



CHILDREN AND FAMILY COURT ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE
STRATEGIC PLAN DASHBOARD
2019-20 QUARTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The dashboard identifies the progress of the Strategic Plan for the quarter. The measurement key provides a guide to the RAG scoring which is used to show progress against plans. The assessment of progress is made by the Corporate Management Team in conjunction with review of the organisations' Interim Delivery Plan.

Practice	To deliver the best quality social work and support service in each case, to improve children's lives wherever they live.	
People	For staff to have the support, resources and working environment that enables them to sustain excellence in challenging times.	
Partners	To share our knowledge, learn from others and use our collective influence to improve the family justice system and wider family policy.	

The overall assessment of progress is positive based on progress of delivering the key activities and programmes of work set out in the Interim Delivery Plan.

The report is written at a time of transition both in terms of a new Chief Executive Officer joining in September but also the transition to a new Strategic Plan. A new approach and format for reporting progress of the Strategic Plan is being developed along with a Success Framework and will be presented to the Board in October 2019. Although the Strategic Plan was launched in quarter 2 this report for quarter 1 is organised to fit within the 3 objectives of the new Strategic Plan: practice, people and partners.

KEY ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES DURING THE QUARTER

Demand in private law continues at a very high level and the number of open cases in the system continues to increase. Demand in public law has seen some levelling off although still at a very high level and with the stock of cases in the system increasing. The level of demand and active stock is continuing to put pressure on capacity and allocation of cases.

Caseloads appear to be stabilising around an average of 22 cases based on current trends. The average however is underpinned by significant local and individual variation. The August 2019 snapshot shows the average caseloads for staff have increased to 22.2 active cases compared to 20.8 twelve months ago. On average in Private Law non-EIT FCAs were holding 24 cases in the latest snapshot.

The Strategic Risk Register reflects that the risk relating to Resources (demand) is considered high and that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) are reviewing demand and resources on a weekly basis and additional resources are being made available where there is need, but there are very limited unallocated funds to deal with this, and at such an early point in the financial year.

Notwithstanding the demand pressures, case and system performance continues to be strong and overall national KPIs are being met and quality assurance audits indicate that quality of work remains high. There are a small number of individual service areas now struggling to fully meet the standard.

The ICO have been carrying out an audit of our processes in the recording and handling of case related information as part of their investigation regarding levels of data breaches. The newly created Information Assurance Manager is now in post and has been working with the Head of Legal on the preparations and response to the audit.

KEY ORGANISATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE QUARTER

PRACTICE

- In the three-month period of April to June 2019 a total of 2,233 Case File Audits (CFAs) have been recorded for 1,053 current eligible staff – an average of 2.1 CFAs per staff. Grading continues to be positive with 72% of CFAs being graded as Good or Outstanding.
- Two programmes of work have been launched to deliver short term changes to help manage demand pressures. These are the 'Small Changes Programme' and 'No Stone Unturned – an action plan to manage demand'. 'No Stone Unturned' is specifically intended to help staff manage their workloads in the context of continuing increases in demand and complexity of cases without reducing quality. Examples include shorter templates for safeguarding letters where there are no significant concerns related to risk. The Small Changes Programme is designed to source ideas from across the organisation and to implement changes in day to day tasks and processes which can release time.
- The Child Impact Assessment Framework (CIAF) was launched on 10 October 2018 to stakeholders and staff and training has been delivered to private law practitioners. The Operational Management Team (OMT) has convened a CIAF review group which will make recommendations in respect digitising the CIAF, learning arising from the internal audit and potential future development.
- The service user engagement working group continues to work on three key workstreams (1) Improving mechanisms for inviting and acting on feedback from children and families, including the role of local resolution and the feasibility of establishing a parents/families reference group; (2) Streamlining the approach for handling web enquiries; (3) Using behavioural insight approaches to develop case-related communications that improve the Cafcass journey for children and families.
- Work continues with One Plus One to develop and pilot the Co-Parent Hub. The hub is being piloted in A3, A2 and A9. A1 will be introduced to the pilot for 1 month to act as a comparator test area for Behavioural Insight purposes. The pilot is due to end in September 2019 and an evaluation will be undertaken.
- The How It Looks To Me app (previous working title the Voice of the Child App) was launched in 2018 and training to practitioners completed in May 2019. Cafcass and Dubit (the app designers) have approached three local authorities as partners in the same sector to discuss using the App in their direct work with children. There is also active interest in a modified version for use in an health setting.
- Planning has commenced in respect of developing a family forum. CMT/OMT are considering available resources to take forward development of the forum.
- Work continues to maintain and improve systems to reduce data breaches. The newly created Information Assurance Manager is now in post. In March 2019 an internal information assurance awareness campaign was launched which includes regular communication and dissemination about information assurance and methods of reducing data breaches.
- A substantial audit opinion was awarded to the IT Cyber Security internal audit. The audit examined the adequacy, effectiveness and reliability of the IT Cyber Security processes, and no areas of significant or of high-risk concerns were identified.

