



Cafcass at a glance 2015 - 16

Our children

- 16,815 (31%) new cases received in 2015/16 were public law.
- 37,502 (69%) new cases received in 2015/16 were private law.
- Most children we work with are aged ten and under (83%).
- We have 38 offices, and will see children at these offices, at schools, at home, or wherever is best for each individual child.

Our Performance

- We continued to exceed all of our KPIs in 2015-16. They include allocation in public and private law, and filing times for private law.
- Demand for public law work increased in 2015-16, with the number of care applications received 14.5% higher than 2014-15. The overall number of open public law care cases also rose by 11%, when comparing March 2015 to March 2016.
- The number of private law cases received increased by 9.9% in 2015-16. Despite the increase in cases, we have managed to decrease the time taken to file section 7 reports from 11.8 weeks in 2014-15 to 10.6 weeks in 2015-16.
- Despite the increase in public law care application demand, the duration has been sustained at or below 30 weeks throughout 2015-16.
- The average private law case duration during 2015-16 was 22 weeks, down from 27 weeks in 2014-15.
- Cafcass received several sector and industry awards including Best Social Worker Employer, Children's Social Worker of the Year, Innovation in Flexible Working and our London private law team was awarded Silver for the Team of the Year, Children's Services.

About Cafcass

We work with over 116,000 of the country's most vulnerable children and young people each year who are going through care proceedings (public law), adoption or whose parents have separated and there is a dispute over child arrangements (private law). Our practitioners are all experienced social workers who work with families following an application to the family court, and will provide judges with the information needed to make a safe decision about a child's future. We are here for children and young people and we provide an opportunity for them to make their wishes and feelings clear. We listen, we don't take sides and we always remain independent.

Cafcass in 2016

In 2015-16 we continued to drive up the quality of our casework, while meeting the increase in demand across both public and private law and delivering efficiency savings in line with reduced spending targets. Despite these savings we maintained the level of resources directed to our frontline and work that matters most to children and families.

Building on the Good with Outstanding Leadership rating of our 2014 Ofsted inspection, our auditing and benchmarking programmes show clearly our further improvements. For example, we increased the quantum of Good and Outstanding casework, with the implementation of our Evidence Informed Practice Tools contributing to improvements in analytical reporting. A refresh of our Quality Assurance and Impact Framework also means there is even greater focus on the impact of our work. Cases are now assessed against four child-focused outcomes: the extent to which the child is safe, heard, better represented and enabled; and learning points are identified for each criteria.

We demonstrated innovation in practice – for example, our National Psychology Pilot, now an embedded service, supports practitioners to enhance their expertise and improve the quality of recommendations through the provision of 1:1 consultations with accredited clinical psychologists. We also introduced a national strategy to strengthen practice and share learning around child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and child trafficking.

We continue to support improved services in the wider family justice sector and help shape future sector reform through close working with the MoJ, DfE, sector agencies and through our membership of formal boards such as the Family Justice Board. We continue our work to help manage demand by piloting pre-court advice in private law, and new ways of working in care cases.