

# Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass)

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This document outlines the framework for the inspection of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service. These inspections focus on the quality and effectiveness of Cafcass private and public law practice with families, the leadership and management of local services and the leadership and governance of the national organisation. In evaluating the impact of the service, the inspection will also evaluate the effectiveness of Cafcass to positively influence the effectiveness of the family justice system both locally and nationally.

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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## Introduction

1. This document sets out the framework for the inspection of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass).
2. Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) will carry out the inspections under section 143 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
3. This framework and evaluation schedule remains subject to periodic review.

## Frequency of inspection

4. Cafcass will be inspected as a national organisation. This national inspection will include inspection of the delivery of services at a local level, but not of all local Cafcass service delivery, usually in seven or eight (of 17) local areas.
5. If Cafcass as a national organisation is found to be good or better overall, the subsequent inspection will be three years later. If Cafcass is found to 'require improvement' the subsequent inspection will be within 12 to 24 months, and if it is found to be 'inadequate' overall the subsequent inspection will be within 12 months.

## Notice period

6. All inspections will be at short notice – two hours. The lead inspector will go on site on day one to begin gathering evidence. Further details can be found in the *Inspection handbook for the inspection of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service*. Cafcass will be asked to prepare the list of information included in Annex A of the *Inspection handbook*.
7. Inspections will only be deferred in exceptional circumstances. Staff absence, including the absence of the Chief Executive, is not a reason for deferral.

## Inspection team

8. Normally, 10 suitably qualified and experienced HMI will carry out the inspection. The full inspection team will normally be on site for eight working days. A small team of inspectors will evaluate and consider the national functions prior to the full team coming on site. The lead inspector will principally be based at Cafcass' national office to ensure continuity of dialogue with the Cafcass senior leadership team and to ensure consistency of the inspection. This is because the inspection team will be deployed gathering evidence across several local Cafcass service areas at the same time.

## The scope of the inspection

9. The children and families within the scope of this inspection are those where Cafcass has a role in family proceedings, and if children and young people are subject to:
- public family law care and supervision applications where a local authority is a party to the proceedings
  - private family law applications related to contact or residence proceedings
  - applications for children to be placed in secure accommodation under section 25 of the Children Act 1989
  - adoption proceedings, be they adoption from care, a step-parent adoption, inter-country adoption, or adoption of a baby relinquished by her or his mother
  - application for leave to remove a child from the UK jurisdiction
  - application for parental orders linked to surrogacy arrangements.

## Inspection activity<sup>1</sup>

10. Inspectors will:
- evaluate and consider a sample of public and private law cases where children are involved in order to judge the quality of front-line practice and management and the difference it makes to the lives of children, young people, their families and carers. This will include discussions with family court advisers, including their managers and other professionals working with the child or young person; in the case of children in public care this will include the Independent Reviewing Officer
  - with their consent, meet as appropriate with children, young people, parents and carers
  - shadow practitioners in their day-to-day work, for example observing practice in court and the work of practitioners with children and families
  - with their consent, consult with key partners, for example local authorities, HM Courts and Tribunal Service and the family judiciary
  - request specific information from Cafcass to inform the inspection and inspection judgements including:
    - copies of quality assurance activity, case audits over the six months prior to inspection and any associated action plans derived from the audits
    - data that support the delivery of the Cafcass service.

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<sup>1</sup> Full details of the inspection methodology can be found in the *Inspection handbook for the inspection of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service*. This will be published in 2014.

11. Full details of the inspection methodology are available in the *Inspection handbook*.

## **The judgements inspectors will make**

12. Inspectors will make the following judgements:
  - overall effectiveness and areas for development.

The overall effectiveness judgement is a cumulative judgement derived from:

- the quality and effectiveness of Cafcass private law practice with families
- the quality and effectiveness of Cafcass public law practice with families
- leadership and management of local services.

The leadership and management of local services judgement is a cumulative judgement derived from:

- the leadership and management of service area A
- the leadership and management of service area B
- the leadership and management of service area C, etc.
- leadership and governance of the national organisation.

