

Checking the work of Cafcass Cymru



Hello

Care Inspectorate Wales check and inspect services. We make sure services are doing the right things in the right ways. We can take action if they aren't.

In June 2022 we checked how Cafcass Cymru are:

- keeping children and young people safe and promoting their well-being
- making sure children and young people are involved and listened to in decisions that affect their lives.

About Cafcass Cymru

Cafcass Cymru work with children, young people and families when they go to family court. Cafcass Cymru:

- makes sure children and young people are safe
- gives families information, advice and support
- makes sure children and young people are listened to by the court
- gives advice to the family court so they can make the best decisions.

Their work is really important!

This booklet tells you what we found.

What we did



We talked to families, carers, young people and professionals.



We ran four surveys.



We looked at evidence and checked record files.



We met with groups to get feedback.



We had interviews with staff to talk about their work.

Covid-19

Cafcass Cymru continued to support children, young people and families through the pandemic, but they had to change how they worked. Lots of the support had to be online.



Some good points

☉ Cafcass Cymru works well and supports children, young people and families.

They:

- put children and young people first
- help to protect children and young people from violence, abuse, and neglect
- make sure children and young people have the most stable life possible
- help make sure decisions give children and young people the best future possible
- promote the health, wellbeing, and safety of children and young people to family courts
- help protect the right of children and young people to know their parents and stay with them if it's safe
- are trusted by families.

☉ Cafcass Cymru involve children and young people in decisions and listens to their views.

They:

- respect children and young people and listen to their views
- make sure everyone understands who Cafcass Cymru are, what they do and why
- use different activities and resources to engage children and young people
- help give children and young people a range of ways to tell family courts what they want
- make sure everyone listens to what children and young people want
- explain decisions, including difficult ones.





☉ **Cafcass Cymru works well with family courts.**

They:

- give family courts good advice at the right time
- make recommendations to the court based on evidence
- set out the different options clearly
- keep good quality court records
- know how to challenge decisions if they think it's not the best thing for a child.

☉ **Cafcass Cymru have good, quality leaders and a stable, skilled workforce.**

They:

- help new staff understand their role and responsibilities
- support staff to develop new skills
- have regular team meetings
- listen to staff and involve them in planning
- have well skilled managers and leaders who are there for staff to talk to.

☉ **Cafcass Cymru continue to improve how they work.**

They:

- listen to views and feedback of people who used their service
- think about the future and are open to new ways of working
- share good practice so staff can learn from each other
- make sure staff have the training they need
- check that all their work is the same high quality with a quality assurance process.

☉ Cafcass Cymru works well with local authority services, legal services and other organisations.

They:

- work well with social workers and other professionals so families get the support they need
- go to children's reviews and help make sure there are no gaps in support
- work well with family courts and share information in the right ways
- get involved in new projects to help family deal with issues like drug and alcohol use.

☉ Cafcass Cymru keeps good quality reports and information.

They:

- keep up-to-date reports
- give family courts the right information to make decisions.

☉ Cafcass Cymru makes sure people have support in Welsh.

They:

- make an active offer of support in Welsh so people don't have to ask
- have a Welsh language policy and framework
- are improving Welsh language skills across the organisation.



Making it better for the future

We set out different ways Cafcass Cymru can improve how they work.

We think Cafcass Cymru could improve by:

- making sure families have more information about family court before starting proceedings
- making sure children, young people, and families have more information about Cafcass Cymru and why they're involved
- keeping children and young people up to date with what's happening
- making sure children and young people know who will tell them about decisions
- checking all staff are doing things in the same ways
- checking case records are kept up to date throughout court proceedings
- making sure case records and reports have more evidence about how children and young people were involved and how their views were gathered
- making sure reports have more evidence about how staff worked with families
- working better with professionals including independent reviewing officers (IROs)
- recruiting more Welsh speaking staff
- offering services in more languages
- giving staff more opportunities for promotion
- supporting staff better when they feel under pressure from work
- making sure staff don't have too many families to support at one time.



Next steps

We've written a letter to Cafcass Cymru. It explains what we found and what they have to do. We have asked them to let us know how they plan to improve their work.

We will check what they do and inspect them again in the future.

Thanks for reading this.

You can read the full report here:

careinspectorate.wales/assurance-check-letter-cafcass-cymru

