

Covid 19 – Cafcass Update

3 April 2020

We are writing to let you know that we continue to have frequent communications with Senior Management and Human Resources in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and the implications for CAF/CASS, the wider Family Justice system and members' new working practices. Our Section Executive Committee (SEC) also met virtually this week to discuss the ongoing situation and to discuss members' concerns.

Cafcass' criteria for exceptional paid leave for childcare and other caring responsibilities was welcome and in our view seemed reasonable. If you are still experiencing any difficulties in making suitable arrangements, please let us know.

We are presently in discussions with Cafcass about their guidance on managing attendance and employee relations during Covid-19 and we are making representations to them about that. We have been pressing Cafcass to issue National Guidance in relation to Family Court Advisors being potentially unable to make safe recommendations in the absence of face to face contact in high risk cases. Further, we have also requested that Cafcass has early discussions with us about their protocol for prioritising work once the demand increases to protect members from unreasonable workloads. Finally we have made representations to Cafcass about extending the Disruption Fund and we have requested additional training and webinars to support members with engaging with children and families using the suite of new technology that has been recommended.

We hope that you are all remaining well and bearing up in these extraordinary times. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries, feedback or require support. If members feel that it would be helpful to hold a virtual members' meeting with the SEC then please let us know and we will arrange it.

In the meantime, Stay safe until next time.

Nicola Taylor-Ebong & Jay Barlow
National Co-Vice Chairs Napo (Cafcass)