

Spending time with parents and carers

(Improving Child and Family Arrangements)



Sometimes families need help to agree how you can spend time with your parents or carers in a safe and positive way. This is because parents and carers don't always find it easy to agree.

Improving Child and Family Arrangements (ICFA) is the name of a Cafcass service that can help with this. ICFA is short term and only happens when the court asks Cafcass to help. It is only for those children involved in private law proceedings (this is when your parents or carers have asked the court for help to make arrangements for you and the time you spend with your family).

How does the ICFA service help families?

ICFA will help your family to agree on the best ways of:

1. Keeping you safe
2. Making sure that your wishes and feelings are heard
3. Talking to and communicating with each other helpfully
4. Coming up with a plan that you all agree on that will mean you can spend time with your parents or carers with as few difficulties as possible.

Each regional provider has links with local partners so the service will be provided as close to where you live as possible.

How this service is used for you and your family?

If the Family Court Adviser (FCA) thinks that your parents or carers need help to agree who you spend time with, and how, then they will tell the Court that they think this service might help you.

Who delivers this service?

Cafcass delivers this service by working with others in local areas and communities. The five main organisations that arrange the work are:

- North – [Child Action North West \(CANW\)](#)
- East – [Children's Links](#)
- West – [Child Action North West \(CANW\)](#)
- South East – [Swanstaff](#)
- South West – [Swanstaff](#)

Your FCA will speak with your family about how the service can help, and your family will need to agree to take part in this work. Your FCA will make sure that the service knows about your wishes and feelings and any worries you may have.



What happens when an ICFA service has been asked for?

When everyone agrees that ICFA could help your family, then the people asked to do the work will talk to your parents or carers and agree a plan to work on together for a few weeks.

You will meet with a worker to help prepare you for spending time with a parent, carer or family member, and then they will be there when you meet that family member to make sure everything is okay and to provide any help if needed.

The worker will let your family and your FCA know how they think things have gone and will write a short report about this.

Where does the ICFA work take place?

This will be agreed with you before the work begins. It could be that you spend time with the family member or carer in your home, in the community, at an office or at something called a Contact Centre.

What happens afterwards?

The worker who spent time with you and your family will write a report of what happened and send it to your FCA. Your FCA will read the report and tell the Court what they believe the best ways of you spending time with your parents and carers should be in the future. The Court will then make a decision and tell everybody.

What if I am not happy with the ICFA service provided?

If you are unhappy or want to talk to someone about the service you have received then you can talk to the service or your FCA. They will listen to you and tell you how your concerns will be dealt with.



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