



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

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 generally positive based on progress of delivering the key activities and programmes of work set out in the Interim Delivery Plan. The Practice and People Pillars are showing a trend to amber based on relentless demand pressures and ongoing budget discussions with the MOJ.

The report is written at a time of transition to the new Strategic Plan. The Strategy for 2019-23 was published in September and work is ongoing to develop work plans for 9 delivery priorities to take forward the Strategic Plan. In parallel to that mechanisms and format for reporting progress and measuring success, including through our new CMT Performance Cycle and to the Board are being developed. The delivery programme will be launched in January 2020 and begin in earnest from April 2020.

To support the development of the delivery programme, a series of leadership roadshows are being held across the country to bring together key members of the senior leadership team and Board with all staff. The roadshows will focus and engage staff on how Cafcass can sustain excellence and move forward together under the three pillars of the strategic plan. These events also provide an opportunity for staff to meet the new Chief Executive.

A new cycle of senior management team meetings has been put in place to create a structured rotation of themed discussions as well as an opening up to a wider range of managers' attendance and engagement in these meetings.

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. While the number of new care cases has started to reduce, demand in other types of public law has been increasing. The net result is that the public law caseload has plateaued at a very high level and with the stock of cases in the system still increasing. The level of demand and active stock is continuing to put pressure on capacity and allocation of cases, as well as how quickly we are able to progress work and file reports.

Average active caseloads have shown an increase which can be largely attributed to the ongoing rises in private law demand (both new cases and ordering of additional work – such as s7 reports and 16.4 appointments – within cases). The average however is underpinned by significant local and individual variation. The latest snapshot (November) shows the average caseloads for staff have increased to 22.3 active cases compared to 21.2 in November 2018.

The Strategic Risk Register reflects that the risk relating to Resources (demand) is considered high. As well as the controls set out under the three lines of defence, 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. Other areas of mitigation to help staff manage demand, such as the Small Changes Programme and the Demand Reduction programme are described below.

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 has now published their audit report on Cafcass' records management and protection of personal data, along with their recommendations for action. The ICO audit report has returned 'reasonable' Assurance, the second highest rating of four, as detailed below. An action plan to take forward the recommendations has been developed and is being reviewed by Information Assurance Board before sharing with Audit and Risk Assurance Committee in December.

KEY ORGANISATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE QUARTER

PRACTICE

- In the three-month period of July to September 2019 a total of 2,042 Case File Audits (CFAs) have been recorded for 1,036 current eligible staff – an average of 2.0 CFAs per staff. Grading continues to be positive with 75% of CFAs being graded as Good or Outstanding.
- Two programmes are in place 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 by testing efficiencies across business processes. Examples include third-party document upload pilot, where ways are being explored to minimise the number of documents FCAs are required to upload onto ECMS to be able to focus more time on social work tasks. The Central Intake Team (CIT) screening pilot, which is streamlining the process between CIT and the Early Intervention Team (EIT) and reducing any duplication and improving the speed of response to new demands for service in private law. FCAs have also been piloting the use of a Low-Risk Safeguarding Letter template to reduce the work required. Initial findings are that this is saving significant time and has the potential to be used in around 20% of new private law cases.
 - 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. Examples of ideas received includes working with HMCTS to develop a 'Cafcass Pass' to fast-track practitioners' access into the court building.
- Scoping has commenced on a Demand Reduction Programme in private law which will focus on fast tracking the arrangements to ensure that a robust gatekeeping process is in place. An internal workshop has been held and a proposal on the areas and work to be included will be reviewed by CMT at the end of November. This work complements (and dovetails with) the longer term proposals being considered by the President's Private Law Working Group.
- The annual Managers Workshop is being planned for November. This has a specific theme of Tackling Demand and will also focus on the vision for Cafcass, developing and learning from practice within the organisation.

