



Defence  
Children  
Services

DCS Directive 0.5.3

DCS General Casework  
Management

DCS Mar 2021 v1.0

## General

<b>Authorisation</b>	Director DCS
<b>Senior Responsible Owner</b>	Head DCS
<b>Point of Contact</b>	DCS Executive Branch DCYP-DCYP-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk
<b>Review Date</b>	Mar 2023
<b>Related Policy/Guidance</b>	JSP 441: Information, Knowledge, Digital and Data in Defence
	DCYP Bite: DCS Casework Management
<b>Annex A</b>	DCS Casework Form
<b>Annex B</b>	DCS Casework Record Template

## Introduction

1. There may be circumstances which cannot be covered by Defence policy contained in JSP 342: Education of Children and Young People, JSP 834: Safeguarding and related direction. In these circumstances, and where initial queries cannot be resolved through interpretation of policy, Defence personnel may raise general casework through their line/chain to the Defence Children's Services (DCS) for consideration.

## Aim

2. The aim of this Directive is to provide direction and guidance on the handling of general casework directed towards DCS.

## Scope

3. The procedures laid out in this Directive excludes casework where a formal MOD policy and process exists and specifically does not apply for casework outlined below:

- a. Casework managed by the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) and the Educational Psychology and Specialist Advisory Service

(EPAS). These teams will have their own procedures which will follow both professional and MOD policy for the management of casework data.

4. The policy and procedures outlined in this Directive therefore only apply for general casework received by DCS employees.

## Queries

5. Individuals who raise general queries about policy relating to children and young people, should be directed to the policy team at DCYP-DCYP-MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk

6. Sensitive data relating to queries should not be disclosed over the telephone.

## Roles and Responsibilities

7. Casework will normally be raised using the casework form at Annex A and emailed to the DCYP-DCYP Multiuser email account. Where casework is received directly by an employee, the Executive Branch is to be notified by email using DCYP-DCYP-MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk

8. Where submitted casework is not contained in the casework form, the originator is to be requested to resubmit using the correct form which is accessed on DCS's GOV.UK pages and at Annex A to this Directive.

9. The Executive Branch will then refer the casework to the appropriate lead area within DCS.

10. **DCS Executive Branch.** The Executive Branch will run a casework tracker<sup>1</sup> and will be responsible for the following:

- a. Monitoring the Multiuser email account;
- b. Receiving casework;
- c. Providing the originator with a unique reference number (within 1 working day of receipt);
- d. Referring the casework to the appropriate lead for the nature of the subject (within 1 working day of receipt);
- e. Recording the casework on the relevant tracker (within 1 working day of receipt);

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<sup>1</sup> This is hosted within the DCS Complaints Tracker on DCS's MODNet SharePoint site.

- f. Recording the progress and conclusion of the casework;
- g. Recording and retaining data in accordance with MOD policy.

11. **Casework Manager.** Casework should be managed by the person best placed to provide a response. When managing casework there should be a lead officer an assisting officer (to deputise in lead's absence) who will be responsible for:

- a. Responding to casework originators using the direction laid out in this Directive;
- b. Applying due diligence to consideration of the case submission and explaining the reasoning behind decision(s) given in the response;
- c. Notifying and updating the Executive Branch on progress and conclusion of casework;
- d. Updating their Command Group member on progress and conclusion of the casework they are managing.
- e. Recording and retaining data in accordance with MOD policy.

12. **Assistant Heads.** Each Assistant Head will be accountable for:

- a. Oversight of the casework being managed by members of their team(s);
- b. Progress and conclusion of casework being managed by their team members;
- c. Records being retained in accordance with MOD policy.

## Procedure

13. Defence personnel are directed through JSP 342: Education of Service Children and Young People, to submit casework via their chain of command/line management, using the casework form hosted on DCS's GOV.UK pages. Where they are not able to access this, the form at Annex A should be provided. Where casework is received that is not contained in this form, the originator is to be redirected to submit casework on the correct form to the DCS multiuser email account.

14. Where casework is received by any individual working for DCS, the Executive Branch is to be immediately notified so that a record can be made on the casework tracker.

15. Even where casework is received directly by the appropriate lead for the subject matter, the Executive Branch is to be notified.

