



Engagement and Participation Strategy

" Don't just open your eyes... Open your hearts"

A young CAFCASS service user

August 2006

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1. Introduction

This strategy has been developed in line with CAFCASS' desire to become a more inclusive organisation. We want to embrace the contribution of diverse and representative groups, develop effective engagement structures at national, regional and local levels to deliver an outward facing 'customer focused' service, which we believe will deliver better outcomes.

This strategy sets out our approach to working with our partners, stakeholders and service users and how we will engage with them at all levels of the organisation.

2. Context

We are a national organisation with ten regions and over 100 local offices from which we deliver our services. A small national office provides leadership, and strategic support to the devolved regional and local services. We reorganised in this way in 2005 because we believed that services should be provided and managed as locally as possible if they are to be effective. It follows therefore, that we should listen to and actively engage with our service users and stakeholders locally. At the same time we need to ensure that those who use our services locally and our stakeholders are easily able to inform our work and our direction at a local level. We need to also ensure that any structures we set up are robust and are formalised in the overall governance arrangements for CAFCASS.

3. Our Strategic Aim

Our strategic aim is to move from just consulting with service users and stakeholders to genuine engagement and participation in an open and honest way. It supports our two-year Business Plan for 2005-07, which sets to (1) Transform Service and (2) Transform the Organisation.

We especially want to put the voices of the children and young people we work with at the heart of this. We believe that this will help us to continuously improve and transform the delivery of our services and we will achieve better outcomes for the children and their families we work with.

4. Our Objectives

We have five key engagement and participation objectives. These are:

- a) To strengthen the voice of children and young people in our work through improved engagement and participation.
- b) To put in place an effective system of engaging nationally with our stakeholders by strengthening our system of Relationship Management
- c) To work with our service users and partners to contribute to the development of key children and family policies which may include specific policy alliances.
- d) To ensure that we consult our stakeholders effectively about the way CAFCASS is being developed

- e) To put in place regional and local structures to engage more effectively

These objectives link direct to the business objectives set out in the business plan 2005-07. These are highlighted in table 1.

Table 1. The Business Plan and Engagement & Participation


Business Objective	Reason
Objective 1.1 – Improving outcomes for children in line with Every Child Matters by modernising practice.	A key component of Every Child Matters is the child’s right to participate and make a positive contribution. Also part of the UN convention on the rights of the child especially article 12.
Objective 1.2 – Mainstream race equality and diversity in all work.	By engaging with local stakeholders and service users it will help to ensure regional and local development plans reflect and take into account community characteristics and views.
Objective 1.4 – Supporting children and families and improving our services through working effectively with all our partners	A key component of the strategy is to work with partners to formulate policy alliances and improve our relationship with partner agencies improving service delivery.
Objective 2.1 – Becoming a more strategic organisation in order to represent children and their families	By developing the use of the performance framework and seeking out the views and feedback of service users we can more effectively plan improvements in the service
Objective 2.2 – Strengthen Leadership and Management at all levels	Elements of the strategy look to develop management to be more outward facing and responsive to the needs of service users. Developing a customer focused culture.
Objective 2.4 – Being more efficient and adding value in all we do	Engaging with service users will inform the planning process as part of the performance framework. This will add value to planning and make it more in line with service users needs.

5. What do we mean by Engagement and Participation

There are many engagement and participation initiatives that are working well within regions and teams. Alongside these there are many initiatives and research projects, conferences etc., which provide ready opportunities for engagement. We already have some good examples of better liaison to learn from; for example: Families need Fathers who are working closely with the CAF/CASS office in Liverpool and Women's Aid and the CAF/CASS office in Rotherham who liaise closely and effectively. Nationally, initiatives such as the development of the 'Domestic Violence Toolkit' (see Appendix 1) have been highly praised. These need knitting together into a recognisable pattern of national and local activity to provide a flexible matrix of service user engagement and participation.

The International Association of Public Participation's Spectrum shown in table 2, which we have adapted for our purposes, visually demonstrates our commitment to make the journey through from simply consulting towards involving, collaborating and where appropriate empowering our service users. The CAF/CASS tools show the different activities that demonstrate increasing levels of engagement and participation.

