

# Ofsted's inspection of Cafcass: Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire

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The part of Cafcass service area A11 covering Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire provides services to children and families in Cambridgeshire, Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Peterborough and Rutland.

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# Contents

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Capacity for improvement</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<b>6</b>
Within three months	6
<b>Meeting the needs of service users</b>	<b>7</b>
Ambition and prioritisation	7
Performance management	8
Workforce development	9
Partnerships	10
Value for money	11
Safeguarding	12
Evaluation	13
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>13</b>
Service responsiveness	13
Case planning and recording	13
Assessment, intervention and direct work with children	14
Reporting and recommendations to the court	15
<b>Definitions</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Inspection grades</b>	<b>16</b>
'No order principle'	16
Principle of 'no delay'	16
Private and public law	16
<b>Record of main findings</b>	<b>18</b>

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## Introduction

1. Ofsted carried out the inspection of service provision by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) in the Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire areas in the week commencing 23 July 2012.
2. Cafcass is a national organisation delivering services to children, families and the courts from 17 service areas across England. The Head of Service is the senior manager in each service area and is accountable to the National Service Director. The National Service Director is directly accountable to the Cafcass Chief Executive.
3. The Cafcass service in Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire provides services to children and families across the local authority areas of Cambridgeshire, Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Peterborough and Rutland. It is part of a larger service area that includes Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. The Cafcass service in these areas was inspected in January 2011. The National Service Director has been in post since 1 April 2012, and was previously the Operational Director for the area. The Head of Service has been in post for five years, taking on responsibility for the Leicester office in 2011, and for the Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire offices on 1 April 2012.
4. The professional staff who provide the social work service to children and families subject to private and public law proceedings are organised in teams based in Leicester, Lincoln and Peterborough. Four operational service managers manage service delivery, including one for the area-wide early intervention team, supported by 37 full-time equivalent family court advisers and 6.81 full-time equivalent administrative staff.
5. During the fieldwork, inspectors examined an extensive range of documentation and held meetings or telephone conversations with stakeholders, the judiciary and local authorities. Interviews were held with the National Service Director, the Head of Service, service managers, family court advisers and business services staff. Inspectors evaluated private and public law reports and case files. The views of Cafcass adult and child service users were surveyed before the inspection, although no responses were received. Inspectors observed Cafcass practice with service users, including children and young people.
6. In April 2012, the Cafcass National Improvement Service (NIS) carried out a short-notice review of the services provided by Cafcass in Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, using the NIS healthcheck framework. The Cafcass staff who carried out the review assessed the service against previously agreed objectives and identified the extent to which they were met, met with learning points, or not met. Inspectors were provided with a copy of the healthcheck.

## Overall effectiveness

### Grade 3 (adequate)

7. The overall effectiveness of the Cafcass service area covering Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire is adequate. The three teams deliver services to an adequate standard and no aspects covered by the evaluation schedule are judged to be inadequate. The Cafcass service area is very newly formed, and the new management team is working together well to focus resources effectively on meeting statutory functions and deploying staff within a tightly managed budget. Managers are experienced and capable and are leading teams based on a good understanding of local need and local performance. Most practitioners feel well supported by their local managers, and business support systems are effective.
8. Safeguarding is adequate and the service advocates effectively for the majority of children and young people. The quality of provision is adequate overall, with variations in the quality of case work. This variation has been identified by managers and action is being taken to improve the standard of practice, with some evidence of early success. Some examples were seen of high-quality, child-centred work. The quality assurance of schedule 2 letters to give early advice to the court on initial screening of safeguarding issues is not sufficiently robust, and letters are too variable in quality.

## Capacity for improvement

### Grade 2 (good)

9. Capacity for improvement is good. The current Cafcass service area was created on 1 April 2012, and benefits from improvements that were already taking place, such as effective budget management, the development of proportionate working and improving partnerships. The managers of the services inspected are clear about the improvements that have yet to be achieved. These have been identified through a comprehensive healthcheck for Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, through local audits and through assessing the performance of managers and practitioners. Appropriate priorities are identified within the business plan, and more local, targeted action plans are in place to tackle specific aspects of performance. Staff understand the priorities and know what is required, such as improvements to case planning.
10. Change has been managed thoughtfully and effectively and national key performance indicators continue to demonstrate very strong performance. Service users benefit from rapid allocation of cases and from practitioners who are committed to improving outcomes for children and young people. Quality assurance and performance management systems are contributing to practice improvements. Individual practice has been assessed and is regularly monitored, although there is more to be achieved in ensuring consistently good

practice across the three areas. Sickness levels are reducing and the use of agency staff is very low.

