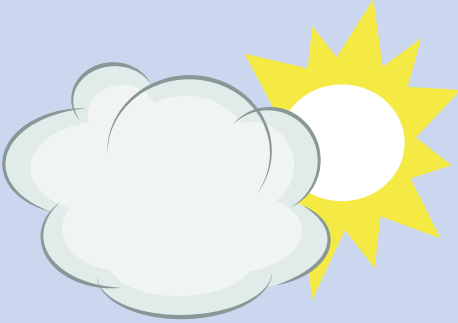




Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Information Pack

Hi!

You have probably never heard of Cafcass Cymru or what we do, and are wondering why you have been given this booklet. But we are here to help!

Sometimes families can find it hard to agree on what is best for their children. To help make things better, they may ask the family court to try to help sort out their disagreement.

This booklet has information which we hope will help you to understand who is who and what is going on!

If you see a word you don't understand, you can look at the Jargon Buster at the back of the booklet for what it means.



What is Cafcass Cymru?

Cafcass Cymru helps and supports children and their families when they are in the family court.

We will listen to how you feel and what you would like to happen, and we will let the court know what we think is best for you.



The UNCRC and children's rights

All children, no matter who they are, where they are from, what they believe in or where they live, have rights.

These rights are the things that children need to be safe, healthy and happy.

The United Nations has a list of all the rights that children have. This list is called the UNCRC for short.

- The UNCRC is a list of 54 rights that every child or young person under the age of 18 has.

All these rights and much more can be found at www.childcomwales.org.uk/uncrc-childrens-rights/

The Children's Commissioner for Wales' job is to tell people why children's rights are so important. If you think that you're not getting access to all of your rights, you can get in touch with the Children's Commissioner for Wales www.childcomwales.org.uk by phoning for free on



0808 801 1000 or **texting 80800** and start your message with **COM**.

Family court

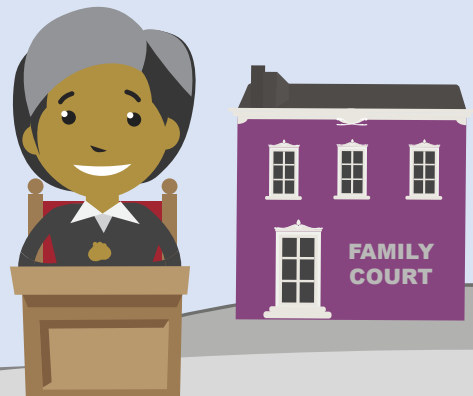
Family court is where important decisions are made about children and their families.

They are very different to criminal courts where people go when they may have done something wrong.

The solicitors and judges do not wear wigs and gowns like you see on television!

The judge asks questions and listens to what everyone has to say before making important decisions about you and your family. Your Family Court Advisor will speak to the judge and let them know how you feel and what you would like to happen.

The judge wants everyone to agree but if that is not possible they will help make the best decision possible for you.



Our staff

Your Family Court Advisor, or FCA for short, is a trained person who works for Cafcass Cymru.

You may also hear them called Family Court Social Worker.

They will help the judges and magistrates make the best decision about you and your family.

They will meet with you and listen carefully to what you think and how you feel. They will also help you understand what is happening.

They will tell the judge or magistrate what your needs, wishes and feelings are.

They will **NOT** ask you to decide what happens next or ask you to make a decision about your family.



What happens?

We will always tell the court what you think and how you feel. We will also share with the court what we think is best for you.

So that our advice to the court is right, we usually speak to other people in your life.

Your family will see the advice that we write. If you are worried about this, make sure you tell us so we can help.

The judge or magistrate will read the advice from us. They will listen to what everyone has to say before making a decision on what they think is best for you.

Sometimes this is not the same as what you wanted, but the court will always do what it thinks is best for you.



What next?

When the judge has made their decision they tell everyone involved with the case what to do next.