Table 2. Stakeholder Participation Spectrum

INCREASING LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION 				
INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Participation Goal:	Participation Goal:	Participation Goal:	Participation Goal:	Participation Goal:
To provide service users and stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions	To obtain service users and stakeholder feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with service users and stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with service users and stakeholders in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To positively develop the skills of service users to take an active part in decision-making.
Our Promise	Our Promise	Our Promise	Our Promise	Our Promise
We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum possible.	Joint decision making
CAFCASS Tools:	CAFCASS Tools:	CAFCASS Tools:	CAFCASS Tools:	CAFCASS Tools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaflets Website Conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCC Service user Focus groups Viewpoint Public Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Workshops & liaison Open board meetings Reference Groups Relationship Managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation Forum Consensus-building & Policy Alliances Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young Persons board Delegated decisions

This spectrum neatly illustrates how our national, regional and local activities, will support more effective decisions and contribute to improving our services. We will incrementally implement this model across the organisation over the next four years.

6. Development of the Strategy

For the development of this strategy we contacted stakeholder and partner organisations and service user groups, representing family and adult interest groups as well as children focused organisations. A number of these groups were members of the Service User Interest Group¹ (SUIG) who were contacted through emails, and this was followed up with a discussion. We also took time to consult a diverse range of other groups. For example, the CAF/CASS Children's Rights Director has been seeking the views of organisations advocating for children and young people who are not currently involved in SUIG. A list of all those we contacted to carry out this review is included as Appendix 2. In addition a number of senior staff have also been consulted. Responses to the consultation were recorded and suggestions and ideas put forward as a set of proposals, which reflected consensus.

The proposals were reviewed by the SUIG group in their final meeting who gave it their full support. The final stage has been to consult with regional directors to look at regional and local issues that will affect the delivery of the strategy.

7. Our Engagement Objectives – How we will take them forward

a) To strengthen the voice of children and young people in our work

We have clearly set out our commitment to Children's Rights through the leadership of our Children's Rights Director, a national team of Children's Rights Champions supported by Participation workers and our Children's Rights Strategy. There is a clear work plan, which is being reviewed and monitored by children and young people themselves.

We have adopted clear principles and procedures for the active participation of children and young people, as set out by Participation Works². (See Appendix 3). More recently we have put in place a Young People's Board to help inform the direction of our work. We held a two-day residential event with 12 young people to develop the work of this Board. In addition there are national good practice guidelines that have been agreed in collaboration with children and young people on how they should be involved.

¹ SUIG came into existence following a parliamentary select-committee review in July 2003. Its membership consists of stakeholder organisations that had acted as an advisory panel to the Lord Chancellors Department (LCD) prior to CAF/CASS, as well as a number of other service user and stakeholder groups, which operate in the family justice sector, who were invited onto the group at a later stage. Its primary function has been to consult, influence and participate in the development of CAF/CASS and its policies. However increasingly this forum has not been working effectively and members have agreed to disband it.

² Participation Works is an online gateway to the world of children & young people's participation. The gateway provides a single access point to comprehensive information on policy, practice, networks, training and innovative ideas from across the UK.

We are also increasingly involving children and young people in the recruitment of our staff. Appropriate training to increase knowledge of children's rights and how to involve children and young people in our work is being delivered and is under constant review.

b) National engagement with stakeholders – Relationship Management

We already have named relationship managers for each of our key partners and stakeholders and relationship management is a fundamental strand of our Partnership Strategy. Essentially this means that a key named individual within CAFCASS has the responsibility for managing and supporting our relationship with the partner organisation or individual communication with that agency and its representative. An excellent illustration of this working well is with Young Voice and their relationship manager Christine Smart, Children's Rights Director. As a consequence there have been joint initiatives on training and research, as well as Young Voice's input in evaluating Viewpoint a tool to seek feedback from Children and Young Persons.

We believe that for a partnership to be effective both partners need to work hard at it. In the short time this has been in place, it has strengthened our communication and we have more robust channels for progressing issues.

Where one of our partner organisations operates at local as well as national levels we may have relationship managers at national, regional and team level. An example of this would be links with the newly formed Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and local authorities or Local Children's Safeguarding Boards. At national level our Corporate Director, Jane Booth is the relationship manager with ADSS in relation to Safeguarding, each Regional Director has a role as relationship manager with ADSS on a regional basis but an appointed local or regionally based manager will sit on and be the relationship manager with each Local Safeguarding Children Board.

