



FAMILY COURT ADVISER JOB PROFILE

Job Title: Family Court Adviser

Accountable to: Service Manager

Working Arrangements: XXXXX Office Base (The expectation will be that the post holder may be required to work flexibly around the service area, or to be routinely office based dependent upon specific responsibilities and duties¹)

Key Working Relationships: Cafcass Staff, Judiciary and Court Services, Solicitors, Local Authorities and other related professional and partnership agencies

Role Requirements: (See attached Person Specification)

Terms of Employment

Grade: Family Court Adviser

Band: Band 7

London Weighting: For those staff with a permanent work base in Greater London.

Superannuation: The pension scheme used by Cafcass is the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (a Local Government Pension Scheme). This is also our auto enrolment scheme. Contribution rates are based on a tiered system.

Annual Leave: 28 days rising to 33 days after 5 years reckonable service, inclusive of 3 privilege days to be taken between Christmas and New Year plus any of the bank/public holidays.

¹ For example, the CIT FCA role based at the National Business Centre (NBC) is a routinely office-based post
Updated December 2019

JOB SUMMARY:

To provide advanced social work-level services to children, families and courts by assessing and analysing court applications for any child protection and serious welfare issues affecting a child or young person. Also, to influence those with parental responsibility to be more child-focused when needed, to advise the courts and Local Authorities about safeguarding concerns and about how a child's life can be improved, supporting judicial case management in the process.

To achieve this, you will need to keep the child at the centre of your work through high quality direct work with children and their families as well as high quality analysis and assessment. You will also need to be a skilled negotiator, working persuasively with family members and professionals on behalf of children. You will need to keep the child's timescale in the context of the child's journey through childhood and, where applicable, the care system, at the centre of everything you do and you must be prepared to advocate in the best interests of the child, ensuring their voice is not lost in the court arena. You will be required to be a resilient, reflective and accountable practitioner, possessing good IT and organisational skills, so that you can maintain a high throughput of outstanding casework.

FCA RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES in line with Cafcass Service Standards. (Responsibilities and Duties may vary depending upon specific role):

Safeguarding/Child Protection

To provide high quality early safeguarding and child protection advice, assessments and analysis to the Court on the needs and best interests of children subject to or involved in Family Proceedings

To ensure that the well-being and safety of the child is paramount throughout Cafcass' involvement in the case.

To ensure that all incidents or risks of significant harm to the child are dealt with in accordance with the relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) procedures and Cafcass policies and procedures

To directly work with, or on behalf of children & families to achieve safe and positive outcomes for children, referring to other services where this will produce benefit.

Service Effectiveness Throughput and Productivity

To produce high quality work with a rapid throughput, combining increasing productivity with quality of casework.

For all work produced to be rated good or outstanding in internal and external audits, with exceptions tolerated where the learning gained from these exceptions can be absorbed and applied to future work.

To be fully engaged with Cafcass policy that all cases must be allocated and to adopt a proportionate approach to work, assessing the needs of the case. In response to changing demands, the regulating mechanism will be the average time spent on cases; which is lower when demands are higher and vice versa.

Quality

To carry out an advanced social work level case analysis of the child's circumstances and to ensure this is updated if circumstances change, and for roles in Cafcass Intake to provide advice to local teams based on initial case analysis.

To provide advanced social work level advice and assist the Court to achieve a timely conclusion to proceedings and the best possible outcome for the child.

To administer and comply with orders made by the Family Court as required and conduct the necessary enquires in accordance with relevant legislation and Court Rules.

To provide a clear child-focused plan of work in each case which is monitored and subject to ongoing review.

To ensure the appointment and instruction of legal representation for the child as required, and work in partnership with the relevant agencies for each case.

To keep up to date with changes in legislation, Court Rules, policies, national directives, procedures and best practice developments.

To participate in training and development programmes in line with the agreed individual personal development plans, taking responsibility for your continued professional development, learning and improvement, through ever greater self-regulation supported by active and positive supervision in line with the Cafcass Supervision Policy.

Engagement and Partnership Working

To work in a child-inclusive way at all times, emphasising the voice of the child to the court and all parties to a case.

To work in partnership with other parties, agencies and significant others for the child, putting the needs of the child first in all discussions and negotiations.

This job profile is not a definitive list of responsibilities but identifies the key components of the role. The specific objectives of the post holder will be subject to review as part of the individual performance review process.



FAMILY COURT ADVISER PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications
Diploma in Social Work (or Social Work England recognised equivalent)
Experience
A minimum of three year's post qualifying experience in social work with children and families at risk
Skills Areas
<p>1. Exercising statutory authority to safeguard the best interests of children</p> <p>Skills to be demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high standard of assessment and case analysis • Ability to produce written work to a high standard • Communicates effectively and demonstrates empathy with children & families within the family justice system • Effective communication and joint working with a range of professionals and agencies. • Negotiation Skills • Ability to work autonomously • Ability to work to deadlines • Ability to prioritise • Confident decision making to work in high conflict situations • Ability to achieve safe outcomes in areas of conflict
<p>2. Assessing different levels of needs and risk including child protection</p> <p>Skills to be demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and use of tools and models of risk assessment • Ability to assess risk based on information available and to achieve defensible decision making to safeguard children. • Ability to gather, record and analyse complex information including court applications • High quality concise recording and reporting skills • Effective casework planning to timescales • Integrate diversity into practice
<p>3. Direct Engagement with Children & Families</p> <p>Skills to be demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of direct work techniques with children and adults • Ability to respond to differing case requirements including the needs of children and adults • Ability to engage children and adults from diverse backgrounds • Effective communication skills during engagement with families and others, focussing on the outcome for the child.

4. Workload management and use of various IT systems to monitor and record information

Skills to be demonstrated:

- Competent and confident use of a range of IT and electronic systems
- Electronic planning and organising of work using a variety of IT tools
- Case Planning and use of various IT systems to monitor and record information
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to work in a fast-paced environment