

CAFCASS Cymru

Electronic Case Planning and Recording Standards / Practice Guidance (April 2017)

Introduction

1. Case planning and recording are essential components of the process of information gathering, analysis and decision making. This is the means by which CAFCASS Cymru practitioners can explain, be accountable for their actions and maximise best outcomes for children.
2. Social Care Wales expects social care workers to meet its Code of Practice in respect of case recording and may take action should registered workers fail to do so. CAFCASS Cymru expects all Family Court Advisors (FCAs) and Family Court Social workers (FCSWs) to comply with these regulations and the requirements further endorsed in this operational guidance.
3. This guidance sets out the mandatory requirements of the Case Planning and Recording Model in IRIS (Integrated Recording Information System) and should be read in conjunction with:
 - The Case Planning / Recording Desk Top Guidance - [LINK](#)
 - CAFCASS Cymru Key tips for Effective Recording - [LINK](#)
 - CAFCASS Cymru Case Planning and Recording Expectation Statement - [LINK](#)
 - Social Care Wales – Code of Professional Practice - [LINK](#)
 - Public Services Ombudsman for Wales – Principles of Good Administration and Good Records Management 2016 - [LINK](#)

Standards

1. The quality requirements of case planning and recording:
 - Focusses on the child and the identified issues.
 - Succinct and accurate and assists in the gathering and organising of key information.
 - Provides a balanced and evidence based account of events throughout the life of the case.
 - Uses non judgemental terminology.
 - Uses language which is clear and easy to understand for all.
 - Differentiates between fact and opinion.
 - Fact: *Direct observation of events.*
 - Opinion: *Interpretation of behaviour and/or events.*
 - Hearsay: *Information reported by another, which is relevant but cannot be verified.*

- Signposts clearly how decisions are reached.
 - Identifies appropriate tools to enhance quality of assessment.
 - Provides an analysis of key information.
 - Demonstrates how best outcomes for children can be achieved.
 - Maintains accountability within the organisation.
 - **To ensure electronic recordings are credible, practitioners must complete them in a timely manner.**
2. All safeguarding issues must be recorded.
 3. Case recording may be disclosed in court proceedings, internal complaints investigations, internal case audits, for inspection purposes and other enquiries.
 4. Service users have the right to access their case files and see what has been written about them. Service users should be made aware that their case is being recorded and used for social work purposes.

Definition

1. Case Planning and Recording are electronic accounts prepared by CAFCASS Cymru practitioners of professional management of the cases allocated to them. They should provide details of investigation and analysis, whilst developing meaning to decision making.
2. Each electronic case file will include:
 - An Allocation Recording.
 - CAP Recording (Private law cases).
 - A Case Plan.
 - Casework Records.
 - Assessment Tools.
 - Safeguarding referrals / Contact Activity referrals (if relevant).
 - Supervision case recording (if relevant).
3. The allocated practitioner will have primary responsibility for ensuring all actions are accurately recorded electronically in each relevant section in IRIS and appropriately analysed. However, any CAFCASS Cymru staff member may record information in the electronic file via the case recording section, for example Business Support/Practice Managers/Heads of Operations.

Procedure

1. It is the responsibility of the allocated FCA/FCSW for each stage of the case to enter the relevant information into the recording sections within IRIS.
2. Handwritten notes may be taken as aide memoires but key information must be recorded electronically in to the relevant sections of the system.
3. To protect the identity of service users' information, the names of service users must not be used in the hand written note/ aide memoire. The IRIS case number or the initials of the case/individual should be used as an identifier.
4. In order for the electronic recording to be credible in a legal context the electronic recording should be made as soon as possible after the event takes place (on the same day or at the very latest within 5 days), particularly if the hand written note / aide memoire is less detailed.
5. Once the relevant information has been electronically entered into the system hand written notes / aide memoires must then be securely destroyed.
6. The case plan must be commenced in private law cases upon allocation and at the initiation of CAFCASS Cymru's involvement in public law. In the event of an emergency or urgent public law case where the usual timeframes are not provided for, the case plan should be commenced within 10 working days of allocation. Information must be entered in to the case plan before the commencement of any assessment work in order to evidence a methodical approach to case work. Information can be added and updated where relevant as the case progresses.
7. The case plan must be updated at stages relevant to developments in the individual case.

