

8 January 2025

Dear

Request for Information - ATISN 23178

Thank you for your information request received on 6 December 2024. You asked for:

1. A copy of Cafcass's policy and procedural guidance for conducting interviews with parents and children, including protocols for balancing engagement between both parties.
2. Statistical data on complaints made against Cafcass officers regarding perceived bias or procedural unfairness in the last three years.
3. Cafcass's policy on how officers handle allegations of coercive control or alienation in child arrangement cases.
4. Guidelines for the use of evidence submitted by parents in child arrangement cases, including timeframes for reviewing documents and ensuring their inclusion in reports.
5. Any training materials provided to Cafcass officers regarding compliance with *Re H-N and Others (Children) [2021] EWCA Civ 448* and its guidance on domestic abuse allegations.

We have interpreted your references to 'Cafcass' as meaning 'Cafcass Cymru' (Cafcass is based in England and is a separate organisation to Cafcass Cymru).

Our response

1. *A copy of Cafcass's policy and procedural guidance for conducting interviews with parents and children, including protocols for balancing engagement between both parties.*

We do not hold information matching the description of your request, but you may find the following helpful: [The role of Cafcass Cymru in Private Law proceedings: factsheet | GOV.WALES](#) .

You may also wish to know that it is left to the discretion of the individual Cafcass Cymru officer linked to the issues within the case as to what interviews they undertake, and with whom, so as to inform their enquiries and work required of them by the court. However, ultimately the court is responsible for case management so sets the timeframe for each case and for particular work to be undertaken in the case.

2. *Statistical data on complaints made against Cafcass officers regarding perceived bias or procedural unfairness in the last three years.*

We do not hold information matching the description of your request.

3. *Cafcass's policy on how officers handle allegations of coercive control or alienation in child arrangement cases.*

The documents listed below (and published on our website) advise our practitioners on victims of domestic abuse, and in relation to features of coercive and controlling behaviour, along with harmful conflict:

[Domestic abuse information sheet | GOV.WALES](#)

[Finding of fact hearings: practice guidance for Cafcass Cymru practitioners | GOV.WALES](#)

[Guidance for Cafcass Cymru practitioners about children experiencing domestic abuse | GOV.WALES](#)

[Children's resistance or refusal to spend time with a parent: Cafcass Cymru practice guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

The following documents have also been provided as attachments to the covering email with this letter:

- *Cafcass Cymru Domestic Abuse Practice Guidance* (this document has been temporarily removed from our website to be updated to ensure it reflects the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and recommendations of the Harm Panel Report).
 - *Cafcass Cymru Harmful conflict practice guidance.*
 - *Cafcass Cymru Harmful Conflict: Additional Research And Resources For Working With Cases Featuring Harmful Conflict.*
4. *Guidelines for the use of evidence submitted by parents in child arrangement cases, including timeframes for reviewing documents and ensuring their inclusion in reports.*

We do not hold information matching the description of your request. However, you may find it helpful to know that Cafcass Cymru officers do not always include information provided to them by individuals as they would usually inform the parties to provide anything they feel is important directly to the court or via their solicitor.

5. *Any training materials provided to Cafcass officers regarding compliance with Re H-N and Others (Children) [2021] EWCA Civ 448 and its guidance on domestic abuse allegations.*

Whilst we do not hold information exactly matching the description of your request, *Re H-N and Others* refers extensively to Practice Direction 12J and you may wish to know that Cafcass Cymru officers have received training on Practice Direction 12J which underpins Cafcass Cymru approach to domestic abuse.

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to:

Nigel Brown
Chief Executive
Cafcass Cymru
cafcasscymru@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. Normally, however, you should pursue the matter through our internal procedure before you complain to the Information Commissioner.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.org.uk

Yours sincerely