



One Minute Guide Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)



The chief function of the Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) is to listen to and advocate what children want, so decisions pertaining to their best interests are taken into account in proceedings (public and private) relating to them. CAFCASS represents children in family court cases in England. Their role is independently advise the family courts about what is safe for children and in their best interests. They aim to make sure that children's voices are heard at the heart of the family court setting.

Why is it important?

- To achieve safe and best outcomes for children in court proceedings.
- To ensure children's needs, wishes and feelings are put first and their voices are heard, so decisions pertaining to their best interests are taken

How do we do it?

- In public law, CAFCASS officers act as 'Children's Guardians' and appoint solicitors to represent the child and prepare an evidence-based analysis of applications made by local authorities to safeguard children. The CAFCASS guardian will liaise closely with the IRO to form a view about the local authority care plan and to ensure the best possible outcome for the child.
- In private law, 'Family Court Advisors' advise the Judges on what children's wishes and feelings are and report on what is best for the children. For example, who the child should live with and what time they spend with the other parent or a grandparent.
- Undertake a range of enquiries and provide independent advice to court.
- Work collaboratively with various stakeholders to safeguard the interests of children and secure best outcomes in all types of proceedings relating to them.

For more information:

Visit the CAFCASS website: <https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/>

Resources for professionals involved in CAFCASS cases can be accessed via [this link](#)