

Working with children and their families



Cafcass Cymru places children at the heart of its work and ensures the wishes and feelings of children are heard, listened to and conveyed to the family court, as well as recommendations in respect of what is in their interests. Undertaking direct work with children is a core element of practice and Cafcass Cymru has adopted a blended approach that includes meeting children face to face and remotely.

Principles underpinning our approach:

- Cafcass Cymru has adopted a blended approach to working with children which includes meeting children face to face and using electronic platforms such as FaceTime and Microsoft Teams. Cafcass Cymru seeks to give children and young people a say in how they communicate with us.
- It is good practice and an expectation that there will be at least one face to face meeting with children during public law proceedings and during private law proceedings where Cafcass Cymru has been ordered to undertake further work, such as completing a Child Impact Analysis report. Practitioners will talk to children and young people about where they might like to meet. If a face to face meeting with a child or young person does not take place, we will ensure they understand the reasons for this.
- Practitioners will introduce themselves and explain their role to children at the earliest point (either in person or remotely), and will discuss and agree with them how they will engage during the proceedings. This may differ between children in the same family. Remote communication can be used to update children and young people about their case where practitioners remain involved.
- Face to face meetings with babies and younger children provide opportunities for observation and / or assessment of relationship dynamics, which can add to the practitioner's analysis of the child's unique circumstances.
- If a child has additional needs in respect of health, disability or communication, we will always plan our engagement with them in a way which ensures they have an equal opportunity to convey their wishes and feelings. This could include practitioners speaking to those who know the young person best to identify how they can effectively communicate with them.
- Conversations with children and young people about their circumstances, wishes and feelings may be undertaken in one substantive discussion or over several shorter conversations which may be a combination of in person and remote meetings.
- We will endeavour to ensure that children and young people can speak to us in a setting where they can speak freely without any undue influence or pressure. We recognise that some children may not feel safe speaking to us remotely, while others may find a face to face meeting more stressful.
- Practitioners retain their professional discretion in making case management decisions. When in consultation with a child, the decision is made not to meet face to face, the rationale for this decision will be clearly recorded.