- 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. The result of the internal audit will be reported to the Performance and Quality Committee in December 2019.
- The initial scoping work undertaken in the Service User Engagement Working Group is now being migrated into the work plan for the second Delivery Priority under Practice (Feedback informed). Planning has commenced in respect of establishing a family forum with a stakeholder event planned for December.
- The work with One Plus One to pilot the Co-Parent Hub has completed. Evaluation of the pilot will conclude in November and will be reported to OMT. The website has closed to the public, this is because the Hub was developed with One Plus One in a specific way there is a need to take learning from that stage before doing any further development. The website can be re-opened if that decision is taken. Other issues to investigate before continuing with the hub relate to available budget and procurement thresholds.
- Work has commenced on revising the workload weighting tool and revised analytics are now in PowerBI to support a better view for managers in making case allocation and workload decisions. The new reporting is to be piloted in three services areas (A9, A14, A5) covering the various aspects of our work in both public and private law. The pilot will commence this side of the Christmas break, with areas involved being closely monitored throughout Q4 when also an evaluation will also be completed. A verbal update will be provided to the Performance and Quality Committee in December.
- Substantial audit opinions were awarded in the audits of Payroll Starter and Leavers, and Freedom of Information and Parliamentary Questions.
- 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.
- The Cafcass Positive co-Parenting Programme has been launched 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 benefits and risks of whether to extend the eligibility criteria to include s7 cases are being considered.

PEOPLE

- The Board recruitment plan is being progressed and candidates have been shortlisted. Interviews have been delayed due to changes on the interview panel and due to Purdah and are now scheduled to take place in January 2020. The Family Justice Young People's Board will hold informal interviews with shortlisted candidates in advance of the formal interview.
- A programme of Area Stress Risk Assessments have been introduced to identify any specific work and non-work-related stressors within each area and location. Results will be shared with the service area management and team meetings and an area/team specific wellness action plan developed to provide staff with support to help minimise any negative impact of stress including the risk of absence.
- A review of the policy framework for assurances in relation to unconscious bias has been commissioned and the findings will be reviewed alongside an updated analysis of diversity in the workforce. The current Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is coming to an end and a review of achievements and priorities for the next strategy period is being undertaken. This will include diversity analysis, diversity networks and champions, unconscious bias and will be brought to the Board for discussion in March 2020.

- 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.
- 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 (project Sapphire) and development of a new intranet. Extensive staff consultation has shaped the requirements for the new ECMS system, which will provide efficiencies and productivity opportunities through better technology, a better user experience and improved data capture, analysis and reporting. 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. 70% of sites have now received upgrades. The remaining sites are subject to wayleave negotiations.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

PARTNERS

- Responses have been submitted to the President's working groups on public and private law. These are also published on the Cafcass website. The two working groups have now been reconvened to refine proposals in the light of the consultation responses. We have made representations to MoJ and DfE that the Family Justice Board needs to play a stronger role in overseeing delivery, including resourcing a programme office and strengthening the support arrangement for LFJB.
- A response has been submitted to the Law Commission's consultation on its proposals to modernise the laws around surrogacy.
- In anticipation of the publication of the report of the MoJ Spotlight Review Panel on harm in the family courts, and the Government's response to it (expected April 2020), we are undertaking work internally on steps we might take in response to the findings and our own assessment of the issues. The areas being developed relate to: clarifying expectations of the family court process; strengthening our practice and transparency of our decision-making; reviewing our commissioned services; improving our capture and learning from case data, audit and feedback; and improving our dialogue with domestic abuse organisations.
- The thinking from the combined internal private and public law strategy group on the prioritisation and coordination of where practice changes are most needed, and to catalyse the work to be delivered in partnership, is being embedded within the new delivery priorities, and overseen through the CMT performance cycle.

- Work to develop auto case creation in ECMS upon receipt of the digital C100 is ongoing. 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 is 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 November 2019. This work also includes establishing a Research Advisory Committee in collaboration with Cafcass Cymru which we expect to be established early in 2020.
- 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) where she is leading work to improve ASGLB's use of data and research; and Assistant Directors sit on the regional equivalent boards.
- Cafcass is represented on the Children and Families across Borders working group which meets quarterly.
- The Positive co-Parenting Programme has been shortlisted for two awards - the Safeguarding Award and the Family Justice Award. The app, How it looks to me, was also shortlisted for the Social Work Award - For the initiative that has made the biggest contribution in transforming life chances and opportunities for vulnerable children and young people through building relationships and helping families experiencing difficulties, including where there are child protection concerns. Winners will be announced at the CYPNow awards ceremony in London on 28 November 2019.

Measurement Key

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