



Child Focused Courts

Child Focused Courts are the new way of working within private law. The model represents a significant shift in how the family justice system responds by placing children's safety, individual experiences and welfare at the heart of decision-making from the outset of proceedings.

Child Focused Courts bring together Cafcass, the court, local authorities, domestic abuse specialists and other partners to ensure that risks are identified early, information is shared promptly, to reduce delay and harm to children and promote better experiences of the family justice system for child and adult survivors of domestic abuse.

The model strengthens Cafcass's role as an independent, child-focused voice in private law proceedings and supports social workers to have maximum impact where children need it most.

Further Information

- [Cafcass: Cafcass welcomes the national rollout of Child Focused Courts](#)
- [Courts and Tribunals Judiciary: Judges welcome roll-out of Child Focused Courts](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Commissioner: How private law reforms support survivors' experiences](#)

What This Means for Family Court Advisers

For Family Court Advisers, working in Child Focused Courts means:

- Playing a central role in early safeguarding and analysis
- Using professional judgement confidently and proportionately
- Keeping the child's experience visible in every recommendation
- Working closely with partner agencies in a problem-solving, child-centred system
- Supporting courts to make earlier, safer and more sustainable decisions

The model strengthens Cafcass's role as an independent, child-focused voice in private law proceedings and supports social workers to have maximum impact where children need it most.

What Is Different About Child Focused Courts?

- **Early, coordinated multi-agency work** - Cafcass partners with local authorities, police, and domestic abuse services to assess a child's situation and needs. If domestic abuse concerns arise, referrals may be made to specialists for risk assessment and support.
- **Earlier safeguarding and decision-making** - The model allows Cafcass or Children's Services to start work as soon as a court application is made, enabling early assessment allowing the court to understand the issues affecting the child prior to the first hearing.
- **A stronger focus on the child's voice** - Children are seen and heard earlier and their views and experience, inform our analysis and recommendations, giving children a meaningful influence over decisions that affect their lives.
- **Reducing harm and delay** - Child Focused Courts aim to reduce the emotional harm caused by adversarial and protracted court processes. Earlier resolution supports safer, more sustainable outcomes for children and families.