



Samantha Kerr
request-537100-dfc8fd66@whatdotheyknow.com

Your ref: CAF 18-150
Our ref: Gov/CAF 18-150

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

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:

1. Can you please provide me with a copy of your “guidelines” an FCA follows to formulate their ‘hypothesis’ where they believe emotional abuse by one service has affected the other service user ?

Cafcass does not have guidelines on this issue.

Cafcass has a [Child Protection Policy](#) that sets out how we will respond to allegations of significant harm in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including emotional harm. In all of its work, the role of Cafcass is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The role of Cafcass is to assess children’s needs and write reports for the court recommending how a child’s welfare can best be safeguarded, with reference to the [Welfare Checklist](#).

The starting point of assessment is always the identification of risk, which includes risk of emotional harm, which may amount to a child protection issue. Cafcass’ approach to supporting and educating staff, who are qualified and experienced on joining Cafcass and who we would expect to be familiar with emotional harm, is one of Learning and Development, of which formal training forms one element, alongside library materials, supervision, assessment tools.

Cafcass has evidence informed tools which are used by practitioners to support their direct work with adults and children in order to improve the quality of evidence informed analysis in our reports. Please see pages 82 -83 of the [Cafcass Operating Framework](#) for more information about Cafcass’ evidence informed tools. The tools

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were developed to improve the quality of analysis within court reports. FCAs are encouraged to use appropriate tools, matched to the identified needs in the case; for example when assessing the impact of domestic violence, or when ascertaining the wishes and feelings of children.

2. Can you please provide me with a copy of Cafcass “guidelines” which enables a FCA to remain “unbiased” when ‘formulating a hypothesis’

Cafcass does not have guidelines on this issue. Please see Cafcass’ [Operating Framework](#) and other [policies](#) which sets out the policies and procedures to be followed by Cafcass staff.

Cafcass has a [Conflict of Interests Policy](#) which outlines Cafcass’ policy on conflicts of interest as they arise both in terms of case work and any independent work carried out by Cafcass employees.

Anti-discriminatory practice is a core value of the social work profession and is part of training offered on many issues; all Cafcass practitioners are qualified social workers registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Please see:

- The HCPC [Standards of Proficiency: Social Workers in England](#) (sections 5-6)
- the British Association of Social Workers’ [Code of Ethics for Social Work](#) (pages 9, 13, 14)

Please see our [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) which outlines Cafcass’ approach to issues of equality and diversity in our frontline work.

Please also see guidance on diversity, including anti discriminatory practice which is set out in paragraphs 2.40 - 2.47 of the [Cafcass Operating Framework](#).

When Cafcass is involved in a case we look at issues as directed by the court and report on any impact to the child, and what is assessed to be in the child’s best interest.

Cafcass has evidence informed tools which are used by practitioners to support their direct work with adults and children in order to improve the quality of evidence informed analysis in our reports. Please see pages 82 -83 of the [Cafcass Operating Framework](#) for more information about Cafcass’ evidence informed tools. The tools were developed to improve the quality of analysis within court reports. FCAs are encouraged to use appropriate tools, matched to the identified needs in the case; for

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example when assessing the impact of domestic violence, or when ascertaining the wishes and feelings of children.

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
Cafcass
Governance@cafcass.gov.uk

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Anthony Douglas CBE Chief Executive



Cafcass, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, is a non-departmental body of the Ministry of Justice
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