Child Arrangement Programme (CAP) – Safeguarding Enquires Report (SER)/First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointment (FHDR)

1. The practitioner allocated to complete the Safeguarding Enquiries Report (SER) is responsible for ensuring that information arising from the Safeguarding Enquiries telephone interviews and agency inquiries are recorded in the relevant case recording section of IRIS prior to completing the Safeguarding Enquires Report.
2. The practitioner allocated to attend the First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointment (FHDR) is responsible for ensuring that information arising from

conciliation and attendance at Court is recorded in the relevant recording section of IRIS. Any other activities should be recorded as required (Referral to Contact Centres, referral to Working Together For Children, third party check, further safeguarding checks).

3. The FHDRA outcomes tick box sections within IRIS must be completed by the FHDRA practitioner following the FHDRA.

Public / Private law work – Allocation

1. A Practice Manager will be responsible for allocating cases where the Court has ordered a key piece of work. The Practice Manager will allocate the case considering the allocation principles. The Practice Manager will complete an electronic allocation note in the case recording section in IRIS and forward it to the allocated practitioner via email.

Public / Private law work - Case Plan

1. Upon allocation there will be an expectation that the practitioner will consider all previous case information, to include the SER (private law only) and any comments made by the allocating Practice Manager. The practitioner must include relevant key information from these sources in the case plan.
2. The practitioner should identify enquiries to be made (What), the intended purpose of these (Why) and whether any specialist tool / research / theory will be used to inform their assessment (How). Any dispute with the allocation note / discussion should also be clearly recorded.
3. The case plan must consider and detail the use of assessment tools / research / theory. If an assessment tool is used it should be saved into the Documents section of the case in IRIS. Similarly, if an Analysis Report Template (ART) is used this should also be referenced in the case plan and saved in the Documents section.
4. The case plan is an open document for the duration of the case and can be added to / updated as relevant.
5. All sections of the case plan must be completed for each action – what/why/how.

Public / Private law work - Casework Records

1. All information that is gathered as part of interviews / enquiries about the child(ren), their parent(s) and significant others, inclusive of professionals should

be recorded in the case recording section of IRIS. A number of different entries will be required according to the individual piece of work. Telephone calls, emails, attendance at meetings, letters, court attendances, legal advice, discussions with legal representatives, assessment interviews and referrals must all be recorded by practitioners chronologically in the case recording section of IRIS, by selecting the relevant activity and recording a succinct account of the event.

2. Case recordings must be completed in relation to each event, complying with the standards set out at the beginning of this document.
3. Details of all contacts observed must be recorded in the relevant section of the case recordings section in IRIS. If any of the contact assessment tools are used (CAF 24–25), these should be saved in the Documents section of the case in IRIS.

Recording in Welsh

1. If a service user has specified Welsh as their language of preference for the report, the case plan and case recordings should also be documented in Welsh.
2. If a service user has specified English as their language of preference for the report, the case plan and case recordings can still be documented in Welsh by the practitioner but they must also be available in English as this is the language of choice of the service user.
3. Practitioners must select in IRIS which language the case plan and case recordings are written in. The setting will automatically default to English so practitioners will need to select the language option if Welsh is used.
4. For supervision and quality assurance purposes, case plans and case recordings documented in Welsh, can be translated by using Microsoft Translate. Sensitive information must be removed before running the programme. Consideration can be given to a Welsh speaking Practice Manager / Head of Operations undertaking quality assurance tasks. For further information and guidance for using Microsoft translate:
<http://intranet/English/Services/WelshLanguage/Translation/Pages/Microsoft-Translator.aspx>

Details on allocation/safeguarding referrals and supervision can be found in the relevant separate procedural guidance.