



Board Meeting 28 May 2021

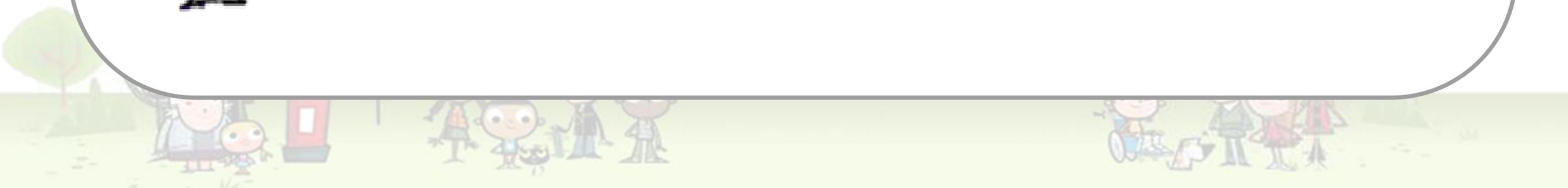
CEO headline messages with senior leadership team





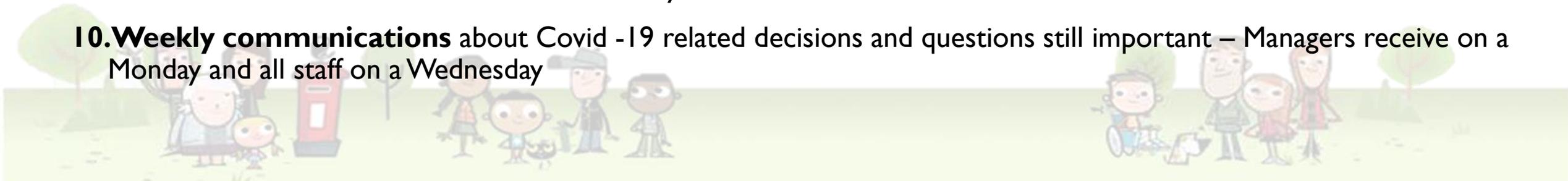
COVID – 19, impact, practice and people

1. Covid – 19 Overview - JT
2. The numbers - JT
3. Prioritisation – next steps including the balanced scorecard – JT
4. Resourcing strategy - NG
5. Seeing children - SP
6. Quality of remote working - SP
7. Delays for children – staff survey and family feedback - SP
8. Principal Social Worker update - SP
9. Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes – SP
10. Domestic Abuse learning and development programme - SP
11. Learning and improvement plan - HJ
12. Budget - JB
13. Ofsted and improvement planning - JT
14. Strategic planning – Transformation and Improvement – TW/JT/JB
15. Together – Practice Framework SP/BT



Covid-19 Overview

1. **Programme board continues to meet weekly**
2. **With exception of restrictions from social distancing** – our business is as usual. Return to in person work still increasing though consideration regarding attendance at court is required given caseload pressures
3. **Prioritisation a key item for review every week**
4. **Planning for an organisation after COVID – 19 – due to take paper on 3 June**
5. **People data** – absence and turnover
6. **Morale and demand** remains front and centre – our live discussions are helpful and direct us to focused ‘think in’ conversations
7. **Quality of practice and seeing children** remains a leadership priority. 96% of children seen have a recording – about 45% in person
8. **Trades unions** are actively engaged
9. **Visible leadership very important** – vlogs, blogs, live events, think ins – a different sort of connection together that comes from isolation and continued uncertainty
10. **Weekly communications** about Covid -19 related decisions and questions still important – Managers receive on a Monday and all staff on a Wednesday



The numbers.....