## **Making judgements**

13. The following paragraphs set out the characteristics of a good service for all judgements. Inspectors will use these criteria to evaluate the experiences of children, young people and families and the services they receive. Inspectors will make a judgement of 'good' where the characteristics set out are widespread and common practice. Inspectors will deploy professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings. When considering the effectiveness and impact of Cafcass practice with families involved in both private and public family law proceedings, inspectors will use the descriptors of 'good' as the benchmark from which to grade performance. A judgement of 'good' will be made where the inspection team concludes that the evidence overall sits most appropriately with a finding of 'good'. This is what Ofsted describes as 'best fit'.
14. Inspectors will make their judgements using one of four performance grades:
  - outstanding
  - good
  - requires improvement
  - inadequate.

15. In addition, they will identify areas of outstanding practice and priorities for improvement. For all children, young people and families the expectation is that Cafcass practice is sensitive and responsive to age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation.

## Grading judgements

16. One of the four performance grades described above will be assigned to each of the four judgements. The overall effectiveness and areas for development judgement is derived from performance in each of the four judgements. Inspectors will use both evidence and their professional judgement to award the overall effectiveness and areas for development grade. The experiences of children, young people and their families; the extent to which the courts are given the best advice to make decisions most likely to improve the lives of children subject to family proceedings; and the quality of professional practice, and management and leadership, will provide the most significant evidence for the judgements to be made.
17. However, widespread or serious failure resulting in significant, avoidable delay and/or failure to safeguard children's welfare will result in an overall effectiveness judgement of 'inadequate'. It is also likely in most cases that, if the quality and effectiveness of either Cafcass private or public law practice with families is 'inadequate', then the leadership judgements are also likely to be judged 'inadequate'. This would therefore limit the overall effectiveness judgement to 'inadequate'.
18. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for an overall effectiveness judgement to be 'good' where inspectors judge the quality of leadership and management of a local service to 'require improvement' or be 'inadequate'. In these instances, leaders and managers will have demonstrated sufficient understanding of their failures and will also have been effective in prioritising, challenging and making sustained improvement. This will be acknowledged and reported by inspectors. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in these instances will consider the evidence and moderate the leadership judgement accordingly.

## Overall effectiveness and areas for development

19. Cafcass will be **outstanding**<sup>2</sup> when:
  - Direct work with children, young people and families, and advice to the family court, is of the highest quality enabling the court to make decisions most likely to improve outcomes for children.
  - Inspirational, confident, ambitious and influential leaders innovate and attract creative ideas to sustain the highest-quality services.

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<sup>2</sup> The characteristics of 'good' must be met in addition to those characteristics that describe outstanding.

- Professional relationships between the Cafcass and partner organisations are mature and well developed. Accountabilities are embedded and result in confident, regular evaluation and improvement of the family justice system locally and nationally.
- Cafcass is proactive and accurate in identifying and responding to the changing needs of children, families, local authorities and the family courts and the performance of its service and staff. Change and improvement are consistently and effectively implemented and reviewed for their impact. Children, young people and families clearly benefit from improvements that are made and the impact of their feedback is well evidenced.
- Effective and continuous learning improves professional practice. This is sustained over time. Professional challenge and leadership ambition inspire high-quality work with families. As a result, this promotes the welfare of children and young people subject to family proceedings, particularly those who are most vulnerable, be they looked after by the local authority, held in secure accommodation or living with their family where parents or carers are seeking resolution to issues associated with divorce or separation.
- The views and experiences of children, young people and their families are at the centre of service design and influence development and strategic thinking.

20. Cafcass will be **good** when:

- Children and young people's welfare is safeguarded and any risks to their welfare are identified and addressed through timely advice and analysis to the court, ensuring their welfare is given paramount consideration.
- Leadership, management and governance arrangements deliver strong, strategic leadership locally and nationally. Cafcass works with partners to plan and deliver effective family justice services.
- There is a clear and up-to-date strategy for developing services and there are sufficient resources to meet the needs of children and young people who the court identifies are in need of a service from Cafcass. Leaders drive continuous improvement so that Cafcass is consistently effective as both the primary social work service in private law proceedings and in the unique role delivered by children's guardians in care, supervision and adoption proceedings. Cafcass' role in the local family justice board drives improvement and practice for children and young people subject to family law proceedings.

21. Cafcass requires improvement when:

- It is not yet delivering good-quality practice, analysis and advice to the courts to ensure that the child's welfare is the paramount consideration. However, there are no widespread or serious failures that result in children not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.