However, in the context of participation and engagement, we need to extend our relationship manager role so that we are doing this more systematically and purposefully with our stakeholder and service user groups.

Our stakeholders and partners would also benefit from regular updates about CAFCASS developments, latest research and conferences, training events and project/programme initiatives happening in the field. Our internal CAFCASS newsletter, 'Channel C', which provides this information, will be sent to all our stakeholders where we have a nominated relationship manager. We will however ensure that our Communications team reviews the content of the newsletter before its external release so that is entirely appropriate.

c) Policy Development including specific policy alliances

We believe that the development of policies should have the involvement of our service users and stakeholders where it is appropriate as this is fundamental to improving outcomes for children and families. We intend to set up short life policy forums or seminars that are inclusive of all relevant service user groups Policy

events organised in this targeted and focussed way will engage organisations more effectively and increase participation.

We provide a unique and expert perspective on our work in the family courts and we are keen to inform national policy debates from our expert perspective. We want to create policy alliances with our partners and stakeholders on issues of common concern. Two leading examples of where we have made good policy alliances are our work with Women's Aid and Refuge working on the management of Domestic Violence cases; with BAAF and the Judiciary in improving adoption panels and court timetabling; and with parents groups in developing our dispute resolution programmes.

We propose that on each major policy issue, which will significantly impact on our work in the family courts, we will hold a participative policy forum and seek to make alliances to influence public policy.

d) Effective consultation about the way CAFCASS is being developed

In common with many organisations, CAFCASS has undergone much change in the past few years. We have a national change programme that has implemented structural change (more devolved structures) and we have recently publicised proposals for National Standards, which affect our practice. It is important that those we work with are kept informed of changes, but equally that they have an opportunity to comment on or shape such proposals.

We will ensure that all major changes are publicised, given adequate time for consultation and comment through written comment and/or face-to-face forums, using opportunities such as stakeholder conferences and existing forums. Our annual open Board meeting is a key forum where we would like more engagement on policies, research and project initiatives. Examples include family group conferences, changes to practice in adoption proceedings, shorter more analytical reports, involvement of young people in decision making, mediation schemes, as well as partnerships and funding. We want to encourage constructive debate, and feedback at this annual forum.

e) Engagement Structures to improve service delivery

Currently, there are a number of clear examples of how CAFCASS engages at a national level with other organisations. The Alliance for Child Centred Practice brings together key agencies and young people to consider issues specifically for looked after children. The aspiration is to consider a shared approach to principles of good practice that can be collectively endorsed and promoted in respective organisations. It meets quarterly and plans to launch itself as an alliance with a conference in February 2007, CAFCASS is represented by the Children's Rights Director.

At a local level, this example of structured engagement is less visible. We recognise that there needs to be better service user and stakeholder engagement through regional forums and local initiatives, which would allow practical discussion and debate about good practice. This would also ensure that organisations have the opportunity for greater involvement and engagement in

the areas most relevant to them. We therefore propose that we develop appropriate forums in the form of Local Participation Boards with the following purpose:

- ✓ Working together more effectively
- ✓ Working with partner organisations to engage our common service users
- ✓ Proactively seek views about national policy and practice developments
- ✓ Seek innovative ways to work together to benefit our service users
- ✓ Listen to and learn from feedback about our services, using it to improve our service delivery.

Local Participation Boards would have as its membership, local stakeholders, service user representatives, children and young people's representatives, and these would be chaired by either a senior manager or an independent chair and supported by a Commissioning and Partnership Manager, a role we will be creating in the near future. They would meet at a minimum three times a year, which would enable effective working without burdening the resources of any of the agencies participating.

The UK Youth Parliament have already expressed an interest in attending such a forum with a view to improving the input of children's views into service delivery, linking with the work being undertaken by the Children's Rights team.

Genuine participation requires that we involve service users and stakeholders in planning, designing and evaluating our services with us. Examples of this could include reviews of parts of our service by young people or members of Local Participation Boards carrying out impact assessments of our newly devised court schemes.

Our team in Southampton has already taken effective and proactive steps to set up a multi-disciplinary working group with statutory and voluntary organisations to improve outcomes for children from minority ethnic communities. That same team reports 100% returns on diversity monitoring and has developed effective dialogue with religious leaders and BME groups, including asylum seekers. The benefits to service delivery can be clearly seen and shared across the region.