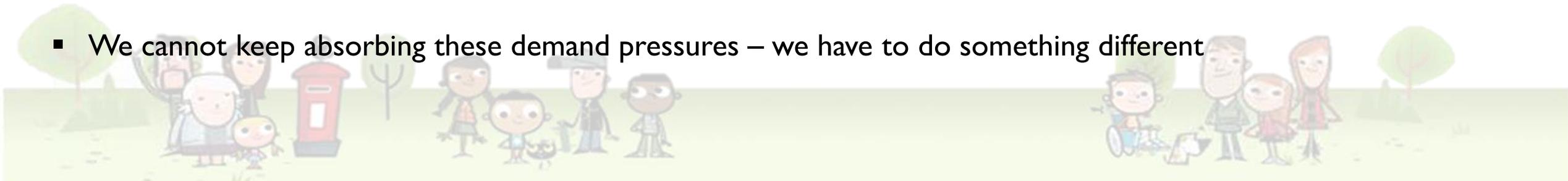
1. Number of children and families with **proceedings open to us continue to increase, albeit more slowly. Volume of open work remains close to record levels** due to reduced capacity and backlogs in the family courts and demand restored to pre – pandemic levels in private law
2. At 24 May, there were **37,785 open active cases (where there is known future work for Cafcass)**.
3. **There is 26% more active work (+7,684 cases / ~12,300 more children) compared to May 2020.** By type of proceedings, this means there has been an increase of **15% (1,841) in public law** and **32% (5,843) in private law**
4. **Case durations continue to increase** and therefore influence caseload levels. The number of active S31 proceedings with a duration between 26 – 35 weeks are **+21% (+440 proceedings)** compared to May 2020. Active cases with a duration above 36 weeks are **+57% (+1,381 proceedings)** for the same period.
5. **Private Law pre-first hearing (EIT) cases** are **+44% (+3,279 cases)** when compared to May2020 snapshot.

The numbers (2)

1. **System throughput remains compromised – 2020/21 financial year 12% lower compared to 2019/20, although it recovered from a 20% drop during the financial year**
2. **Caseloads for social workers remain high** : work after first hearing are 23 sets of proceedings, with 66% of qualifying staff holding > 20 sets of proceedings with known future work. For private law case work before the first hearing, active caseloads average 56 due to increased delay in hearings and high demand
3. **462 FCAs carrying ‘above threshold’ caseloads (>40 in EIT and >25 in WAFH)**
4. **Duty allocations at 1,572 – 2500 children – close to highest since CAP in 2014**
5. **Practice supervisors** carrying on average 15 sets of proceedings which is close to a full caseload and means support and oversight at the frontline is almost completely diminished .With Service Managers overseeing the quantum of duty work – that capacity is also compromised.
6. In terms of system capacity at Cafcass – long term teams are at **90% saturation**.This means there is little headroom to allocate more work.Worst case scenario of low case closures will mean that in **4 weeks, this could be as high as 97%** based on recent demand levels.

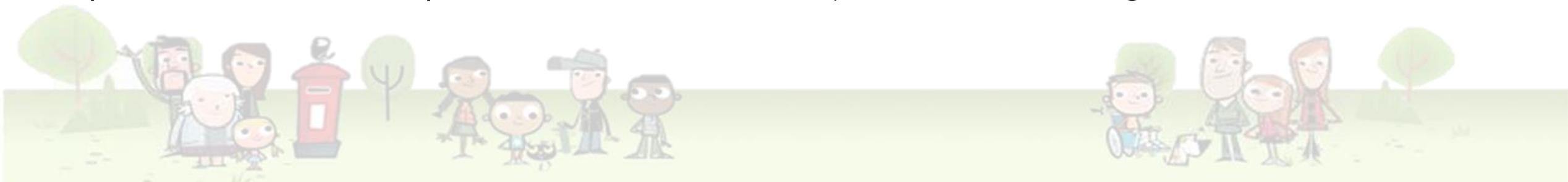
Prioritisation – a reminder about why

- **The volume of open active work is 26% greater than before the Pandemic**
 - ✓ 7,500 more active cases and close to ~12,000 children on active work
 - ✓ Practice Supervisors holding an average 15+ active proceedings so first line practice oversight is compromised
 - ✓ 66% of staff over 20 sets of proceedings
 - ✓ 30% over 25 set of proceedings
 - ✓ Cafcass Associate capacity full – 1,500 cases
 - ✓ Duty system for allocation of proceedings is saturated in one service area – 3 more are close
- **Persistently high caseloads, unchecked, will have a detrimental impact on our staff, the quality of practice and on children**
- The demand pressures are due to increased private law applications and a slower rate of court disposals due to the impact of Covid-19 on all parts of the family justice system
- Whilst previous peaks in demand have been managed effectively through duty allocation, the current situation represents a relentless and ongoing rise that cannot be sustained safely
- We cannot keep absorbing these demand pressures – we have to do something different



Prioritisation – so what's different?

