CHILDREN AND FAMILY COURT ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE

Paper for the Board Meeting on 22 January 2020

PROJECT SAPPHIRE UPDATE

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KEY POINTS

- The product is now called Cafis (Children and Families Information System)
- We intend to replace parts of ECMS with Cafis in six stages over the coming 10 months
- The planned approach has been approved by OMT and CMT
- We are currently planning the detail for Release 1

1.   AIM AND PURPOSE

1.1.   To update the Board on the status of project Sapphire, which will replace the case management system ECMS with Cafis.

2.   ACTION FOR THE BOARD

2.1.   This paper is for information and no action is required.

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1.   The current case management system, ECMS, is based on technologies which will go out of support in October 2020. This lack of support has potential security implications, since any security holes subsequently discovered would not be fixed.

3.2.   In October 2018 we started looking at options to replace the system. We performed a comprehensive market search and concluded that off the shelf systems would not meet our needs closely enough, would be expensive and take too long to implement.

3.3.   The supplier of ECMS proposed updating the existing system. This was a better fit since most staff like using ECMS and we have the opportunity to make it better. This option was quicker and cheaper than others.

3.4.   An outline business case was established with this as the preferred option and was approved in May 2019. We ran a discovery phase to produce more accurate cost estimates and the business case was updated with these. This full business case was subsequently approved.

4. KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR THE BOARD TO CONSIDER

4.1. Following an open competition for staff members, with shortlisting via the project board and the Operational Management Team (OMT), the decision to name the product *Cafis* was taken by the Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB).

4.2. Development of the product is being done by our partner Version 1, who currently look after ECMS. Development started in September and is progressing at an acceptable pace, with very positive staff feedback about the components that have been delivered so far.

4.3. We also have streams of work developing a Data Warehouse - which will enable us to do more sophisticated reporting in the future, and work looking into the data migration from ECMS to Cafis.

4.4. The design of the product is established in workshops every two weeks where example screens are shown to staff representatives. Each two-week period covers a relatively small number of 'stories' (or parts of the specification) and aims to complete the development in that period, working very closely every day with the product owner and business representatives. We currently have a list of 54 representatives. These design workshops are recorded and posted on the project blog, where all staff can see them and comment.

4.5. We are recruiting 6 FCAs to work a few days a month on the project, their time being backfilled. One of these is seconded to a Local Authority for part of the time. Securing time from FCAs has proven difficult in the past. We expect the discussions with the candidates to conclude during January. They have been invited to the design workshops already.

4.6. Staff representatives will be involved in user acceptance testing before each release to ensure it is working well. As development progresses, this will also run on a two-week cycle following the development periods.

4.7. In November the implementation strategy was approved by OMT and CMT. This involves replacing parts of ECMS with Cafis in a number of stages. This makes the change more gradual, and the training and support requirement is much less than a "big bang" implementation. The new system is designed so that ECMS and Cafis will operate on the same data, at the same time. ECMS functionality will be turned off as Cafis is released, to avoid confusion and reduce risk of new features not being taken up by staff.
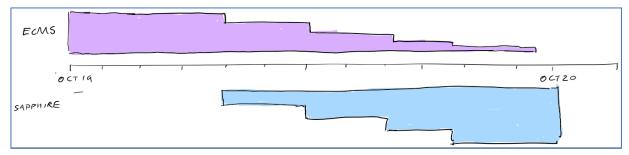

Figure 1 – diagram illustrating a staged implementation

4.8. In December the release plan (covering the way each release will be managed) was also approved by OMT and CMT. It is not proposed to use classroom training. The fact that there are multiple releases allow us to modify the process for each release, making more of what works well, targeting some releases to specific staff groups and addressing any issues which arise.

4.9. We will report on the staff readiness leading up to each release, this will be based on numbers of staff who will have seen the training video by area, with more detail available for managers to follow up.

4.10. We are currently planning Release 1 in more detail and will publish a release date later in the month.

5.   IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

5.1.   Cafis is aimed at Cafcass staff, as ECMS is. However, the improved workflow and usability of Cafis over ECMS should return time to staff in key areas, which will improve efficiency and wellbeing of staff. This will indirectly but positively affect children and young people

6.   RISK ANALYSIS

6.1.   **Insufficient funds** – There is a risk that we run out of budget before we complete the product. Our mitigation plan is:

6.1.1.   We embarked on a *Discovery phase* before we started development. This enabled us to define in greater detail what the features of the new product are, and to provide a more accurate estimation of costs. The maximum estimation of costs was used in developing the business case. This gives some headroom.