11. Children's views contribute to service development through mystery shopping, office inspections and involvement with staff interviews.
12. Partnerships with key stakeholders such as local authorities and the judiciary are well established in many cases, and highly valued. For example, a multi-agency pre-proceedings project in Lincolnshire has received strong support from partner agencies, and is set to be launched later this year.

## **Areas for improvement**

13. In order to improve the quality of provision and services for children and young people in Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire, the service area should take the following action.

### **Within three months**

- Ensure that the impact of all relevant equality and diversity issues is included in case planning, assessment and direct work with children, young people and their families.
- Improve the quality of schedule 2 letters to ensure that they are of a consistently high standard.
- Ensure that all relevant agencies are clear about responsibilities for undertaking section 7 reports, in accordance with the nationally agreed protocol.
- Ensure that management oversight is robust and is clearly recorded on electronic case files.
- Ensure that electronic case files contain a clear record of when case plans are shared with children and families, and whether children have been seen alone.
- Ensure that all practitioners are given the opportunity to engage with senior management, to enable better integration into the new area.
- Ensure that all relevant local stakeholder groups have good opportunities for effective liaison.

## Meeting the needs of service users

### Ambition and prioritisation

#### Grade 2 (good)

14. Ambition and prioritisation are good. Managers are clear about the area priorities and have a shared vision for continuous improvement, which is communicated to staff. Improving the quality of work while maintaining timeliness is a priority for the coming year. Lines of accountability are clear throughout the service area. The National Service Director meets regularly with the Head of Service and is well informed with regard to current performance and progress.
15. The reconfiguration of the service area has been well managed in many aspects. This is particularly notable given the concurrent national changes within the organisation such as the introduction of the new Operating Framework and a revised performance management system. The Head of Service has been effective in creating a new management team and managers provide good leadership to their teams. Managers have worked well with staff to adapt to the changes, and morale is generally good. Many family court advisers are positive about the way in which changes have been managed, for example with the implementation of proportionate working, the development of analytical report writing and, most recently, the performance and learning review. The placing of early intervention workers in the Leicester office is a positive development, as previously the work was being carried out in another service area. Managers have recognised that further development is required on early intervention arrangements, and a team improvement plan is in place.
16. The single business plan for the area identifies current strengths and appropriate key priorities, and is clearly targeted towards achieving a well integrated service. The plan is risk-assessed, and risks are regularly reviewed. The plan is underpinned by a number of supporting documents, including a clear workforce development plan and an equality impact assessment. Safeguarding children is an established priority in recruitment and in practice; safeguarding practice is regularly reviewed and managers have ensured representation at all Local Safeguarding Children Boards.
17. Effective business planning has led to consistently good performance on key performance indicators for some time, ensuring that cases are allocated promptly and that delays are kept to a minimum. Good business systems enable close monitoring of the progress of cases. The service area is about to begin the monitoring of requests for extensions to filing dates, which are believed to be small in number.
18. The use of commissioned services is carefully monitored. In 2011–2012, the majority of the budget for the allocation of referrals had been used. The use of

domestic violence perpetrator programmes as part of contact activity is beginning to be established and promoted.

19. Some young people have been involved effectively in assessing the quality of customer care; a 'mystery shopping' exercise by a young person in November 2011, seeking advice on her rights, identified a good outcome to the telephone query and the young person reported a courteous response. Two young people inspected the quality of the Lincoln office in November 2011 from a service users' perspective and reported positively on the office environment.