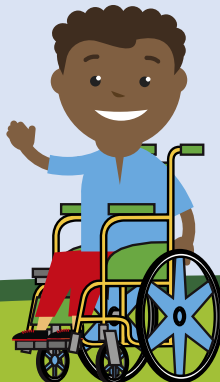
Quite often the judge will be asked to decide who you will live with or who you can see.

If the judge says where you should live, they may also say how often you should see your other parent (the one you do not live with).

Your family will usually be the ones to tell you what the judge has decided.

Once we have helped the court make its decision you probably won't see us again.

There are lots of people for you to speak to for help, the next part of this book explains who they are.



Links

If you are looking for more help or information here are some people that may be able to help you.



<https://gov.wales/cafcass-cymru>



Champions children and young people and aims to get their rights respected and their voices heard.

www.childcomwales.org.uk/



Get info and advice about a wide range of issues, talk to a counsellor online, send Childline an email or post on the message boards. www.childline.org.uk/



Wales' leading advocacy provider, supporting the most vulnerable children and young people in Wales.

www.tgpcymru.org.uk/



Information, advice and advocacy helpline for children and young people. 080880 23456

www.meiccymru.org/



Nyas Cymru provide confidential advocacy representation to vulnerable children and young people across Wales on behalf of local authorities.

www.nyas.net/nyas-cymru




From before they are born until they are into their twenties, we help disadvantaged children across the UK.

www.actionforchildren.org.uk/

Tell us what you think!


If you want tell us about something we did well or something we could have done better you can do this in a number of ways:

You can use the feedback forms found in the feedback area of our website:

 www.gov.wales/cafcass-cymru or; You can email us

 @MyVoiceCafcassCymru@Gov.Wales or;

You can phone us between

 9:00am – 4:30pm Monday to Friday on
0800 49 60 650

If you feel unhappy with the way you have been treated by us and would like someone to fix it, you can make what we call a formal complaint. Just let someone who works for us know you want to make a complaint and we will make sure you have all of the information you need.

We can also ask someone to help you make your complaint. This person does not work for us and they are called an Advocate.

They can speak for you and help you say what you want.

What happens next?

We will contact you to talk about what has upset you.

We will look into what you tell us and will let you know within 3 weeks what we have found out and what can be done to make things right.

If you want to, we can meet again to talk about any questions you may have.



Jargon buster

Barrister is someone who has been trained in family law. They are able to provide advice and speak in court on behalf of people going through the family courts.

Cafcass Cymru is an organisation which helps and supports children and their families when they are in the family court.

Confidential means that it is very private and will not be shared with anyone else unless it is very important to do so.

Family Court is where important decisions are made about children and their families. They are very different to criminal courts where people go when they might have done something wrong.

Family Court Advisor (FCA) is the name of a trained professional person who works for Cafcass Cymru and helps children and families in private law cases.

Judge is a legally trained person who makes decisions in a family court. The Judge listens to what everybody who is involved has to say, reads reports, applies the law and decides what is best for the child.

Magistrate is a trained member of the community who volunteers to work in the family court. They are advised by a Legal Advisor. They listen to what everybody who is involved has to say, read reports, apply the law and decides what is best for the child.

Private Law are cases that are usually brought to the family court by parents (sometimes other family members) in connection with issues that involve children.

Report is written information that includes your wishes and feelings and what your Family Court Advisor thinks is best for you. It will be given to the court to help them make a decision about what is best for you.

Rights of the Child is a list of rights all children and young people, everywhere in the world have, no matter who they are, where they live or what they believe in.

Social Worker is trained to help make sure children are safe and properly looked after.

Solicitor is someone who has been trained in family law. They are able to provide advice and speak for people going through the family courts.

UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) is a list of rights all children and young people, everywhere in the world have, no matter who they are, where they live or what they believe in.

**If you can't find the word you are looking for,
please ask your Family Court Advisor.**