16. Passing casework on to the Executive Branch.

- a. Acknowledge receipt of the casework using the following standard statement (within 1 working day of receipt):

*DCS is committed to providing a high quality of service and your casework submission will be treated seriously and in confidence. I/We have passed your submission to the DCS Executive Branch and you should receive an initial response with your unique reference number within 2 working days of receipt.*

- b. Email the contact details of the originator, the date of the casework and any supporting detail to the Executive Branch using:

17. To enable effective recording and tracking of casework, the Executive Branch will coordinate as below:

- a. Acknowledge receipt of the submission (within 1 working day of receipt) and include the following statement:

*We have referred your casework to XXXX who will aim to provide a full response within 20 working days of receiving your complaint. If this is not possible, you will be informed of when a reply in full will be provided.*

and;

- b. Provide the originator with a unique reference number (within 1 working day of receipt);
- c. Refer the originator to the appropriate lead for the nature of the subject (within 1 working day of receipt);
- d. Record the casework on the casework tracker (within 1 working day of receipt);
- e. Record the progress and conclusion of the casework;

18. **Investigation and response.** The first task in managing casework is to establish what the subject is about and what the originator expects to be done about it. Any uncertainty regarding the casework is to be made clear immediately to avoid confusion and advice sought from the policy team.

19. Where casework cannot be answered within 20 working days and deeper investigation is required, a holding reply is to be sent explaining the reason for the delay and indicating when a full reply will be provided.

## Internal Review

20. An internal review may be requested by the casework originator. Internal reviews will examine the decision reached on casework and are to be conducted by individuals who had no part in the original casework decision. Internal reviews are to be signed off at Assistant Head level or above and it is essential that signatories cannot have been involved in the original casework.

21. Key points to note are:

a. Internal reviews can be conducted at the request of the casework originator or suggested by the organisation where the originator remains dissatisfied after having received at least two/three responses;

b. Internal reviews are used to reach an independent conclusion as to whether casework has been sufficiently considered and responded to. Reviews will therefore need to:

(1) Identify the circumstances (facts, events, actions) surrounding the casework;

(2) Clarify the causes of these circumstances and the reasoning behind the consideration and response to casework;

(3) Propose steps to reach resolution.

c. Internal reviews should be signed off at no lower than Assistant Head-level;

d. Casework that has been successfully concluded should not be reviewed;

e. The full internal review report should be sent to the complainant. Personal data should be afforded protective measures (redacted) and data should be taken in the form of descriptors laid out in MOD policy (JSP 440: Defence Manual of Security and Resilience).

22. Prior to commencing an internal review, an email is to be sent to the originator to inform them of:

a. The name, position and contact details of the individual leading the review;

b. The composition of the review team;

c. The expected completion date of the review. The target of 20 days should be applied unless it is inappropriate at the outset due to the complexity of the case – this should be clearly communicated and a

different target set. If slippage occurs, everyone involved in the review should be informed and an explanation given.

d. The individual points under review. This is an opportunity for the originator and the review lead to agree on the detail.

23. **Review Team.** The review team should be led by an individual at SO1 level or above and should be composed of up to 4 individuals with knowledge of the topic(s) being considered within the original casework. The team will be 'assigned' by the Executive Branch and the internal review will be signed off by an Assistant Head or above.

24. There is no set format for internal review report, but the following structure is suggested:

- a. A brief introduction, summarising the reason for the review and the composition of the review team;
- b. Detail of the casework;
- c. The findings of the review;
- d. A conclusion which should present:
  - (1) A statement of whether the original response is upheld fully, partially or not upheld;
  - (2) Details of additional steps that need to be taken to provide a sufficient response to the casework;

25. A draft of the report should be shared with all individuals involved in the review and with the original casework manager and there should be opportunity to comment on the draft.

26. The Assistant Head overseeing the review should sign off the report and the originator should be emailed a copy of the report which should be filed in accordance with data protection regulations.

## Data Protection

27. The MOD has a legal duty under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA18) to respect third party confidentiality and care must therefore be taken not to disclose personal details that may be included in casework.
28. The casework form provides a signpost to relevant privacy notices and does not require the originator to consent to the processing of information contained on the form, using the lawful basis of 'in the public interest'.
29. Casework records therefore should only contain details that are required for the management of the case. Records held on the tracker must not include any personal data about the case other than the current progress/status in general and it must not include a comments cell.
30. Records that hold any personal data must be on an OSP file, compliant with MOD policy and registered on the appropriate information asset registers (for example the Army Information Asset Register)