PEOPLE

- A Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Transition Working Group was established to ensure the effective 'on-boarding' and induction for the new CEO. The programme of induction work is well underway with one to one meetings in place with CMT.
- Two Deputy Directors have been appointed from within the OMT and have joined CMT as part of succession planning for the departure of the National Service Director in 2020.
- The Board recruitment plan is being progressed with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The provisional recruitment timetable has been set and submissions to the Minister for approval to proceed will be made on 2 September and interviews are scheduled for 27 and 28 November.
- The new Strategic Plan was launched internally to staff on 15 July. A webinar was held for staff including Board representation. Work is now progressing to launch the plan externally in September 2019 and to develop the Success Framework. 'Champions' representing service areas have already played a vital role in encouraging staff involvement in the development of the Strategic Plan and plans are being developed to continue this into reporting of delivery.
- A number of priority projects are being taken forward to move systems away from SharePoint 2010 which becomes unsupported in October 2020. These projects aim to deliver the minimum viable solution but with focus on service and system improvement and innovation. This includes the replacement of ECMS and the procurement and development of a new intranet. These projects aim to deliver outputs before October 2020.
- Options to procure and implement a new HR and payroll system to replace the current Midland HR contract are being developed. The current contract comes to an end in January 2020 but with an option to extend for one year until January 2021.
- The delivery of network (bandwidth) improvements is progressing well. 60% of sites have now received upgrades and the another 30% will go-live during September. The remaining sites are subject to wayleave negotiations and those sites should be complete by November 2019.
- Development and delivery of proactive and preventative wellbeing support to staff continues. Cafcass is part of a national network, Mental Health Allies (MHAs), spearheaded by MoJ. This staff-led network of volunteers provides confidential support to staff and managers. This is in addition to our well established internal Mental Health Champions.
- Diversity Champions working with Diversity Networks continue to promote diversity for practice and staff at national and local level and help shape engagement with service users at local level. The Director of Strategy is now the CMT champion for these networks and will be working with them to further strengthen their profile over the coming months.
- The Emerging Talent programme is continuing to develop high performers and data shows that staff on the Emerging Talent scheme perform positively on key measures such as throughput, sickness absence and PLR scores.
- Talent attraction and recruitment and selection of new staff remains a priority with a number of activities ongoing to ensure that we attract not only sufficient quality and quantity of applicants but also seek to ensure we have a diverse workforce. HR Resourcing is establishing closer links to internal stakeholders and continuing to establish more ways to provide insight to managers while adding demonstrable value to associated processes.

PARTNERS

- Cafcass continues to play an active role in two judicially-led working groups, established by the President of the Family Division, looking at how the Public Law Outline and Child Arrangements Programme could be reformed. Work is ongoing to develop a response to the President's consultations and these will be shared with the Board on 9 September.

- The combined internal private and public law strategy group is now embedded and leading on the prioritisation and coordination of where practice changes are most needed, and to catalyse and provide oversight for work to be delivered in partnership.
- Work to develop auto case creation in ECMS upon receipt of the digital C100 has started. This is an extension of the C100 Digitisation project which is continuing to pilot the receipt and digitisation of C100s on behalf of Cafcass and HMCTS.
- The Director of Strategy has been appointed to the Family Justice Observatory Board, Chaired by Sir James Munby. Good progress has been made on data transfer arrangements which will now take place in October 2019. This work also includes establishing a Research Advisory Committee in collaboration with Cafcass Cymru.
- Priorities for collaboration with ADCS over the next 6 months include further development of a shared view on resources in the system, responding to the risks faced by adolescents, and share and collaborate on responses to the Public Law Working Group consultation.
- The Cafcass Positive co-Parenting Programme is being launched during June and September 2019 following a national pilot. The programme is designed in response to concerns about drift and disproportionate working in r16.4 cases. Briefing and training materials have been made available to staff. A briefing on the outcomes of the evaluation has been provided to the Judicial Liaison Committee.
- The local authority-led Cafcass Plus model has been piloted in five teams and evaluation reported to OMT. The future guidance on Cafcass Plus is being reviewed to ensure it aligns with pre-proceedings guidance being developed under sponsorship of the FJC (the Head of Legal Services represents Cafcass on the group), and with a proposed Family Justice Observatory working group on infant removals. The judicially led public law working group has also made some recommendations in relation to pre-proceedings work.
- Cafcass continues to work on problem-solving the current issues in the family justice system through membership of the national Family Justice Board and all LFJB in England. In addition, the Director of Strategy is a member of the national Adoption and Special Guardianship Board (having taken this over from the Chief Executive) and Assistant Directors sit on the regional equivalent boards.
- Cafcass remains actively involved in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office programme to improve the standards of child safeguarding in the British Overseas Territories. Training of staff in overseas territories continues to take place, facilitated by Cafcass and partners.
- Cafcass is represented on the Children and Families across Borders working group which meets quarterly.

Measurement Key

	Inadequate Progress (not being met; remedial action required)
	Satisfactory Progress (Issues occurring but action in place)
	Good Progress (on target)