



OFFICIAL

Our Ref:

Date:

Dear

Court Ref:

Why are you receiving this letter?

We know that being involved in court proceedings about your family can be hard for adults. This is often worse for children. During our involvement in your case, a Cafcass Cymru practitioner will be working with you to better understand the effect your dispute is having on your child/ren and what can be done to remove or reduce any harmful impact. The report we will provide to the court and parties will include an analysis of any current or future risks your child/ren may face, and what changes you may need to make to keep your child/ren safe. Where it is safe to do so, we will try to help you and the other party to reach a solution for your child/ren, which works for you as parents.

The report will make recommendations to you about how best to make sure all future arrangements are in your child/ren's best interests. This might mean we make recommendations or suggestions that are different from what you think should happen. The Court will read the report and listen to the views of the parties before making final decisions about what should happen.

What will happen next?

We will need to talk with you and with your child/ren. A Cafcass Cymru practitioner will soon be allocated to your case and they will get in touch with you, initially by text message or telephone. They will arrange a convenient time to talk. The discussion is an opportunity for you to let us know and to help us better understand any concerns you have about your child/ren's safety and best interests. They will also arrange with you how we will talk to your child/ren about their views.

Due to the current situation you may experience a delay in hearing from us. We would like to reassure you that we will be in touch in due course.

Ffôn • Tel: 03000 628877
Ffacs • Fax:
cafcasscymrusouthwales@gov.wales
Gwefan • Website:
<http://cafcass.gov.wales>

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Cafcass Cymru appointments with your child/ren

Children and young people have a right to express their own views and for their voices to be heard in the proceedings. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is likely that meetings between your child/ren and Cafcass Cymru will take place via remote means, such as over the phone, FaceTime or Microsoft Teams. We ask you to support your child/ren in the following ways:

- Make your child/ren available for any appointments the Cafcass Cymru practitioner sets up.
- Explain carefully to your child/ren about the purpose of our involvement and share with them the attached link to Cafcass Cymru's welcome letter for children and our Children's Leaflets. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/cafcass-cymru-cia-letter-to-child-25-august-2020.pdf>. Ask them whether they would prefer us to talk to them by telephone or using a video platform.
- Reassure your child/ren that the Cafcass Cymru practitioner wants to listen to their views and understand how they feel about things, to help make sure the adults can achieve the best possible arrangements for them (who they live with and who they see or spend time with). Explain that children do not make the decisions themselves, this is up to the Court.
- Make sure that they have a private space in which they can talk without being overheard or interrupted by anyone else in the home.
- Let them know in advance when we will be contacting them, help them get ready and provide any materials that the Cafcass Cymru practitioner has suggested would be useful (for example pens and paper or a favourite toy).
- Understand that we may need to speak to your child/ren more than once, and may ask to observe you and your child interacting with one another.

We understand that you may be concerned if, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we do not meet your child/ren in person. However we would like to reassure you that we have a range of tools and approaches to communicate with children via remote means, which have worked effectively and successfully for many children since the start of the pandemic. Please raise any anxieties you may have about us engaging with your child/ren in this way, as soon as possible with the Cafcass Cymru practitioner. This will ensure we understand your concerns and can consider the best way to address this.

Other points to note:

- Cafcass Cymru has a duty to undertake the tasks the court has requested and we generally need to engage with the child/ren to do this. We will therefore file a report to the court based on the enquiries we have been able to make. This includes cases where we have not been able to speak to the child/ren, as a result of their own choice or parental decision.
- We may contact other agencies or family members as part of our enquiries; you can tell the Cafcass Cymru practitioner who you think is relevant for us to speak to.
- It is possible that not everything you tell us will be included in the report. We will focus on what is relevant to your child/ren and make recommendations to help you achieve what is in your child/ren's best interests.

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- We have a duty to safeguard you and your child/ren. If we are worried about someone's safety, we will make a referral to the local authority (social services).
- Please refrain from discussing the court proceedings on social media, to protect your child/ren's privacy.
- As an organisation, we ask that service users do not record the discussions which take place, without having consulted with us beforehand.

Our website contains helpful information, leaflets and links about the role of Cafcass Cymru and what you can do to support your child/ren. We would encourage you to have a look at the information on the website, you can find the link here: <https://gov.wales/cafcass-cymru>

If you feel that you are at risk of or have experienced domestic abuse, you can contact the Live Fear Free Helpline on 0808 80 10 800 or visit the website at <https://gov.wales/live-fear-free>. This service is offered to both women and men and also provides advice to family members who may be concerned about someone.

Your information

In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation, Cafcass Cymru has produced a Privacy Notice that explains what personal information we collect, why we collect it, where we collect it from, what we do with it, who we share it with, how long we keep it and how we keep it secure. The Privacy Notice also sets out your rights under the UK GDPR with regard to your personal information. You can find the Privacy Notice on our website at <https://gov.wales/cafcass-cymru/how-we-use-your-information> or if you would like a copy in a different format, you can contact your local Cafcass Cymru office and we will provide you with a copy.

You will need to contact the office to advise us of any change of address, contact details or legal representation and **if you have not already done so, you must verify your e-mail address in order to receive your copies of court reports electronically.**

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not involve any delay.

Yours sincerely

Cafcass Cymru

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