 10% of complaints were investigated and recently less than 1% of complaints have been investigated". You ask if this is due "to a change in a procedure or just a reluctance for the Ombudsman to hold social workers accountable for their misconduct?"



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Pages 57 and 58 of the Annual Report 2006-2007 provide information about the changes in our reporting from that time and why figures for 2005-2006 are not therefore directly comparable with later figures. The link for this Report is as follows:  
[http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/1074/Annual-Report-2006-07.pdf](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1074/Annual-Report-2006-07.pdf)

4) In your final question in your second email, you ask "Of those complaints that have been upheld since 2005 please could you state what the complaint was regarding". I have looked at our records and the CAFCASS complaints, upheld in part or in full after investigation, were in relation to: the way that CAFCASS officers carried out their investigations and CAFCASS's handling of complaints made to them.

As you will see from my previous response to you, of the complaints about the GSCC that were accepted for investigation from 2005/2006 - 2009/2010, none were upheld by the Ombudsman.

I hope that the information that I have provided is useful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roberta Coleman', with a horizontal line underneath.

Roberta Coleman  
Freedom of Information / Data Protection Officer