22. Cafcass will be **inadequate** when:

- There are widespread or serious failures that result in children not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted. This is likely to be the case if any of the following are judged 'inadequate':
  - the quality and effectiveness of Cafcass private law practice with families
  - the quality and effectiveness of Cafcass public law practice with families
  - leadership and management of local services
  - leadership and governance of the national organisation.

## Grade descriptors

### The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass private law practice with families

Children and families who are the subject of private law proceedings receive timely and proportionate assessment prior to first hearing to identify that their welfare is safeguarded. Courts are provided with concise and accurate advice to enable them to identify the children who need a post first hearing service from Cafcass, and they receive the assessment appropriate to their needs and rights. Cafcass' practice in private family law is timely, proportionate to need, equitable and delivered in accordance with professional social work standards.<sup>3</sup> Children's needs, wishes and feelings are central to Cafcass practice.

23. The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass private law practice with families is likely to be judged 'good' if:

- Children and young people's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through the actions and recommendations of Cafcass.
- The family court is given high-quality advice and/or recommendations about applications made to it in private law proceedings, at first and all subsequent hearings where appropriate.
- Children, young people and their parents, carers and families are provided with appropriate information, advice and other support during proceedings.
- Delay in allocation, work undertaken with families and filing with the court is appropriately avoided and in line with court-set filing dates.
- Effective initial risk assessment and screening of cases are undertaken. Schedule 2<sup>4</sup> letters are timely, proportionate, focused on the safety and protection of children and provide appropriate advice about the next steps in

<sup>3</sup> Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers in England set out by the Health and Care Professions Council (Health and Care Professions Council, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Schedule 2 of the revised Private Law Programme 2010 (a Practice Direction made by the President of the Family Division).

ensuring the child's best interests about the need for future Cafcass involvement.

- The wishes and feelings of children are clearly sought, well represented and influence plans for their future from the first hearing. They understand what is happening to them and why.
- Effective assessment and direct work with children, young people and their families/carers is undertaken with the children's best interests remaining central to the proceedings and their welfare properly safeguarded and promoted.
- Work with children, young people and their families/carers is well planned. Planning is shared with the parties so that they understand the progress of the case; plans are individualised, responsive, reviewed and proportionately focused on the issues identified by the court.
- Children and young people who are the subject of orders of the court are seen, and seen alone, provided this is in their best interests and taking account of the complexity of the case.
- Cafcass practitioners' practice in court is consistent with the Private Law Programme,<sup>5</sup> demonstrates good working relationships with the judiciary and court officials, is purposeful, equitable to each party and recognises the distinct role of Cafcass within the family court.
- Reports to the court, including oral reporting, include information that is relevant to the proceedings and has appropriate analysis and recommendations. Written recommendations flow from the body of the report and are undertaken by suitably social work qualified and experienced Cafcass practitioners.
- Where appropriate, in children's interests and where it supports and promotes children's welfare, recommendations to court are shared with all parties in advance of the day and this is recorded.
- Case recording is coherent, timely, is sufficiently comprehensive to reflect the work undertaken, including the outcome of the assessment, and equitably reflects the views of parties and children and young people.
- Information-sharing between agencies and professionals is lawful, timely, specific and effective.

#### 24. Outstanding:

- The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass private law practice is likely to be judged 'outstanding' if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a 'good' judgement, there is evidence that professional practice exceeds the standard of 'good' and results in courts having the best possible advice. Evidence-based informed practice, some of which will be innovative, continues to develop from a strong and confident base, making an

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<sup>5</sup> Private Law Programme 2010 (a Practice Direction made by the President of the Family Division).

exceptional difference in how the court is able to make its decisions about the best outcomes for children and young people.

25. Requires improvement:

- The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass private law practice is likely to 'require improvement' if 'good' private law practice is not sufficiently in place. However, there are no widespread or serious failures or unnecessary delays attributable to Cafcass that result in children's welfare not being safeguarded and promoted.

26. Inadequate:

- The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass private law practice is likely to be 'inadequate' if there are widespread or serious failures, including unnecessary delay in identifying solutions that are most likely to be sustainable for children and which result in children's welfare not being safeguarded and promoted.

