

5 January 2023

Dear

ATISN 16942 – Child Contact Centres

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 07 December 2022. You have requested the following:

- 1. What is the current position of the Welsh Government in respect of the availability of child contact services in Wales?*
- 2. What is the current position of the Welsh Government in respect of the charges to parents using child contact services in Wales?*
- 3. What is the total amount of funding currently provided by national or local government or through Cafcass Cymru, to support contact services in Wales?*

Our Response

1. The Welsh Government's position is that we want to see fewer children and young people entering care, by providing the right support at the right time to families going through difficult times. Our focus is on keeping families together coupled with doing the best for our young people providing a strong, complementary, and holistic approach to achieving this ambition.

Child contact services and centres provide neutral places for children of separated families to see and have contact with their parents or family members. These centres have been set up putting the child at the centre providing safe and friendly environments for the families.

2. In relation to charges, the Welsh Government's position is that Cafcass Cymru will make a referral to a child contact centre for face-to-face or remote contact and fund this contact where:
 - It has been court ordered at a First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointment (FHDRA) after consultation with the Family Court Advisor (FCA) or Family Court Social Worker (FCSW) on court duty and agreed with both parties.or
 - Where it is part of a FCA or FCSW court report recommendation and/or where Cafcass Cymru has active and on-going case involvement.

Outside of this, parents, parties and/or legal representatives will need to make their own referral direct to a contact centre and cover any costs.

3. Cafcass Cymru funds court-ordered supported and supervised contact arrangements across Wales to provide a service when the family court makes an order in cases in which Cafcass Cymru is involved requiring contact between a child and separated

family members. The service is demand-led, but funding in FY 2022-23 through Cafcass Cymru to child contact centres in Wales would not exceed £300K.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,