Other examples of engaging with our service users take the form of a text messaging pilot scheme in the South East Region, where children are provided with a confidential mobile telephone number so they can text in their views and give feedback about their involvement with CAFCASS. The responses received are fed directly into the Complaints, Compliments and Comments (CCC) Manager who report back to the regional management team and act upon feedback received. Also in the North East Region a pilot is being set up to provide an advice line to young people so they can talk to an independent case worker about their case.

We have devolved a number of functions, such as complaints management, knowledge learning and development (KLD) to our regions in the past year. We will continue to strengthen the effectiveness of local service delivery by

appointing a number of locally based Commissioning and Partnership Managers. We propose that this person works in collaboration with our regional management team and the work undertaken by our regional groups leading on KLD, diversity, complaints, and children's rights to knit together the local engagement of service users and stakeholders. Examples of how we can achieve this are inviting, free of charge, local groups to regional conferences and for our local managers to be proactive in forging links with the wider community and their local MP/s, as some teams already do.

We should also make links with existing forums in local authorities, such as those for looked after children. Effective engagement requires our time and resources, both of which are stretched. However by adding value to existing forums and working groups we aim to embrace service user engagement and participation as 'the way in which we work' rather than as an additional burden.

8. A summary of our Engagement and Participation strategy

Our proposals, are aimed at achieving better outcomes for children as set out in Every Child Matters. We want to engage more effectively at National, Regional and local levels with our service users and stakeholders and move from merely consulting to genuine participation. Our proposals can be summarised as follows:

- Provide opportunities for children and young people's involvement including one off events and activities such as consultations, as well as ongoing peer mentoring, work placements, training and recruitment.
- Our Young People's Board has been recently formed and the young people themselves will help to agree how it will function, its activities and how they can be involved within the organisation.
- National engagement through strengthening our Relationship Management roles and through policy alliances, which are more systematic and purposeful with all stakeholders including former SUIG members.
- Regular updates about CAFCASS developments, latest research and conferences, training events and project/programme initiatives happening in the field to our stakeholders and partners through our internal CAFCASS monthly newsletter.
- Develop an advance programme of consultations through feedback, surveys and consultation/research forums, which targets aspects of our work. E.g. all our dispute resolutions schemes.
- Publicise all major changes in CAFCASS; give adequate time for consultation and comment through written comment and/or face-to-face forums, using opportunities such as stakeholder conferences and existing forums
- Use our annual open Board meeting for engagement on policies, research and project initiatives.

- Listen to and actively engage with our service users and stakeholders more locally and develop appropriate forums such as Local Participation Boards chaired by a senior manager or an independent chair.
- Genuine participation through the involvement of service users and stakeholders in planning, designing and evaluating our services with us. E.g. review of parts of our service by young people or members of Local Participation Boards carrying out impact assessments of our newly devised court schemes.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of local service delivery by appointing Commissioning and Partnership Managers to work with local managers and the work undertaken by our existing groups leading on knowledge learning and development, diversity, complaints and children's rights to knit together local engagement of service users and stakeholders.

9. Implementation, Timescales and Monitoring

Consideration has been given to each of the proposals and the activities required for the implementation are set out below in the 'Strategy Planning matrix' below. Strengths and weakness have been identified for each of the proposals, which will effect their implementation. We will implement this strategy incrementally over the next 3 years and ensure that regional business plans reflect the objectives set out in this strategy. Progress will be monitored through the Quarterly Regional Performance meetings.

10. Having your say

It is important that CAFCASS staff have involvement with and ownership of the Engagement and Participation Strategy. We want to hear from you and for you to input to and help shape this strategy. We also welcome external views from our partners and stakeholders. You can do this either individually, or as a team or region by directly emailing either:

Paul.Brown@CAFCASS.gov.uk

Christine.Smart@CAFCASS.gov.uk

Sherry.Malik@CAFCASS.gov.uk

11. Strategy Planning Matrix

Outputs Results	Inputs Activities	Measurable Indicators	Strengths/Successes	Weaknesses/ Risks	Owner
Relationship Managers - Strengthening their role	<p>Ensure all our partners and stakeholders have a named relationship manager.</p> <p>Establish a directory of relationship managers. Partnership Strategy launched</p> <p>Clear communication link between Relationship managers and national office</p>	<p>Up to date relationship manager list updated by the Communications team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Managers are currently in place and assigned to organisations. ✓ Partnership strategy clarifies role of relationship manager. ✓ System already set up and in operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Stakeholder list not up to date ✗ Ownership of relationship manager list at national office ✗ Relationship managers unclear to their role ✗ Inconsistency across the organisation 	L Wooderson
Improved communication of CAFCASS activities	<p>Establish regular mailings to relationship managers</p> <p>Relationship managers to forward to partner organisation</p>	<p>Newsletter regularly received via Relationship manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Information provided to partner about activities that CAFCASS is involved in ✓ Use existing information system ✓ Low level of input required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Newsletter not forwarded to Stakeholders and Service users. ✗ Inappropriate information included to wider audience 	Comms & Relationship Mangers
Programme of consultations - Advance plan of feedback, surveys and other related activities across the organisation	<p>Activities across the organisation being communicated to centre.</p> <p>Programme of initiatives put together/distributed.</p> <p>Findings of feedback or consultation summarised and reported on.</p>	<p>Programme published and being actioned.</p> <p>Annual summary report reviewing activities and findings for the previous year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maintains a strategic overview of specific consultation and feedback activities across CAFCASS. ✓ Prevents groups working in isolation and unnecessary overlap of work. ✓ Helps to inform outcome based assessments of the service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Not every group across CAFCASS informs centre of their activities. ✗ Programme not used to influence future activities. 	S Malik P Brown

Outputs Results	Inputs Activities	Measurable Indicators	Strengths/Successes	Weaknesses/ Risks	Owner
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Informs the work of HMICA 		
<p>Full & proper consultation - Publicise major changes and allow for responses</p>	<p>All major changes are publicised, given adequate time for consultation and comment through written comment and/or face-to-face forums, using opportunities such as stakeholder conferences and existing forums</p>	<p>Responses from all stakeholders and Service users published and appropriate amendments made.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Effective consultation already taking place ✓ Allows for effective and direct engagement participation in policy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Not all appropriate Stakeholders and Service Users are consulted ✗ Not all responses can be adopted, may lead to disillusionment 	<p>CDG</p>
<p>Open Board Meetings – engagement on policies</p>	<p>Organise annual event Invitations to be sent out Set policy questions</p>	<p>Evaluation forms to be made available on the day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Board meeting already an annual event ✓ High level policy influence for Stakeholders and Service User groups ✓ Backing of the Board and Senior Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Meeting hijacked by single groups ✗ Failure to invite appropriate and relevant Stakeholders and Service User groups ✗ Poor attendance of stakeholders and service users. 	<p>Board & Governance</p>

Outputs Results	Inputs Activities	Measurable Indicators	Strengths/Successes	Weaknesses/ Risks	Owner
Participation forums – Local Boards and local liaison	Regions to decide best type of participation forum Identify managers responsible for organising events locally Senior manager to chair local forums bi-annually Business plans to be influenced by forums	Team and Regional plans Quarterly performance reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Senior managers in support of establishing regular local forums ✓ Local stakeholder and service user group already identified in regions ✓ Stakeholder and Service User groups keen to engage at regional and local level ✓ Forum that is most effective for the local area takes shape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ National priorities lower importance of establishing forums ✗ Time and resources limited in teams ✗ Dependent on the appointment of coordinating manager ✗ Poor take up, poor attendance and participation. 	Regional Directors
Commissioning & Partnership Managers – engaging with local stakeholders	Appointment of Commissioning and Partnership managers C & P managers organising local forums	Commissioning and Partnership managers appointed and in post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Part of job description is to work closely with partner organisations ✓ Financial resources already set aside nationally ✓ Recognition that this is a key role for the C&P managers. ✓ Does not take up more Service Manager time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Time delay in C&P managers being appointed. ✗ Stakeholder and Service User groups do not have adequate resources to attend. 	CDG
Young People’s Board – voicing the views of children and young people	Recruit children and young people Residential weekend for staff and young people to develop role of YP board Regular bi-monthly meetings to increase	Young Person Board set up Attendance and input into policy, practice & wider partnerships. Evaluation of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Children and young people with experience of parental separation and CAFCASS’ services both in public and private law. ✓ A key service user group who are able to comprehend and relate to other children and young people thus helping to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ The young people lose interest once time and effort have been invested into bringing them up to date with skills and knowledge. ✗ This is a small group of young people who are not necessarily representative 	Children’s Rights Team