6.1.2.   There is provision in the contract for the supplier to provide two additional resources at no cost, if we are unlikely to complete the development in time or to budget.

6.1.3.   The business case has a small provision of *Optimism Bias*, or contingency.

6.1.4.   We may be able, with business agreement, to simplify some of the features during development and hence possibly reduce the cost.

6.2.   **Staff engagement** – There is a risk that the product will not meet the needs of staff. We are involving as many staff as possible by:

6.2.1.   Engaging with up to 54 staff representatives from across the organisation, during the discovery phase and during all parts of the development phase.

6.2.2.   Ensuring that the features of ECMS (which is very well regarded by staff) are replicated in Cafis, and improved where possible.

6.2.3.   Having a communication and engagement plan, allowing all staff to see (through the blog) the designs and key decisions, and encouraging feedback and engagement from all.

6.2.4.   Because of the nature of FCA work, they have found it difficult to commit time to the project. Following decisions at CMT, and discussion at the Audit and Risk Assruance Committee, we are recruiting up to seven FCAs to work on the project for a few days a month, backfilled.

6.3.   **Staff disruption** – Replacing any core IT system has a high risk of disruption to the business, we are minimising this risk by:

6.3.1.   Implementing the new system in a number of stages. This means that change at each stage is less disruptive and allows for improvements to process over time.

6.3.2.   The concepts of the new system are similar to ECMS, and these will be familiar to staff, enabling them to adapt more quickly. In essence, very little business change will be introduced by Cafis, though there will be considerable streamlining and opportunities for efficiencies in current processes.

6.3.3.   The system is being design by a *User Experience* expert, so will be designed in a way which is logical and consistent for our staff.

6.3.4.   We will provide training videos by role and shorter videos showing how individual features will work, alongside traditional guidance. We will utilise staff as C*afis champions*, who will signpost staff to the most appropriate place for assistance.
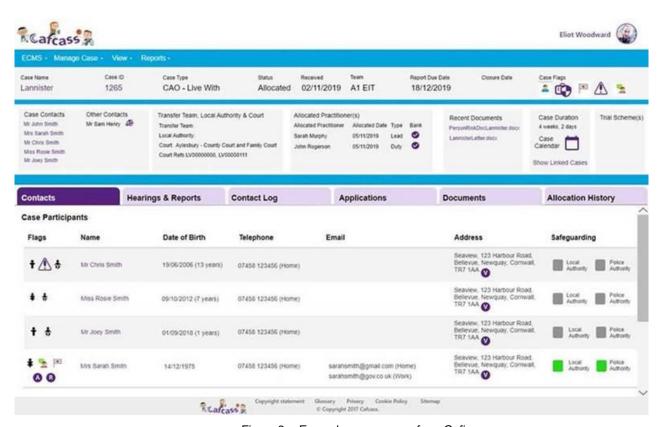
7.   EXAMPLE SCREENSHOTS
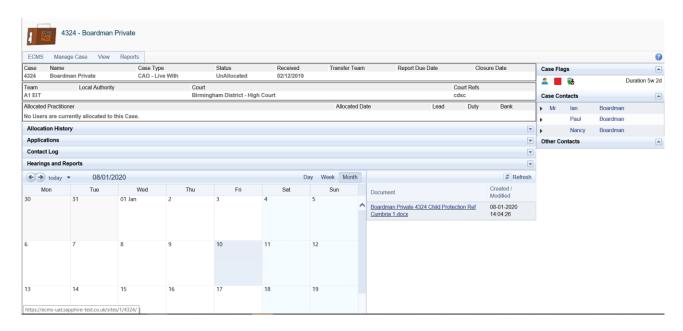

Figure 2 – Example case screen from Cafis

Figure 3 – Current case screen from ECMS

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Acronym or term	Definition
Agile	A software development methodology, where development is in short bursts, allowing easy reprioritisation of features and greater visibility
Discovery phase	A phase of an IT project where information is gathered to define more clearly what the project is to achieve
Cafis	Children and Families Information System
CMT	Corporate Management Team
ECMS	Electronic Case Management System
FJYPB	Family Justice Young Persons Board
FCA	Family Court Advisor
Optimism Bias	A common mechanism in projects to take into account under-estimation of costs. Usually applied as an overall percentage
OMT	Operational Management Team