



Cafcass Cymru

Report Quality Assurance

Version 1 (March 2026)

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This document sets out Cafcass Cymru's approach to report quality assurance, also known as 'gatekeeping'.

Cafcass Cymru is a learning organisation, individually and collectively. Report quality assurance forms part of how we learn together and support each other to deliver high-quality, evidence-based reports. It supplements, but is not a substitute for, reflective supervision, regular practice reviews and other learning and development opportunities.

The principles covered in this document apply to private and public law reports.

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What is Report quality assurance?

Report quality assurance is the supportive read-through of court reports prior to filing. It is an opportunity for a sense check and 'second pair of eyes' on our reports before they are filed with the court and parties. Feedback from the reviewer can be used to assure or improve readability of the report and clarity of analysis and recommendations.

The practitioner remains responsible for the quality and contents of their report. They are responsible for complying with legal frameworks, keeping up to date with Cafcass Cymru practice guidance and writing reports that make recommendations in the best interests of children, and reflect trauma informed and domestic informed approaches.

Report Quality Assurance by Practice Managers

Report quality assurance will be undertaken by PMs or heads of operations when:

- Practitioners are in their probationary period.
- Practitioners are being supported via a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).
- Practitioners' development plan includes PM report quality assurance, for example when a practice review, internal audit or case review identifies learning in respect of report writing.
- None of the above apply, but practitioners request a 'second pair of eyes' on their report.

For example, when addressing complex issues or making recommendations that have significant impacts on the child or adults involved or on the trajectory of proceedings, e.g. recommendations for Fact-Finding Hearings, s37 reports, change of a child's primary carer.



Report quality assurance is not a substitute for seeking reflective supervision, which allows more time for reflection and to think through recommendations.

Practitioners should request situational supervision to allow for reflection if considering making recommendations that extend our involvement and commit Cafcass Cymru resources, e.g. Rule 16.4 appointment, FAO, Monitoring Order, or if safeguarding concerns mean they are considering the need for a 16A Risk Assessment report. Decisions to proceed with such recommendations or 16A RA report need to be recorded on the IRIS case file.

Report Quality Assurance by Peers

A second pair of eyes can also be requested from practitioners who have passed their probation period. Report quality assurance by peer practitioners provides an opportunity for shared learning and reflection, which can benefit both the report writer and the reviewer. It can provide a sense check and 'second pair of eyes' on the report and is encouraged as good practice.

The responsibility for the contents of the report, applying Cafcass Cymru practice guidance, and seeking supervision when required (e.g. if recommending further work) remain with the report writer.

Report quality assurance checklist

The [report quality assurance checklist](#) provides focus for quality assurance of private law reports, and is drawn from Cafcass Cymru's key outcomes:

- Safe,
- Voice of the child,
- Better represented, and
- Enabled and advised.

The checklist can also be used by practitioners as a sense check of their own report and for reflection before they send their report for report quality assurance or filing, if they elect not to ask for report quality assurance.

Feedback from report quality assurance can either be provided verbally or via email comments. There is no form to complete. If a peer reviewer has concerns about the safety or quality of practice then this should be discussed with their PM.

If PM report quality assurance is part of a probationary period or PIP then notes of the feedback given and actions in response should be recorded as appropriate.

Legal Context

Cafcass Cymru practitioners are social workers, employed by Cafcass Cymru to provide independent social work advice to the family court. They undertake the following duties, as set out in the Children Act 2004 (section 35):

In respect of family proceedings in which the welfare of children ordinarily resident in Wales is or may be in question:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of the children.
- Give advice to any court about any application made to it in family proceedings.
- Make provision for the children to be represented in such proceedings.

- Provide information, advice and other support for the children and families.

The family court is the decision-maker, whose role it is to consider all the evidence before it, in reaching a decision in the best interests of the child. The rationale for a practitioner's recommendations should be set out in the analysis in their court report, which is open to the scrutiny of the family court.

Cafcass Cymru practitioners are individually professionally and ethically accountable for their court reports.

Cafcass Cymru as a Welsh Government body is responsible for the provision of high-quality, evidence-based, child-centred reports to the courts, for ensuring that children and families are provided with an effective service and that performance is managed effectively.

Organisational responsibilities include:

- Supporting the development and quality of practice through practice oversight and leadership, providing frameworks, support and expectations that enable the delivery of high-quality court reports.
- Ensuring that practitioners have a documented development plan and where necessary a performance improvement plan.
- Ensuring practitioners act within legal frameworks, civil service and Welsh Government values, and the Social Care Wales professional code.

Resources

Links to:

- › Cafcass Cymru report quality assurance checklist
Link: [report quality assurance checklist - CIRs](#)
- › Cafcass Cymru Practice Framework
Link: [Cafcass Cymru Practice Framework: Putting Children First | GOV.WALES](#)
- › Writing for Children and Families
Link: [Writing for children and families: practice guidance for practitioners | GOV.WALES](#)
- › Practice Review Guidance
Link: [Cafcass Cymru - Practice Development](#)