Outputs Results	Inputs Activities	Measurable Indicators	Strengths/Successes	Weaknesses/ Risks	Owner
	<p>knowledge and skills of the Board.</p> <p>Opportunities for involvement e.g. training of CAFCASS staff, consultations, policy input etc.</p>	<p>business plans and children's rights strategy report.</p>	<p>young people thus helping to see things from their perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Innovative and thought provoking ideas on what helps/hinders practice. ✓ Helping to contribute to achieving the '<i>Every Child Matters</i>' 5 outcomes. ✓ The Board will operate in line with the '<i>Hear by Right</i>' standards as recognised as good practice by the DfES and DCA. 	<p>of those across the country – this must be taken into account and acted upon if/when needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Excessive use of the same group of children and young people by CAFCASS staff for all consultations. X Failure to recruit new members to ensure evolving Board over time 	
<p>Participation Opportunities for Children and Young People: One-off involvement</p>	<p>Consultations surrounding CAFCASS practice e.g. leaflets, websites and contribution to websites.</p> <p>Consultations surrounding Government policy e.g. transparency in family courts.</p>	<p>Evaluation and reports.</p> <p>Change in practice/practice tool.</p> <p>Contributions to reports and Government agendas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Able to get feedback from a wide-range of children and young people. ✓ Succeed in providing practice tools, which are fit for the purpose and user-friendly according to children and young people. ✓ Provide credibility to work as ensuring children and young people are being listened to throughout the organisation and in its work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Focus groups not from a broad enough selection of young people. X The young people might not feel comfortable inputting as they have not built a relationship with the workers. X The information received might not be relevant, of use or unrealistic. X A large amount of time and effort to organise an event – especially if from a national pool. 	<p>Children's Rights team</p>

Outputs Results	Inputs Activities	Measurable Indicators	Strengths/Successes	Weaknesses/ Risks	Owner
<p>Participation Opportunities for Children and Young People: Ongoing involvement</p>	<p>Peer Mentoring – offering support to children and young people.</p> <p>Training FCA's and staff in how to communicate with young people.</p> <p>Helping to recruit workers who will come into direct contact with children and young people.</p> <p>Advice line – offering advice and support to those that ring/email CAFCASS advice line</p>	<p>Evaluation and reports.</p> <p>Reduction in complaints.</p> <p>Better feedback from young people.</p> <p>Volume of calls and emails.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Able to offer advice to children and young people from their own perspective and help them feel that they're not alone. ✓ Provide a service, which is tailored to the needs and requirements of children and young people. ✓ Involvement of children in recruitment and selection of staff. ✓ Provide training opportunities for the young people which will support their future careers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ A small number of young people involved. ✗ Have to ensure adequate training and support for the young people involved. ✗ Time consuming. ✗ Could be costly especially if outside of normal working hours. 	<p>Children's Rights Team</p>

11. Appendices

Appendix 1.

An example of effective engagement and consultation – The Domestic Violence Toolkit

The process of engagement can be effective and produce high quality pieces of work as an outcome and the domestic violence toolkit is an example of what can be achieved by partner agencies working together. A Domestic Violence advisory group was set up, consisting of a mix of CAFCASS staff, (FCA's, Service Managers Regional Directors) along with representatives from an NSPCC project based in Cardiff (the project assisted young adolescent boys, who as a result of experiencing domestic violence, had begun acting out violent behavior.) The advisory group obtained advice from a national disability organisation, 'Contact a Family', including use of their research into the barriers facing families where a child with disability had also experienced domestic violence.

The outcome of the work was good practice guidance and assessment tools and collated in the form of a toolkit. This allowed practitioners to dip in and out of the material as needed, although they are required to be familiar with the standards and ensure their practice meets these.

The toolkit was issued for a three-month consultation and actively sought views to identify weaknesses, gaps and difficulties. Responses were received from a range of statutory, voluntary sector organisations and academics as well as some individuals. These were analysed and reported to the advisory group with a set of proposals about how the policy should be amended to fairly reflect the issues raised by respondents to the document. The advisory group jointly agreed how the final document should be amended.

