CFAB

protecting **CHILDREN** and
uniting **FAMILIES ACROSS BORDERS**

INTERNATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION & FAMILY SERVICES

A SERVICE GUIDE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES, COURTS & PROFESSIONALS



WHY CFAB?

When a child's family, identity or future spans more than one country, professionals responsible for their care need specialist support.

CFAB is the UK's only member of the International Social Service (ISS) network and the only UK charity dedicated to international child protection and cross-border social work.

For over 70 years, we've helped local authorities, courts and professionals:

- Safeguard children across borders
- Identify and assess family members overseas
- Explore kinship and permanence options
- Support reunification and overseas placements
- Navigate international social work and legal processes

70+	130+	2,750+	182	614
Years of expertise	Countries in our network	Children supported 2025/26	Local authorities advised 2025/26	Professionals trained

WHY WE EXIST

In an increasingly globalised world, children and families are more likely than ever to have connections across borders, creating both opportunities and challenges for those responsible for their care. Working with partners around the world, **CFAB helps professionals navigate the complexities of international social work, through our effective, high quality range of services.**



WE ARE HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

Our experienced and specialist international Social Workers can help if:

- ✓ You need to find out if a child or family is known to statutory services in another country
- ✓ A child has parents, relatives or other important family connections overseas that need to be identified, contacted or assessed
- ✓ You need a kinship assessment in another country
- ✓ You are exploring family reunification, placement or permanence options overseas
- ✓ There are safeguarding concerns involving a child, family member or situation overseas
- ✓ You need welfare checks, home visits or information gathering in another country
- ✓ You need specialist social work advice on an international case
- ✓ An unaccompanied or separated child needs support to explore safe family options
- ✓ You need guidance on international child protection law, policy and practice

Call our free Advice Line: 020 7735 8941



HOW WE CAN HELP

Our range of specialist services help professionals navigate complex international child protection cases.



Free Advice Line: 020 7735 8941

As a first point of contact, our free Advice Line provides expert advice and practical support to professionals managing cross-border children and family cases. Operating hours Mon-Fri, 10am-3:30pm.



Child Protection Alerts

Rapid reporting of child protection concerns to overseas child welfare authorities through CFAB's trusted international network, helping to safeguard children at risk across borders.



Record Checks

We obtain social care records and relevant information from overseas authorities to support informed decision-making, risk assessment and permanency planning.



Welfare Visits

Undertaken by qualified social work professionals overseas, welfare visits provide information about a child's living situation, safety, wellbeing and family circumstances.



Assessments

Working with our international partners, we arrange specialist assessments overseas, including kinship, parenting and best interests assessments, to support care planning and court proceedings.



Local Assistance

When UK professionals need to visit another country, our local partners can provide practical support, cultural insight and knowledge of local services, legislation and systems.



International Family Group Decision Making

Supporting local authorities to identify, engage and involve family networks overseas, helping children benefit from wider family-led solutions and supporting statutory Family Group Decision Making requirements.



Pre-Placement Preparation

Specialist support to prepare children, families and carers for international placements, helping to build understanding, manage expectations and promote successful transitions.



Post-Placement Visits

Follow-up visits and support after placement to monitor a child's wellbeing, safety, development and adjustment within their new family environment.



Life Story Work

Therapeutic and creative support that helps children understand their experiences, make sense of their journey and develop a stronger sense of identity, belonging and connection.



Family Reunification

Practical and emotional support to help refugee children and families rebuild relationships, navigate change and achieve successful reunification within the UK.



Immigration Advice

Delivered by advisers accredited to provide Immigration Advice Authority (IAA) services, supporting refugee and migrant families to navigate immigration and family reunion processes.



Court Advice

Expert advice and support for court proceedings involving international elements, helping ensure decisions are informed, child-centred and based on the best available evidence.

BEYOND CASEWORK

BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

International social work can be complex. That's why CFAB goes beyond individual case support to help professionals build the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to work with children and families whose lives span international borders.

Training and Practice Development

Delivered by qualified social workers with direct experience of cross-border casework, our specialist training covers topics including international child protection, international kinship care, culturally inclusive practice and best interests assessments for unaccompanied children.

Resources and Guidance

We provide a range of free resources, research and guides to support professionals, including our International Kinship Care Guide and Cultural Family Life Library, helping professionals to navigate international situations and cultural considerations with confidence.

Team Support

Our team can attend service, team and practice meetings to provide advice on international considerations in children's cases, share learning and strengthen practice.



CFAB's International Social Work Certificate

Our self-paced online professional development programme equips practitioners with the knowledge and skills to confidently and effectively manage and deliver international casework.

WHEN PARTNERSHIP CREATES LASTING CHANGE

Christina and Maria were just six and eight years old when they were removed from their mother's care after experiencing physical and emotional abuse linked to her severe mental illness.

Although the sisters held dual British-Lithuanian nationality and had regular Skype contact with their father in Lithuania, he was unable to provide long-term care. With no family members able to care for them in the UK, **Christina and Maria entered the care system.**

Recognising the importance of exploring family options, the children's **local authority asked CFAB to assess whether their paternal aunt and uncle in Lithuania could care for them**. Through the International Social Service (ISS) network, CFAB worked with our partner organisation in Lithuania to undertake a full assessment of the family.

The assessment was positive, and the information provided enabled decisions to be made about the girls' future care. As a result, **Christina and Maria were placed in the long-term care of their aunt and uncle in Lithuania.**

To support the transition and ensure the placement remained successful, the **local authority requested that CFAB arrange post-placement visits** through our ISS partner. These visits helped monitor the girls' wellbeing and adjustment as they settled happily into family life.

Partnership working helped secure a safe, stable family home while preserving the girls' connections to their family, culture and heritage.



NEED SUPPORT WITH AN INTERNATIONAL CASE?

Whether you're exploring family options overseas, managing a safeguarding concern, or navigating a complex cross-border case, our specialist team is here to help.

Contact CFAB:

Free Advice Line (Mon-Fri 10am-3:30pm)
020 7735 8941

Email
info@cfab.org.uk

Website
www.cfab.org.uk

Scan here to learn more:



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