## **Performance management**

### **Grade 3 (adequate)**

20. Performance management is adequate overall. Performance management of staff is being used more systematically to improve the quality of the service and appropriate measures have been taken to address some areas of poor practice by a number of practitioners through the use of action plans and formal human resources procedures. The new performance and learning review system has been implemented and all practitioners have received a review within the last three months. The performance and learning review system is welcomed by many of the staff. Practitioners report that they are clear about what is expected and that they receive good support from their managers. Staff report good access to managers for case discussion, although some files seen by inspectors did not contain evidence of robust management oversight.
21. The use of quality assurance to raise standards in report writing and service delivery is not yet fully effective, in particular where management capacity is under pressure. Quality assurance of schedule 2 letters is not sufficiently robust to ensure that the letters are of consistently good quality. This results in variability in content and quality of analysis, and in presentation.
22. Key performance indicators are consistently met and performance information is a standing agenda item at management team meetings, ensuring regular monitoring by managers. Required standards of performance are met in financial management. Cases are allocated in a timely manner and the very small number of private law cases held by managers is risk-assessed to ensure that filing times are met.
23. Analysis of complaints is used to inform service development. Complaints are investigated and analysed at a national level and the learning is cascaded to all Heads of Service on a quarterly basis. Year on year figures show that the number of complaints for Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire is relatively low. However, the Head of Service has noted a small increase in the number of complaints about the early intervention service, leading to consideration of changes to introductory information provided to service users. The timeliness of responding to complaints has deteriorated in the last year and this has been identified as a key area for improvement in the current business



plan. Staff within the service area have also received a number of compliments, from a range of service users and professionals.

## **Workforce development**

### **Grade 3 (adequate)**

24. Workforce development is adequate overall, with good features. Recruitment, selection and retention are priorities, resulting in a high level of stability of staffing across most parts of the area. A strategic area workforce plan identifies current outcomes and clear and appropriate key priorities. This extends through detailed local office plans to inform plans for each team and practitioner effectively. The considerable organisational changes impacting on local offices in the recent period have included the deletion of the family support worker role, changes to business support arrangements and the development of early intervention work in the Leicester office. The early intervention work has enabled some specialisation of roles to take place. There is good use of the role of the enhanced family court adviser in each office, providing additional capacity for consultation, mentoring and audit of work.
25. Family court advisers place a high value on the support, guidance and direction from their service managers. Managers have supported staff well throughout the numerous changes and staff express a consistently high level of confidence in them. Many, but not all, staff members spoken to during the inspection are well engaged with the changes taking place. Despite good attempts to gain practitioners' views through, for example, staff surveys, some staff feel less well engaged with senior managers and consider that they have a limited influence in moving the service forward. Sickness absence is reducing across all of the staff group and is lower than the national average, increasing capacity within the workforce. There is limited need for, and a low use of, agency staff as capacity is sufficient to meet responsibilities.
26. Practitioners describe receiving good induction, support and further training to enable their professional development, with some external opportunities as well as tailored and targeted internal training for individuals and whole teams. Relevant training is commissioned from the National Improvement Service to assist with individual and team development. Newly qualified workers experience a well-considered approach to the requirements for their early development, with bespoke and effective placements designed to enhance their base of expertise.
27. The recent internal healthcheck of the Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire offices and other audits, such as of case plans in the Leicester office, provide clear indicators of where practice improvements are required. Individual performance is monitored by managers and, while most staff are currently operating at a satisfactory level, a number of staff have been placed on action plans in recent months. Managers recognise that training needs identified through the performance and learning reviews need to be aggregated and developed into

targeted training for the area. Practitioners have recently received training on equality and diversity issues, and on report writing; this has been well received, although the impact of this training is yet to be established.

28. Designated Family Judges report that the use of expert assessments is appropriately targeted and is reducing. This is confirmed by family court advisers, who are increasingly confident in their role and report a closer scrutiny by managers of requests for expert assessments.

## **Partnerships**

### **Grade 2 (good)**

29. Arrangements for partnership working with stakeholders are good. Local authorities and the judiciary report strong and highly effective partnership working at both strategic and operational levels in many parts of the service. One local authority described a culture change within Cafcass over the last three years, from one of professional distrust to honest dialogue and easy access now to managers, with early conversations if any concerns arise.
30. Strong relationships have enabled good multi-agency working, such as the development of a pre-birth screening protocol in Lincolnshire to help to meet a 26-week target for public law proceedings. The protocol is soon to be launched. The duration of care applications has already improved notably in the last year in two offices, for example from 46.3 weeks in Lincolnshire in June 2011 to 33 weeks in June 2012. In Cambridgeshire, effective work is taking place with partner agencies to produce an adoption action plan to improve timeliness in adoptions.
31. Relationships with the courts are largely very productive and service managers have been actively involved in the development of Family Justice Boards. As with local authorities, a number of courts describe managers in Cafcass as turning the service around over the last three years, and have high regard for their skills. Effective partnership work ensures that most courts are aware of the development of proportionate working by Cafcass and consider options carefully before making an order. The rate of ordering of reports by the judiciary has reduced over the last year. However, despite a nationally agreed protocol, some confusion still remains between agencies and some courts regarding the responsibilities of agencies for the completion of private law reports.
32. Separated Parents' Information Programmes are available across the area to help parents understand the changing needs of their children as a result of family disruption. Domestic violence perpetrator programmes (DVPP), which address the needs of parents who have a significant history of domestic abuse, have recently been introduced to ensure that these parents can offer safe care for their children. These have been commissioned to offer a responsive service and are available on both a group work and individual basis at a range of