## **The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass public law practice with families**

Children and families who are the subject of public law proceedings are supported by children's guardians whose assessment, analysis and recommendations to the court are timely, proportionate and focused on the child's best interests. Their practice is effective and governed by professional social work standards. Children's wishes and feelings are at the heart of Cafcass practice and courts are provided with advice that ensures the best interest of children are paramount, delay is avoided and children's welfare is safeguarded. Children's guardians add value to the proceedings, where appropriate before proceedings, and challenge local authority plans where necessary. Children's guardians maintain communication with children's independent reviewing officers and ensure an effective handover at the end of proceedings. Cafcass in its public law work has a significant impact on good working relationships with local authorities.

27. The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass public law practice with families is likely to be judged 'good' if:

- Children and young people's welfare is safeguarded and is promoted through the actions and recommendations of children's guardians.
- Children's best interests remain central to the proceedings.
- Children's guardians give the family court high-quality advice about any application made to it in public law proceedings – at the first hearing, case management conference and subsequent hearings – where the guardian's advice is required by the court.

- Children and young people are appropriately represented in family proceedings or, where age-appropriate, enabled to instruct their own legal representative.
- Children, young people and their parents, carers and families are provided with appropriate information, advice and other support during proceedings.
- Cafcass does not contribute to avoidable delay and challenges other agencies where delay is identified. They involve independent reviewing officers regularly to improve the plans for children and ensure their needs and wishes have been properly understood.
- Where appropriate, children's guardians monitor and provide advice during pre-proceedings work that local authorities undertake with children and their families.
- Children's guardians quickly establish an understanding of the child's needs and provide the court with analysis and advice early and through the proceedings, where necessary verbally.
- The wishes and feelings of children are clearly sought, well represented and influence plans for their future. Sufficient information and engagement is provided to enable children to understand what is happening to them and there are mechanisms to identify when children may be having difficulty in understanding.
- Effective assessment and direct work with children, young people and their families/carers is undertaken that provides added value to the work of the local authority. There are effective working relationships between safeguarding and social workers for the local authority.
- Work with children, young people and their families/carers is well planned, and case plans are individualised, responsive, reviewed and proportionately focused on the issues identified by the court.
- Children and young people who are the subject of care and supervision proceedings are seen and seen alone by their children's guardian, proportionate to the needs and complexity of the case (where the child is not seen, the reasons are recorded). Children and young people are seen with a children's guardian who builds effective engagement with the child in accordance with Cafcass' functions and duties.
- Cafcass practitioners' practice in court is consistent with the Public Law Outline,<sup>6</sup> demonstrates good working relationships with the judiciary and court officials and is purposeful and equitable to all parties.
- Reports to the court, including oral reporting, include information that is relevant to the proceedings and has appropriate analysis and recommendations. Written recommendations flow from the body of the

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<sup>6</sup> Practice direction issued by the President of the Family Division regarding care and supervision proceedings under part 4 of the Children Act 1989.

report and are undertaken by suitably social work qualified and experienced children's guardians.

- The recommendations and advice of children's guardians in care and supervision proceedings add value to the work of the local authority and other expert advice to the court. Expert advice from children's guardians reduces the need for appointments of further experts.
- Case recording is coherent, timely, is sufficiently comprehensive to reflect the work undertaken and the outcome of the assessment, and is equitable to the adult parties.
- Information-sharing between agencies and professionals is lawful, timely, specific and effective.
- Children's guardians liaise and work effectively throughout proceedings with independent reviewing officers and provide a handover at the end of proceedings to ensure continuity of challenge to the local authority's future planning for children.

28. Outstanding:

- The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass public law practice is likely to be judged 'outstanding' if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a 'good' judgement, there is evidence that professional practice exceeds the standard of 'good' and results in courts having the best possible advice. Evidence-based practice, some of which will be innovative, continues to develop from a strong and confident base, making an exceptional difference to how the court makes its decisions about the best outcomes for children and young people.

29. Requires improvement:

- The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass public law practice is likely to 'require improvement' if 'good' public law practice is not sufficiently in place. However, there are no widespread or serious failures or unnecessary delays attributable to Cafcass that result in children's welfare not being safeguarded and promoted.

