

What to expect from your communication with Cafcass Cymru

This guidance is designed to help you understand what you can expect from Cafcass Cymru staff (this includes the Cafcass Cymru practitioner involved with your case, as well as business support staff).

How and when to contact us

The office phone number for the area dealing with your case is **03000 255 600**.

The office e-mail address for this area is **cafcasscymrusouthwest@gov.wales**

Our usual working hours are Monday to Thursday 9am-5pm, Friday 9am-4:30pm. We are not an emergency service so will not generally respond outside of these hours.

Courtesy and Respect

You should expect to be treated with courtesy in all your communications with Cafcass Cymru. Likewise, there is an expectation that we will be treated in a similar manner. We will not be spoken to, or receive e-mails or messages that are abusive, rude or aggressive in tone. Should this happen, the response will be as follows:

- You will be advised that if you continue in a tone that is offensive, unnecessary or unhelpful, the call will end.
- The threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment towards staff will result in the end of the telephone call.

Communication by telephone

If you need to call the practitioner dealing with your case, you should use the area office phone number.

Cafcass Cymru practitioners have many cases at any one time, and they cannot always respond to you immediately, though efforts will be made to ensure your calls to us are logged and that we avoid unnecessary delay in responding to you.

Calls during office hours will be answered by a member of business support staff. If the practitioner requested is not available to take the call, the business support staff will always take a note of the caller's details and a summary of the message will be passed on to the practitioner.

Practitioners will always aim to return your call as soon as they are able. Business support staff will not be able to say when exactly a call will be returned, but will let you know if the practitioner is likely to be unavailable for more than three working days.

The mobile phone numbers of practitioners will not be shared and business support staff are not permitted to give out mobile phone numbers. If a practitioner has to call you using a mobile telephone, this will be from a withheld number.

Our practitioners generally work normal office hours, (Monday to Thursday 9am-5pm, Friday 9am-4:30pm), and they will not usually be able to respond to calls outside of these times.

On occasions, you will receive text messaging from Cafcass Cymru, usually to arrange an appointment. Please be aware, that the centralized electronic system used for text messages does not allow for you to reply, so if you have difficulty with the appointment offered, please advise us of this by telephone.

Communication by letter or e-mail

Should you wish to e-mail Cafcass Cymru, the office email address should be used.

However, confidential information should NOT be shared with us via e-mail. This means you should not include information such as that which would identify your child, yourself or any other party, or information which you or your child would consider personal. You should not include yours or your child's name, addresses, dates of birth, or the like. Photographs should not be sent by e-mail.

We will not exchange confidential information with you regarding you or your case by e-mail.

Should Cafcass Cymru send you any confidential information by post, this will be done using Special Delivery services and you will need to sign for the item. Please ensure that you keep us informed of any changes of address or phone number.

Communication about a court report

If when you receive a report from Cafcass Cymru you disagree with the content or recommendations, this is something you should tell your solicitor, or tell the court when you attend. If you believe that specific details are incorrect (such as a date of birth or spelling of a name), then please advise us of this, so that if we need to change something, this can be addressed as quickly as possible.

Visits to the office

If you wish to meet with your practitioner, this should be by appointment only. If you wish to request an appointment or telephone call to discuss matters with the practitioner, please contact the Cafcass Cymru office.

The expectations in respect of courtesy and respectful behaviour apply to all office visits and appointments. Appointments will be brought to an end if these are not adhered to.

You should not call to the office without an appointment as the practitioner is unlikely to be available, and this may cause you frustration.

When the case ends

A private law case is closed once Cafcass Cymru has completed the work the court has asked us to do, if the case has not already concluded at the First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointment in court. This may happen before your court case finishes, which means that they will not be able to discuss your case any further unless requested to do so by the court. A public law case is closed when the Final Hearing ends.

Should you have concerns about a child's safety once our work is completed, you should notify the Local Authority social services department in the area where the child lives and/or the police if the child is subject to immediate harm.

Should you wish to contact Cafcass Cymru after the case closes, to pay a compliment or to make a complaint, you can either contact the Cafcass Cymru area team which has been involved with you, or you can use the Cafcass Cymru feedback hub – <https://beta.gov.wales/cafcass-cymru/feedback-compliments-and-complaints>