The toolkit was launched for implementation through regional events, which included external local partnerships, local refuge providers, regional Domestic Violence coordinators and contact centre managers. In addition it was made available on the Internet and intranet. Every regional management team, along with practitioner staff across CAFCASS were trained on the toolkit during 05/06. A comprehensive, 3-part DV training programme aimed at reaching all practitioners and service managers over the next 3 years is being developed. The Domestic Violence Toolkit is now a highly acknowledged quality piece of work, to the benefit of external and internal practitioners working with children and issues of domestic violence.

Appendix 2.

External stakeholders we consulted to carry out this review.

Association of Shared Parenting – Graham Porter
British Youth Council – Jules Mason
Commission for Social Care Inspectorate – Roger Morgan
Families need Fathers – John Baker
Family Rights Group – Maggs Bevan
Fathers Direct – David Bartlett
Grandparents Association – Lady Barbara Lowry
NACCC – Duncan Gore
National Children’s Bureau – Janine Shaw
National Youth Advocacy Service – Elena Fowler
National Youth Agency – Bill Badham
NSPCC – Barbara Esam
One Parent Families – Alison Garnham
Parentline plus – Gill Loughran
The Children’s Society – Christine Osbourne
Triangle Services – Ruth Marchant
UK College of Family Mediators – Dominic Raeside
UK Youth Parliament – Ashley Sweetland/Kate Parish
Voice – John Kemmis
Who Cares Trust – James Massender
Women’s Aid – Alison Buchanan
Young Voice – Adrienne Katz

Appendix 3.

THE PARTICIPATION CHARTER

Supported by British Youth Council, Carnegie Young People Initiative, Children’s Rights Alliance for England, Children’s Commissioner for England, National Children’s Bureau, National Youth Agency, Save the Children

Participation is right

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that any child or young person has a right to express their views and have them given due weight in decisions affecting them, in accordance with their age and maturity. Participation is not a privilege and it does not have to be earned; rather, it values children and young people as citizens in their own right. The UK has ratified the convention, and increasingly public services are required by law to take seriously the wishes and feelings of children.

Children and young people are the best authorities on their own lives

Only children and young people themselves can communicate what they like and dislike, what works for them and what doesn’t. Services that involve them meaningfully in individual decision making and in planning, delivery and evaluation will be better able to meet their needs and be better used by them.

Participation depends on respect and honesty

Honesty, mutual trust and respect are essential for effective participation. Children and young people's contributions must be taken seriously, treating each child as an individual and avoiding assumptions or stereotypes. It requires honesty about how children's contributions are going to be used and exactly how much power and influence they can really have. Children and young people must feel free to say what they really think, without the possibility of negative consequences.

Participation must be accessible and inclusive

Children who are very young, disabled, or who have special educational needs have the same right to participate as other children. Services and organisations should be proactive in engaging them, as well as those who are socially or economically disadvantaged, excluded or discriminated against on any basis. Participation also requires a safe, child-friendly environment to be effective.

Participation is a dialogue to influence change

It involves listening and responding constructively to what children and young people say or want to do. Children and young people value the experience and knowledge that adults can contribute to help them participate. Prompt and honest feedback by adults is one way of letting children and young people know that their views are valued.

Participation is built in

For participation to be meaningful, services and organisations have to build this into their values, structures and procedures. Different levels of participation will be appropriate according to the circumstances, goals, type of organisation and the children and young people involved. It can range from individual decision making to inclusion in democratic processes or involvement in organisations' planning, evaluation, decision-making or governance structures. Meaningful participation never stops; it is not a project or task with a beginning and an end, and it requires commitment, time, effort and resources.

Participation is everyone's responsibility

Every person or organisation whose activity affects children and young people directly or indirectly has a responsibility to ensure their views are listened to and acted upon.

Participation benefits everybody

Effective participation improves decisions affecting children and young people and helps them to develop confidence and skills, and to build valuable social bonds. It develops children and young people's sense of their own rights and responsibilities as citizens, helping to counter anti-social behaviour and promote a commitment to society and its institutions. Successful participation can also benefit communities, promoting social cohesion and a more positive view of children and young people. For services, it is one of the keys to ensuring they meet the needs of children and young people, are well used by them, and so are able to demonstrate improved outcomes.