30. Inadequate:

- The quality and effectiveness of Cafcass public law practice is likely to be 'inadequate' if there are widespread or serious failures, including unnecessary delays attributable to Cafcass (and not adequately challenged), in identifying permanent solutions for children and which result in children's welfare not being safeguarded and promoted.

## Leadership and management of local services

Local leadership is strong and produces consistently effective local delivery of services and good-quality practice with children, families and the family court. Cafcass works with local partners to deliver an effective family justice service. Leaders drive continuous improvement so that the local service is highly effective. Partnerships are supported by transparent and rigorous governance between Cafcass and key statutory, private and voluntary organisations. Shared priorities are clear. There is active involvement with the local family justice board and local safeguarding children boards. The heads of service and senior management teams have a comprehensive knowledge about what is happening at the 'front-line'. There is regular review of the added value Cafcass is making to children's lives. Evidence is provided to support this. They oversee systematic performance management and monitoring that demonstrates rigorous and timely action in response to service deficiencies or new demands.

31. Leadership and management of local services is likely to be judged 'good' if:

- Cafcass has an effective working relationship with the local judiciary, including the family proceedings bench that results in timely conclusion of cases and good outcomes for children.
- Cafcass is proactively and effectively engaged with its key partners; local authorities; groups who represent children and adult users of Cafcass; and relevant local voluntary sector organisations to improve the operation of the local family justice system.
- Local leaders ensure active involvement with the local family justice board and local safeguarding children boards to improve practice.
- Local business plans are risk-assessed, focused on activity most likely to affect improvement and result in improved effectiveness.
- Local leaders identify and address negative trends in performance and sustain improvement. The area has demonstrated a track record in successfully addressing performance issues and/or there has been a significant improvement in performance and quality in the short term. There is demonstrable capacity to sustain this improvement.
- Local leaders demonstrate clear lines of accountability between the local delivery and national organisation.
- Performance management, including the quality assurance of reports to the court, are effective at the local level. Delay for children is regularly reviewed and action taken where it is needed.
- Staff are experienced, effectively trained, supervised and the quality of their practice improves. Management oversight of practice, including practice scrutiny by senior managers, is established, systematic, is used to improve the quality of assessment and advice to the courts and is effective in tackling weaknesses and overcoming barriers to improvement.

- All staff work in a culture that is challenging as well as supportive and that promotes improvement.
- There is evidence of learning from feedback and/or complaints.
- There is effective and continuous learning from a range of sources, including complaints from children, young people, families and front-line staff, both individually and collectively. Serious case reviews and audits, key stakeholders, inspection findings and research informs service development and design.
- There is an effective response locally to equality issues such as race, culture, religion, gender, age, sexuality and disability, both in terms of the workforce and in how Cafcass fulfils its statutory functions.<sup>7</sup>
- Local managers monitor the use of services commissioned by Cafcass and promote their use through the courts to ensure the effective deployment of Cafcass resources to inform national commissioning.

### 32. Outstanding:

- Leadership and management is likely to be 'outstanding' if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a 'good' judgement, there is evidence that local leaders and managers are inspirational, confident, ambitious and influential in improving Cafcass practice and the performance of the local family justice system. They innovate and attract creative ideas to sustain the highest-quality advice to the family courts. They know their strengths and weaknesses well and can provide evidence of improvement over a sustained period of time. Professional relationships between Cafcass and partner members of the local family justice board and local safeguarding children boards are mature and well developed and show tangible impact. Accountabilities are embedded and result in confident, regular evaluation and improvement of the impact of Cafcass' contribution to family proceedings.

### 33. Requires improvement:

- Leadership and management locally 'require improvement' when the characteristics of 'good' leadership are not sufficiently in place. However, there are no widespread or serious failures that are not identified or are not being effectively addressed.

### 34. Inadequate:

- Leadership and management locally is likely to be 'inadequate' if one of the two practice judgements is 'inadequate' and leaders and managers have not been able to demonstrate sufficient understanding of the failure. They have been ineffective in prioritising, challenging and making improvements.