locations with availability at weekends and in the evenings. However, only a small number of individuals are currently on programmes, and the service area has recognised that embedding the DVPP practice guidance is a priority. Partnership work is taking place with the courts to develop understanding and promote effective use of the programmes. A partnership agreement has been in place since 2007 for the Peterborough office to be used as a contact centre.

33. Partnerships with some other stakeholders are less well established and require further development. Relationships are in place with local stakeholder groups but further work is required to consistently seek their views. Mediation services, as a response to help families resolve difficulties, are used well in some areas but managers recognise that further coordination of these services is required. The early intervention team improvement plan recognises that family court advisers need to have greater knowledge of the services in the area and appropriate action to address this has been identified.

## **Value for money**

### **Grade 2 (good)**

34. Value for money is good. Available resources are well managed and targeted appropriately. Considerable efficiency savings have been achieved without impacting adversely on service quality. Key performance indicators demonstrate continuing high performance. For example, there are no delays in allocation of work. Workloads are distributed effectively to respond to the changing demands on the service, with practitioners required to undertake both private law and public law work. Caseloads in some offices have been assessed locally as relatively high, and a small amount of extra capacity has been created to ease the pressure. Overall throughput of work is good and most practitioners report that their workloads are reasonable. The use of agency staff is very low and careful deployment of managers has led to good continuity of management cover during maternity leave from within the existing service area management group.
35. Managers are working with the judiciary to try to ensure that the ordering of reports is targeted appropriately. While there is further progress to be achieved, report ordering in some courts has reduced considerably in the last year.
36. Family court advisers have recently been provided with smartphones and this is enabling more efficient use of time when away from the office. The conversion to the electronic recording system from paper-based files is enabling easy access for managers and practitioners to case files, particularly when away from the office. However, at times, the supporting technology has been unreliable, and this has impacted on productivity. This has been identified as a national issue and robust action is being taken to secure improvement.

## Safeguarding

### Grade 3 (adequate)

37. The contribution of the service area to safeguarding children and young people is adequate. Family court advisers are aware of their role in safeguarding children. Records show that all relevant staff have complied with the requirement to read the child protection policy, and all have received an assessment of their safeguarding practice in the last six months. However, safeguarding practice is still very variable. Some case records sampled contained examples of high quality safeguarding practice, including thorough risk assessments, good liaison with local authorities and measured recommendations; these high standards were not consistently evident across the service area. Through the healthcheck and performance management of practitioners, managers have identified that further improvements to safeguarding practice are required, and this is included in the current business plan.
38. No cases were identified by inspectors that left children at risk of harm as a result of systemic deficits in practice or management. Evidence was seen of relevant cases being referred to the local authority, and local authorities confirmed that cases referred by Cafcass were timely and appropriate.
39. The screening of private law cases by the early intervention team is mostly of an adequate standard, although in some cases seen by inspectors the safeguarding issues are not outlined sufficiently clearly. In some cases, statutory checks have not been received by the court date, and can therefore not be taken into account in the analysis, but this is highlighted to the judiciary and cases are returned to court if subsequent information raises concern.
40. Engagement with all five Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) has been achieved, with an appropriate Cafcass representative at most meetings. Local authority LSCB representatives who spoke with inspectors valued the Cafcass contribution to the board. Learning from serious case reviews is disseminated effectively by Cafcass both nationally and through local team meetings.
41. Safe recruitment processes are in place nationally to ensure that staff who are recruited are suitable to work with children. Cafcass managers have not had to report any allegations against staff to the local authority designated officers, but advice is sought by Cafcass managers as appropriate.
42. Improvements to provision for service users are being achieved, for example through changes to the design of the Peterborough office, with the intention of ensuring a more welcoming experience.

