

This Factsheet is about complaints relating to the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service in Wales (CAFCASS CYMRU). It should be read together with our general information leaflet about our service.

CAFCASS CYMRU is a division of the Welsh Assembly Government, and works with children and families who are involved in family court cases. It is independent of the courts, social services, education and health authorities and similar agencies. It champions the interests of children involved in family proceedings, advising the family courts on what it considers to be in the best interests of individual children.

Its role is to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- give advice to the family courts;
- make provision for children to be represented;
- provide information, advice and support to children and their families.

What the Ombudsman can do

If you are dissatisfied with the administrative way in which CAFCASS CYMRU deals with your complaint, then you can complain to the Ombudsman about that process.

He can:

- look at a complaint about how CAFCASS CYMRU has handled its complaints procedure, or any stage of it.

What the Ombudsman cannot do

He cannot:

- look at any issues of suspension, discipline or any personnel issues concerning members of CAFCASS CYMRU staff;
- take any action in respect of the commencement or conduct of legal proceedings before a court of law. If you are unhappy with the Court's decision then you may wish to consider taking legal advice;
- take action in respect of any report prepared for the purposes of court proceedings.

Issues to bear in mind



- If you are unhappy with the content of a CAFCASS CYMRU report that has been prepared for the purposes of court proceedings then you should take the opportunity to raise and clarify any concerns regarding the report within the Court proceedings.
- You do not need to make your complaint to the Ombudsman using a solicitor or any other advocate; his service is free and impartial and we aim to make the process as easy to follow for complainants as possible.

Further information



You may wish to consider contacting the following organisations for advice:

- CAFCASS CYMRU - <http://wales.gov.uk/cafcasscymru/home/?lang=en>;
- Children's Commissioner for Wales, who may be able to act as an advocate for a child - <http://www.childcom.org.uk>;
- Meic is an information, advice and support helpline service for children and young people up to the age of 25 in Wales - <http://www.meiccymru.org> .

The Ombudsman is independent and impartial; he cannot order public bodies to do what he recommends – but, in practice, they almost always do.

Examples of cases that the Ombudsman has looked at can be found on our website. Please see www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk .

If you are unsure whether the Ombudsman would be able to look into your complaint, please contact us:

- **phone** 0845 601 0987;
 - **e-mail** ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk;
 - **visit the website at** www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk;
 - **write to:** The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ
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