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<sup>7</sup> As set out in section 12 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

## Leadership and governance of the national organisation

Leadership and governance arrangements are strong and combine to produce consistently effective strategy and good-quality services for children, families and the family court. Cafcass works with partners to deliver a consistent and high-quality national service. Leaders drive continuous improvement so that the organisation is consistently effective. Partnerships are supported by transparent and rigorous governance between Cafcass and key statutory, private and voluntary organisations. Shared priorities are clear. There is effective engagement with the national family justice board, Department for Education, Ministry of Justice and local authorities. There is a clear and up-to-date strategy for commissioning and developing services that meet the needs of children and families in line with the courts' expectations. The Chief Executive and senior management team have a comprehensive knowledge about what is happening at the 'front-line' and use this to influence the development and management of the organisation. They oversee systematic performance management and monitoring that demonstrates rigorous and timely action in response to service deficiencies or new demands. They know the difference their services are making and how well they are delivering. Organisational development and the national improvement function have impact across the organisation. Cafcass challenges and uses its influence on practice elsewhere in the system to drive improvement.

35. Leadership and governance of the national organisation is likely to be judged 'good' if:
- Strategic leaders prioritise, identify and implement ambitious strategies in relation to the provision of family court social work services which influence and respond to the national policy agenda driving improvement in practice.
  - Strategic leaders use their influence externally to effectively promote the best interests of children and young people in the national family justice system, including delay in the making of permanent arrangements for children and young people.
  - The Cafcass Board provides effective strategic leadership, delivering a clear vision to inform the organisation's strategic direction and priorities and holding the organisation to account.
  - Cafcass senior leaders implement policy which maintains the best interests of children and the 'paramountcy principle' while ensuring an appropriate relationship between demand, resources, performance and quality. They exercise robust management oversight and are effective in tackling weaknesses and overcoming barriers to improvement.
  - Cafcass performance targets are child-focused and stretch the organisation's performance, rate of continuous improvement and delivery of services to children.



- National leadership is visible and demonstrates clear lines of accountability between the national organisation and local delivery.
- Cafcass is proactively and effectively engaged with the President of the Family Division, other senior judges, the Association of Directors of Children’s Services and other key partners in the family justice system.
- The national organisation delivers improvement in the internal quality of practice across the national organisation, appropriately balancing local innovation and creativity with consistency of service for children, families and the courts.
- National commissioning of services is intelligence-based, is supported by robust needs assessments (locally and nationally) and provides services that local courts consistently use to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are the subject of family proceedings.
- Staff at all levels work in a culture that is challenging as well as supportive and that promotes improvement and safeguarding and promotion of equality.
- Feedback and/or complaints from children, young people, families and front-line staff, both individually and collectively, are investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner. They are taken into account and, where appropriate, impact on strategy, service development and design.
- There is effective and continuous learning from a range of sources, including complaints, serious case reviews, homicide reviews and audits. Key stakeholders, inspection findings and research inform service development and design.
- There is an effective workforce strategy that is implemented well. Organisational development and national improvement services provide a skilled diverse workforce able to respond to the demands placed upon Cafcass.
- There is strong leadership on issues of race, culture, religion, gender, age, sexuality and disability both in terms of the workforce and how Cafcass fulfils its statutory functions.<sup>8</sup>
- Children and families benefit from a sufficient and high-quality range of materials that explain Cafcass’ role.

### 36. Outstanding:

- Leadership and governance of the national organisation are likely to be ‘outstanding’ if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a ‘good’ judgement, there is evidence that senior leaders and managers are inspirational, confident, ambitious and influential in improving Cafcass practice and the performance of the national family justice system. They know their strengths and weaknesses well and can provide evidence of

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<sup>8</sup> As set out in section 12 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

sustained high performance or improvement over a sustained period of time. Professional relationships between Cafcass and partner members of the national family justice board are mature, well developed and are making tangible improvements. Accountabilities are well embedded and result in confident, regular evaluation and sustained high performance or improvement in the impact of Cafcass in the family courts.

37. Requires improvement:

- Leadership and governance nationally 'require improvement' when the characteristics of 'good' national leadership are not sufficiently in place. However, there are no widespread or serious failures that are not identified or are not being effectively addressed.

38. Inadequate:

- Leadership and governance nationally is likely to be 'inadequate' if either of the two practice judgements, or leadership of the local organisation, is 'inadequate' and leaders and managers have not been able to demonstrate sufficient understanding of the failure. They have been ineffective in prioritising, challenging and making improvements.