



FAMILY JUSTICE YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOARD UPDATE

Cafcass Board Meeting

9 October 2019

Overview

The Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB) currently has 59 members aged 8 – 25 years old. From April 2019 to September 2019 the FJYPB have completed a total of 46 commissions with a range of key stakeholders. 16 were for Cafcass.

FJYPB

1. Voice of the Child Conference 2019

The FJYPB held another successful Voice of the Child conference on 24th July in Leeds. This year focused on the impact of family court proceedings on the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families.

Stakeholders were well represented, and the conference included keynote speeches from Nav Mirza (Dads Unlimited) and the President of the Family Division, Sir Andrew McFarlane.

A highlight of the day was again the 'In My Shoes' segments. The members recollections revealed how an understanding of mental health is essential to ensuring the right support to children and young people during family court proceedings.

Feedback from delegates was very positive with 80% of delegates rating the conference as 'excellent' and 20% as 'good'. One example of feedback is:

"The delivery of the conference by the YP on the FJYPB was inspirational. Confident, competent and sincere delivery of activities and stories."

"Really good and varied conference - loads of different activities. Well done to all of the YP and the organisers too."

In addition to the summary report of the day (appendix 1), the FJYPB are working on a mental health resource for family justice professionals following the table discussion activities on the day. Once finalised the summary and the resource pack will be shared with those who attended on the day as well as key partners. They will also be available on the FJYPB webpage.

The FJYPB are looking ahead to next year's conference and will start planning at the October Board meeting.

2. Mental health training presentation

The FJYPB have developed training based on a presentation to the Performance and Quality Committee and this year's Voice of the Child Conference on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in the family courts. The purpose of this training is:

- To help Cafcass staff think about the impact on children and young people's wellbeing when they are involved in the family courts;
- To help Cafcass staff think about what they can do to support the mental health of the children and young people they work with.

The presentation includes a voiceover from FJYPB members. It was piloted on 27 September 2019 at the A2 East development day with a voice over presentation of 'In My Shoes'. Staff identified that this was a very powerful presentation. It will now be distributed across Cafcass.

3. In My Shoes

Three 'In My Shoes' presentations have now been recorded with voice overs.

4. Updating our existing Family Law Glossary

Members have recently had the opportunity to review the FJYPB's existing [family law] glossary. Members found that the original glossary is now outdated and that many new terms and words need to be added. They also found that it needed a makeover, so have re-designed its layout and made it easier to read.

There are a few more changes and updates to make, but we will be ready to share our newly improved glossary with Cafcass, other family justice agencies, and children and families in early November. It will also be available on the FJYPB webpage.

5. Social Worker of the Year Awards

The Board of Trustees at the Social Worker of the Year Awards have once again invited members of the FJYPB who have been supported by social workers, to be part of a judging panel for a number of categories for this year's awards. The awards ceremony takes place on 29th November.

FJYPB and Cafcass England

6. Meeting with Jacky Tiotto

Marie Gittins and Jacky Tiotto recently had an introductory meeting to discuss the FJYPB, its future and priorities. Jacky will meet with some FJYPB members and the team on 10th October to talk about the work of the Board and discuss ideas about future work and projects.

Jacky has already asked the FJYPB to get involved with a number of pieces of work such as the Cafcass child engagement policy and the possibility of delivering a London conference for London local authorities. Watch this space!

Jacky will also be joining the Board at their festive Board meeting on 7th December 2019.

7. Cafcass Board Member Recruitment

FJYPB members will be involved in the upcoming recruitment of new Cafcass Board members. The FJYPB members will sit on their own young person's panel with a list of tailored questions to ask each candidate. The views of the FJYPB will be shared with the final interview panellists for consideration.

8. Cafcass Office Takeovers

The FJYPB's *Take Over Challenge 2019* involved members of the FJYPB taking over the reception and family areas of two identified offices, Stafford and the NBC. The aim was to make improvements and suggestions as to how the family areas can be more child friendly and welcoming.

FJYPB members made a list of recommendations for the staff to consider brightening up the areas. Full reports for both office takeovers can be found in appendix 1 & 2.

FJYPB and Wales

9. Cafcass Cymru

The FJYPB and Cafcass Cymru continue to work closely together and have planned to meet later this year to discuss current and future workstreams. Most recently the FJYPB reviewed the Cafcass Cymru children's packs. Members provided several recommendations which have now been considered and implemented.

Further key updates

10. Public and Private Law Consultations

Over the summer holidays several FJYPB members met in York to have their chance to review the public and private law consultations. Members were able to share their views that have been presented to the President of the Family Division, Sir Andrew McFarlane.

11. Harm in the Family Courts Workshop – August 2019

The Ministry of Justice invited the FJYPB to take part in a focus group to hear from those members with direct experience of domestic abuse or other forms of harm to gain a better understanding of their experiences and what may have helped them during the proceedings. The session was supported by Jenn and Claire (FJYPB team) and the session was led by Professor Liz Trinder, who said:

"I found it the most useful session I've been in so far and was really impressed with how thoughtful and constructive the young people were"

Forward Look

- **5 October:** Next FJYPB meeting in York
- **11 October:** FJYPB will speak at a regional NAHT conference to raise the awareness of family court experience in schools.
- **22 October – 15th November:** Members of the FJYPB will be involved with the Cafcass Leadership roadshows
- **7 December:** Festive FJYPB Meeting in London

The Family Justice Young People's Board

Appendices:

Appendix 1: VOTC19 Summary Report

Appendix 2: Takeover report – Stafford

Appendix 3: Takeover report - NBC