## Evaluation

### Grade 3 (adequate)

43. Evaluation is adequate. Self-evaluation provides a realistic analysis of most of the strengths and weaknesses across the area. The business plan and associated plans identify accurately where improvements are needed and good progress is being made on most of the priorities identified. Service managers have good awareness of the business plan and the key priorities for their teams and individual staff. The recent internal healthcheck of two parts of the reconfigured area is thorough and robust and identifies many of the areas for improvement that have informed the business plan.
44. The outcome of self evaluation is evident, for example in the number of family court advisers who have become subject to supervision action plans in the last few months, and in the delivery of a range of training to address issues identified as common themes. The impact of these activities, such as on improving the understanding of equality and diversity issues, and the work to improve case planning has yet to be established.

## Quality of provision

### Service responsiveness

#### Grade 2 (good)

45. Service responsiveness is good. Managers and family court advisers across Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire are aware of the need to ensure early resolution to matters in the family justice system and are effective in tackling avoidable delay. As a result, the area consistently meets its key performance indicators for both the allocation of cases and the timeliness of reports. The majority of schedule 2 letters are filed promptly and distributed to parties in advance.
46. All cases are allocated promptly and caseloads are manageable. Service managers do not hold cases as a matter of routine, but will hold cases if a practitioner is off sick, to ensure that work is progressed. Robust business support systems are in place to ensure that filing dates are not missed. As a result, the parties have time to consider the report in advance of the court date. In the small number of cases where delay is unavoidable, short extensions are agreed appropriately with the court.

## Case planning and recording

### Grade 3 (adequate)

47. Case planning and recording are adequate. Case recording is up to date and contains relevant detail. All records are maintained on the electronic recording system, which enables access to up-to-date information for staff and managers.

Contact logs seen by inspectors are sufficiently detailed and give a clear understanding of the practitioners' contacts with children, their families and other agencies. In most cases, the progress of the case and any relevant developments are clear and in some cases the contact log is very thoroughly completed and provides a comprehensive chronology of the case.

48. Case plans are adequate overall. The healthcheck and local audits have identified shortfalls in case planning across the area and an extensive training programme has been put in place. Inspectors saw evidence of some improvements to plans following the training, but this has yet to be embedded. Most case plans seen by inspectors specify the key issues in the case and the actions required. Some case plans are completed well and identify any subsequent changes to the plan. Inspectors saw examples of completed plans containing good, succinct summaries of the work undertaken and the outcomes achieved for the children, making clear the impact of the intervention. However, too many case plans lack specific, measurable objectives and do not make clear if liaison with other agencies is required. In some cases, insufficient attention is paid to identifying and addressing the needs of children arising from their racial, cultural or religious backgrounds. Case records do not consistently make clear whether the plan has been shared with the relevant family members and children and young people.

## **Assessment, intervention and direct work with children**

### **Grade 3 (adequate)**

49. Assessment, intervention and direct work with children are adequate. Families and children are seen and assessments indicate that their views are taken into account. However, assessments do not always make clear whether children have been seen separately in order to ensure that they can talk about their experiences, wishes and feelings, nor do assessments consistently consider equality and diversity issues.
50. In public law cases, assessments of local authority care plans are generally thorough and provide some effective challenge to ensure good outcomes for children. Good liaison is undertaken with the local authority and other key agencies. Local authorities confirmed to inspectors that family court advisers are appropriately critical and add value to their work.
51. The majority of direct work with families and children is planned well and is suitably focused on the key issues. The quality of engagement with children and young people is variable. However, some practitioners show high levels of sensitivity to the age and feelings of the child, and recording on some case files demonstrates good engagement, focusing on improving outcomes for children and young people.
52. Not all assessments include sufficient evidence that contact has been made with other agencies such as schools, if relevant. However, where specific needs

are subsequently identified that require further referrals or additional information from another agency, this is undertaken.

