# Children and Family Across Borders

**Introduction**

A good Child and Family assessment will systematically draw on all the evidence available to make an informed decision about the care of the child/ren. Where there are family links overseas, practitioners should consider working with colleagues abroad as part of the assessment process, unless doing so is likely to place the child/ren in danger. This will provide a more holistic picture and help the practitioner to understand the unique characteristics of a child within their family, cultural, religious, ethnic and community context.

**Who are CFAB?**

CFAB is the UK member of the International Social Service (ISS). The ISS is a network of Social Workers, Lawyers and other child protection professionals, located in over 130 countries. It is the only international network focussed on inter-country social work, providing access to expert, on-the-ground support for children and families where there is an international element.

The complexities of migration and international separation can unfortunately make some children difficult to support and leaves them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. CFAB works to bridge the gap between systems and professional practice, to ensure that children in these circumstances enjoy the same care, protection and right to family life as we would want for any child.

**Membership**

KCC benefits from being a CFAB member. Our membership gives staff working with children and families in cases where there is an international element, access to professional advice and support. Services include:

* A free Advice Line for cross-border social work
* International child protection alerts
* Asylum and Refugee Support Services
* Life story work
* International record checks, welfare visits and post-placement services
* Training on international social work (including virtual training)
* Published guidance and useful fact sheets for social workers
* Published research on the challenges and best-practice in cross-border social work.

In practice this could mean:

* A child from overseas who finds themselves in the care system in the UK will often have family overseas who are ready and willing to look after them. CFAB professionally assesses options to help them get the best possible long-term care – wherever possible reuniting them with their family.
* When a child who social services have concerns about moves between the UK and another country, CFAB alerts the relevant authorities to ensure that they are still protected.

**Making a referral**

It is important not to confuse CFAB with the Central Authority. While there are requirements to contact Embassies and the Central Authority, there is no requirement to contact CFAB.

Social Workers should discuss any potential need to engage CFAB with their service managers in the first instance and then, before making a referral, call the CFAB Advice Line. They will very quickly be able to tell you whether they have links in a particular country, and whether they are able to assist. If they are able to help, they will send a referral guide and any other relevant paperwork.

It is important not to confuse CFAB with the Central Authority. While there are requirements to contact Embassies, and the Central Authority (in certain circumstances as set out in this document), there is no requirement to contact CFAB.

**Key contacts and for more information**

Children and Families Across Borders website: <http://cfab.org.uk/>

CFAB free advice line – 0207 7358941

|  |
| --- |
|  |