



FJYPB Update

Cafcass Board Meeting April 2026

Priorities 2025 - 2028



1. Improving children and young people's participation in proceedings.
2. Helping professionals understand how domestic abuse affects children and making sure all types of abuse and harmful parenting are thought about.
3. Making sure children know their rights and keeping a focus on them growing up safe and happy.
4. Keeping the focus on reducing delays across family courts because children need certainty and safe final decisions.

IMPACT FJYPB HAS MADE



Cafcass Board Meeting – January 2026



Quick Update

Cafcass Families affected by Protests interview with Dawn



By Gergo Fordos

OMT:
Guide to
Keeping
Children and
Young People
at the Centre
of Proceedings



We asked 4 questions



Who had actually seen or read it?



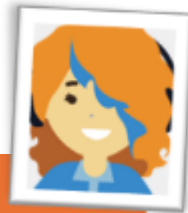
What resonated the most?



How they plan to use the guide?



How they might start conversations about communication, involvement and endings?



Family Justice
Strategy –
Roundtable



FJYPB +
CHILDREN'S
SOCIAL CARE
ADVISORY
BOARD

FJYPB Message on Technology and AI across the family courts

Technology and AI should make the family justice system feel **more human, not less.**



Technology can help us take part when it gives us **choice, privacy, and understanding**

When communication feels automated, it can make us feel invisible

AI can help explain things, improve accuracy, and save time — **but the final message must come from a real person**

AI should **support professionals, not replace human care**

Social media contact is confusing when guidance is unclear — **we need adults to support us, not leave decisions to us**

What we see online shapes how we feel about our families, professionals, and the court — **often more than adults realise**

Digital communication can feel safer and easier — **but only if you check what access we actually have**

FJYPB Top Tips:

Under review

TOP TIPS: for professionals when working with brothers and sisters

The FJYPB have developed some top tips for professionals when working with brothers and/or sister groups.



1 | BELONGING

"Every brother or sister is unique. Ask me who in my family I call my brother or sister."

Professionals need to see my relationships with my brother(s) and sister(s) as just as important as those with parents or grandparents. This includes brothers and sisters I live with, those I do not, and anyone in my family who feels like a brother or sister to me.

2 | UNDERSTAND EACH OF OUR VOICES

Listen to my voice and the voices of my brother or sister individually. Always ask whether we want to be spoken to together or separately.

I might see our family situation differently and might not want to talk about things in front of my brother or sister.

"Make sure to ask in private if one sibling would like to have a chat separately as they may not want to accept the offer in front of a sibling."

Be curious about differences in our views rather than trying to reconcile them too quickly.

3 | SPEND TIME WITH

When making life-changing decisions about where we live and who with, keep us together where it is safe and right to do so.

If we cannot live together, plan carefully for our family time. Family time should be treated with the same seriousness as time with parents and should include emotional support, not just arrangements.

Where family time is difficult, inconsistent, or changes over time, make sure support is in place before and after, and review plans as our needs and relationships develop.

4 | PARENTING PLANS

Support my parents to think about creating a Parenting Plan and include when and how I will spend time with and keep in touch with my brother(s) and sister(s).

"Parenting Plans should include brothers and sisters, not just parents."

5 | SAFEGUARD

When making safe decisions about my life **do not forget** my brother(s) and sister(s) when making decisions about my safety. This includes brothers and sisters I live with and those I do not, including people in my family or where I live who feel like my brother or sister.

Also consider that I may not always have a healthy or safe relationship with my brother(s) or sister(s). Think about this and how this may change in the future as my needs and theirs develop over time. Make sure to include your thinking in your analysis and recommendations.

6 | COMMUNICATION

Communicate with me in a way I understand. I may prefer talking, visuals, written notes, short check-ins, or time to think.

Do not assume I have understood just because I nodded or agreed.

Explain decisions step by step, including what will happen, who will be there, and what it means for me and my brother(s) and sister(s).

This is especially important if I am neurodivergent. Check my understanding. Ask me to tell you in my own words what I think is happening, and correct misunderstandings early.