## Record Keeping

31. The Executive Branch will record the following for each casework:
  - a. Originator's unique reference and date of casework;
  - b. General detail of casework and desired outcome;
  - c. Date of response.
  - d. Action taken to resolve casework.
32. Casework Managers will record the above and include supporting data as linked documents or references. A template for casework records is at Annex B.
33. Records should be retained for the appropriate retention period before reviewing unless they pertain to the care of children and must be preserved to fulfil any potential legal duties that the MOD may have in relation to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

## ANNEX A – DCS CASEWORK FORM



There may be circumstances which cannot be covered by Defence policy contained in JSP 342: Education of Children and Young People, JSP 834: Safeguarding and related direction. In these circumstances, and where initial queries cannot be resolved through interpretation of policy, Defence personnel may raise general casework through their line/chain to the Defence Children's Services (DCS) for consideration.

DCS's internal direction on casework management is detailed in the DCS Directive 0.5.3 which is available on request from the Executive Branch using the DCYP-DCYP-MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk account. This Directive does not apply where a formal MOD policy and process exists and specifically does not apply for casework managed by the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) and the Educational Psychology and Specialist Advisory Service (EPAS). These teams will have their own procedures which will follow both professional and MOD policy for the management of casework data.

Queries about DCS's procedures for the management of general casework should be directed to the Executive Branch and bite-sized information is accessed on DCS's GOV.UK pages.

## Data Protection

The MOD has a legal duty under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA18) to respect third party confidentiality and will take the utmost care not to disclose personal details that may be included in casework. We will comply with the data protection principles under the data protection legislation. This says that the personal information we hold about you must be:

- used lawfully, fairly and in a transparent way
- collected only for valid purposes that we have clearly explained to you and not used in any way that is incompatible with those purposes
- relevant to the purposes we have told you about and limited only to those purposes
- accurate and kept up to date
- kept only as long as necessary for the purposes we have told you about
- kept securely

This casework form does not require the originator to consent to the processing of information contained on the form, using the lawful basis of 'in the public interest'.

It is important that you read the privacy notice accessed on the DCS pages of GOV.UK, together with the MOD privacy notice accessed at the MOD's pages on GOV.UK, so that you are aware of how and why we are using the information we ask for.

## Part A

### Originator Details

*To be completed by the originator of the casework.*

Name:	
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Service/Staff Number:	
Telephone/email:	

**Detail of Submission**

*To be completed by the originator.*

Originator to provide an explanation of the issue: what is the organisation being asked to consider and what is the looked-for outcome. Submission content should include supporting evidence, aim to be no longer than 2x A4 pages and will need to be submitted below:

<i>Please expand box</i>
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Originator Signature .....

Dated .....

**Chain of Command (CofC)/Line Management(LM) Endorsement.**

*To be completed by the originator's immediate CofC/LM.*

Name:	
Service/Staff Number:	
Telephone/email:	
<b><i>CofC/LM to provide reasons for endorsement/non-endorsement in the relevant box below:</i></b>	
<b>This submission is endorsed for the following reasons:</b>	<b>This submission is not endorsed for the following reasons:</b>

**PART B**

**Submission**

On completion of Part A, this form should be submitted, with any additional supporting documents, to DCS Executive Branch using the email below :

DCYP-DCYP-MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk

Casework submissions will be coordinated by the DCS Executive Branch. Submissions will generate an email receipt normally within 2 working days and DCS will aim to respond to casework within 20 days. Any delay will be communicated to the originator with an explanation.

**PART C**

**DCS Response**

*To be completed by the casework officer assigned to this submission.*

Authorising Signature (SO1 level or above) .....

Dated .....

**DCS CASEWORK REFERENCE:** *This is the Reference generated by the Executive Branch*  
**CASEWORK MANAGER AND ASSISTING OFFICER(S):** *Post details not personal names*

SERIAL	DATE AND TITLE OF CASE	ISSUE	ACTION	OUTCOME
1	<i>From the original submission</i>	<i>Explain the issue without identifying personalities</i>	<i>Explain the action taken.</i>	<i>Explain what the outcome is. Has a resolution been achieved? Use this table to identify any tasks that DCS needs to follow up.</i>
2	<i>Leave Blank</i>	<i>There may be multiple issues – use multiple serials in this form to split them out.</i>	<i>In a complex case, there may be several actions taken by a number of areas within DCS – use the serialised table to separate out actions.</i>	<i>Explain the outcome that fits the issue in this serial.</i>