## Reporting and recommendations to the court

### Grade 3 (adequate)

53. Reporting and recommendations to the court are adequate. The majority of reports seen by inspectors were of adequate quality. Systems are in place to ensure that reports are shared with parties in a timely manner, although practice currently varies between offices and electronic case files do not routinely contain this information. Action is now being taken to achieve consistency.
54. Reports by family court advisers in public law cases are mostly succinct and appropriately scrutinise and challenge the plans of local authorities. Children are routinely seen as part of the reporting process and their views are taken into account in reports. Assessments lead to recommendations that are focused on improving outcomes for children and young people.
55. Reports for private law cases are mostly adequate, although the quality is more variable than in public law cases. Children are routinely seen as part of the reporting process, and this is reflected in reports. Some good examples were seen by inspectors, particularly of the reporting of direct work with teenagers, which provided valuable evidence to the court about their views. In some cases, reports do not contain information from all relevant sources, for example from schools, to get a clear overview of the welfare issues of the child. Most reports contain an appropriate level of analysis of the key issues and the views of the practitioner relate clearly to the evidence collected. Recommendations are generally clear and proportionate to the needs of the case. Reports seen by inspectors demonstrate that practitioners take account of the 'no order principle'<sup>1</sup> when making recommendations.
56. The majority of the schedule 2 letters seen by inspectors are of an adequate standard. However, some examples seen by inspectors were overly descriptive, poorly presented or included unsubstantiated allegations by parties about each other. Some information provided by parties, for example regarding health issues, was unsubstantiated, but presented as fact.
57. Members of the judiciary are mostly positive about the quality of Cafcass reports, and value the experience of practitioners.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>.

## Definitions

### Inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Adequate
Grade 4	Inadequate

### 'No order principle'

Children Act 1989 section 1(5) is known as the 'no order principle'.<sup>2</sup> It states: 'Where a court is considering whether or not to make one or more orders under this Act with respect to a child, it shall not make the order or any of the orders unless it considers that doing so would be better for the child than making no order at all.' The 'no order principle' is consistent with two of the philosophies underlying the Children Act 1989: that there should be minimum state intervention in family life and that parents should exercise and be encouraged to exercise responsibility for their children'.<sup>3</sup>

### Principle of 'no delay'

Section 1(2) of the Children Act 1989 sets out the general principle that any delay in determining the question about a child's upbringing 'is likely to prejudice the welfare of the child'. This means that any unnecessary delay should be avoided.

### Private and public law

Family law is that area of the law which regulates and deals with family and domestic relations, including, but not limited to, marriage, civil and domestic partnerships and the welfare of children. Where these matters are dealt with by courts, they are known as family proceedings. The person or body that brings the issue to court is known as the applicant and the person or body opposing the application is known as the respondent. In general terms applicants and respondents are known as parties to the proceedings.

Private law is that part of the family law where the state does not normally need to be involved. Private law proceedings involving Cafcass are usually about situations where parents have separated and they cannot agree where a child should live or with whom they should have contact. The law that established Cafcass states that it should only become involved in family proceedings where the welfare of the child is, or may be, in question.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1.



Private law cases are dealt with through what is known as The Private Law Programme. This is designed to provide a framework for the consistent national approach to the resolution of issues in private law proceedings. It is designed to assist parties to reach safe agreements where possible, to provide a forum in which to find the best way to resolve issues in each individual case and to promote outcomes that are sustainable, that are in the best interests of children and that take account of their perspectives.

Public law is that part of the family law which deals with relationships between parents, or those with a parental role, where the state does need to be involved to ensure that a child does not suffer significant harm. Court proceedings are usually initiated by a local authority applying for a care or supervision order. This may result in the child being looked after by the local authority under a care order. Adoption-related applications are also normally public law proceedings.

Public law cases are dealt with through the Public Law Outline. This is a system aimed to control delay in family court public law proceedings. It was introduced across England and Wales in April 2009, with new Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities.

## **Schedule 2 letter**

A schedule 2 letter is provided to courts by Cafcass for first directions hearings in private law proceedings. The letter informs the court about whether there are any risk factors to children known at that stage in proceedings which the court should consider before deciding next steps. The duty on Cafcass to make risk assessments is set out in section 16A of the Children Act 1989.

## Record of main findings

<b>Cafcass service area A11: Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire only</b>	
Overall effectiveness	Adequate
Capacity for improvement	Good
Meeting the needs of service users	
Ambition and prioritisation	Good
Performance management	Adequate
Workforce development	Adequate
Partnerships	Good
Value for money	Good
Safeguarding	Adequate
Evaluation	Adequate
Quality of provision	
Service responsiveness	Good
Case planning and recording	Adequate
Assessment, intervention and direct work with children	Adequate
Reporting and recommendations to the court	Adequate