7 | UNIQUENESS

Recognise that we are all different, even within the same family.

We may have different ages, abilities, identities, beliefs, coping strategies, and needs.

Do not assume that living together means thinking the same. One of us may be quieter, younger, or less confident — this does not mean our voice matters less.

Be aware of power and roles between us.

8 | RECOMMENDATIONS & DECISIONS

Explain decisions to me clearly and honestly. Tell me what has been decided, why, and how it will affect me and my brother(s) and sister(s).

Avoid vague language. Words like "best" can be confusing. Explain how this decision supports my safety, wellbeing, and future.

Record your reasoning clearly. I may read these records later in life. Help me understand that decisions were made thoughtfully and individually.



Developed by the Family Justice Young People's Board 2026

Commission Guides - Supporting FJYPB Participation



FJYPB COMMISSIONING GUIDE:

Office Inspections



What is an Office Inspection?

An office inspection is a **check-up of a Cafcass office**, as part of a regional performance board review. The visit usually takes about an hour to complete.

Board members visit an office to see if it feels like a place where children, young people and their families would feel comfortable visiting for a meeting with maybe a Family Court Advisor or Mediation.

Together we look at whether:

- The waiting area is comfortable and welcoming.
- Are their age-appropriate resources like books, games and toys?
- Is this an office you would feel safe spending time in and attending a meeting about you and your life?
- Is the office accessible and easy to navigate.

Your views help notice things adults sometimes miss, like missing colouring sheets, toys that aren't age-appropriate, or rooms that feel too plain or uninviting.

FJYPB Guide Developed: February 2026



Why You're Important

Adults who work in the same place every day can stop noticing things that have a real impact on visitors. FJYPB members bring an honest and powerful perspective that helps make the environment better for everyone who visits.

For example:

A Cafcass worker isn't going to sit down and colour a feelings sheet... but an eight-year-old might! Having paper, pens or colouring pencils available helps children feel comfortable and gives them a way to express themselves."

Your feedback matters and **often leads to real changes** in how offices are set up.

What happens during an Cafcass Office?

We will meet with a Business Support Office who usually greets us at the door or via an intercom if the office is in a shared building with other businesses.

- We'll be given a visitor lanyard which shows other people working in the office that we are visiting from outside.
- We'll be guided on fire evacuation processes and updated on how to stay safe during our visit.
- Depending on who else is in the building, you may walk around with staff or explore some areas more freely.
- How easy the office was to find, entering the building and reception, and whether it's clear how to get in.
- Accessibility (lifts, stairs, signage, space to move). Can someone with mobility, sensory or communication needs move around comfortably?

Your Role

You don't need to be an expert. Just share what things feel like from a **child or young person's point of view**.

Think about

- Does the space from reception to the family rooms feel calm, safe and welcoming for children and young people?
- What the family rooms look and feel like. Is the seating comfortable and suitable for different ages and needs? Are resources (e.g., toys, books, pens, paper) easy to reach and accessible without asking?
- Are there any sensory issues? (too noisy, too bright, too cluttered)
- Would I feel safe talking about my life here?

Changes

- Missing or unsuitable resources (toys, books, pens, paper, fidget toys, games)
- Rooms that feel too plain or uninviting.
- Accessibility issues (e.g., cluttered spaces, hard-to-find signs, no quiet space)
- Anything that would help children or young people feel calmer or more comfortable

Top Tips

- ✨ Look at the office from a child or young person's perspective

Think: "How would I feel being here?"

- ✨ Be honest, constructive, and kind. Your role isn't to criticise but to observe and give helpful feedback.

Staff value your insights, and changes often happen because of them.

- ✨ **Don't be nervous!** Your input genuinely makes a difference. You're there to help improve the experience of children, young people and families.

- ✨ **Trust your instincts and personal experience.** You may notice things others miss. Board members bring lived experience and a fresh set of eyes, a huge strength in inspections.

- ✨ **Focus on what works well and what could be improved.** Remember: if something feels off or could be better, say it. "If we don't say something, it might never change."

If you have any questions or want to chat about this commission in more detail, then please contact and member of the support team at fjypb@cafcass.gov.uk

FJYPB Guide Developed: February 2026

FJYPB Meeting



7th March Board Meeting NEWSLETTER



Listening to Your Feedback 🗣️



Helen shared what members told us after recent commissions, and the feedback was **really positive!** Members said they felt listened to, included, and proud to be making a difference when speaking with professionals. A big theme was **feeling included** and knowing that members' views truly matter in discussions.

To finish, the **Feedback Champion Awards** were shared 🎉
Congratulations to **Lara Punjani**, our winner, with other members also recognised for joint second place. Thank you to everyone who shared their feedback!

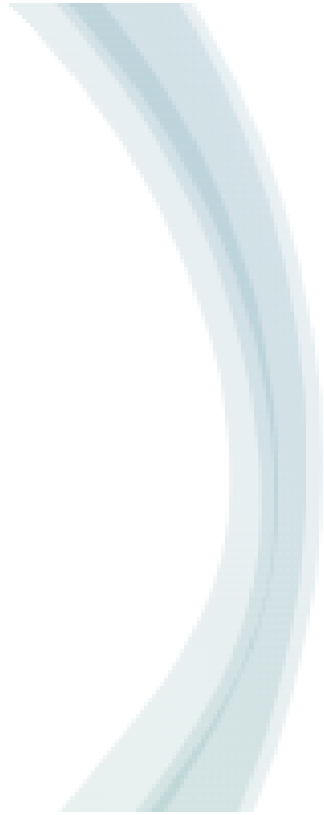
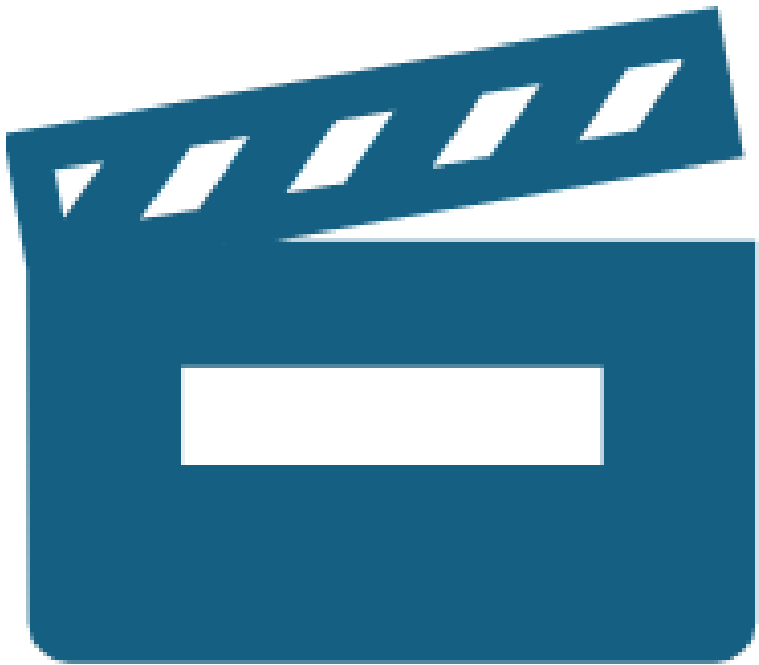
The Impact You've Made ✨



This section was **led by members**, with support from the team, and focused on the impact FJYPB is having across different areas of work. Members shared their own PowerPoint slides about commissions they've been part of, showing how young people's voices are influencing meetings, guidance, and practice.

Members talked about important topics like keeping children at the centre of decisions, supporting families, improving communication, and making sure the right help is offered at the right time. The support team also shared a few extra updates, including work with other boards, views on AI and technology in the family courts, and ongoing work to make Cafcass guidance clearer and safer for children and young people.

Busting Words, Building Trust: Strengthening Practice Through Language



Word Busting Videos

VOICE OF THE CHILD CONFERENCE - 2026



PLEASE SAVE THE DATE
WEDNESDAY - 29 JULY 2026