- We are committed to **bringing FCA caseloads down** to a safer level and **freeing up Practice Supervisors** to support best and consistent practice in working with children
- We are being **open and honest** with Family Division Judges, the Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service that it is not sustainable or safe for Cafcass staff to hold a system-wide problem – it will take the whole system to solve this situation
- We will be **open and honest with children and families** about our ability to allocate their case and the potential for delay – giving them an opportunity to challenge that decision
- Our approach to making decisions about activating prioritisation in a local area will be made carefully, **exhausting all the viable measures, taken with our partners, to prevent prioritisation within a reasonable timescale** and we will communicate openly with all parties
- We have held challenge meetings in 4 service areas and the Covid-19 board made the decision to activate the protocol and to work to open an allocation hub in one subject to one final challenge on the data next week.



Resourcing strategy

- Headcount – additional 168 (Covid-19 funded) since April 2020
- Further projected new starters over next 3 months – 81 (75 are frontline)
- Known leavers (over next 3 months, incl retirements) - 37 (31 are frontline)
- 12 Month Turnover 9.7% (20 May 2021) compared to 9.5 % last year (31 May 2020)
- 3 Month Turnover as at 21 May 2021 overall 3.1% (Social Work staff 2.7% /Non-Social Work staff 4.7%)

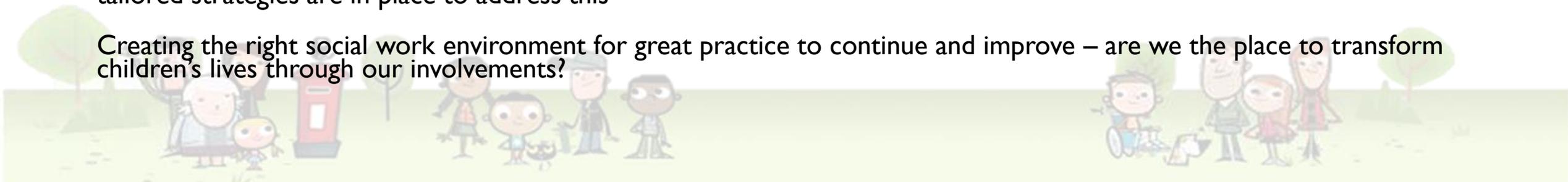
Priorities

1. **Talent pipeline** – Appointed 3 Aspiring NQSW who will convert onto the full Social Work Academy programme for which selection is underway. Also converting talented agency workers onto permanent Cafcass contracts.
2. **Reviewing recruitment** of all social workers to ensure quality, speed and best value.
3. **Working with our recruitment partner Penna** using evidence based insights to further develop the employer brand strategies to attract and retain talent linked to the wider People and Organisational Development strategy.

Challenge

Candidate market for Social Workers remains quite static in some areas such as the South West, Lancashire and Midlands – tailored strategies are in place to address this

Creating the right social work environment for great practice to continue and improve – are we the place to transform children's lives through our involvements?



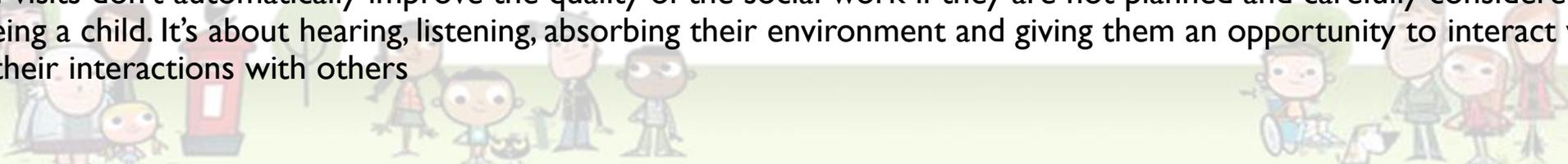
Our most important responsibility – to see children and to advise the family courts

- **New guidance** issued 13 November and again 5 January 2021 . **National lockdown 3 in January – default position changed to remote seeing of children unless by exception – new variant, R number and national lockdown were reasons**
- **‘Live event’** with all staff on re-issuing 5th COVID – 19 guidance on 8 March – as a result of change from alert level 5 to 4 – change will take us back to default of seeing children in person with risks fully assessed and rationale made clear if not in person
- In addition – **new policy on timeliness of seeing children, purpose, recording and management oversight**
- Clear that our **priority is to see children in person** when this is in their best interests – BUT, accepting that 10 additional sets of proceedings per family court adviser (and for some more) this means having to **prioritise and balance all children with those most in need and at risk - rationale to be clear to child, family and court and recorded contemporaneously**
- **Children seen audit** – 85% who should have been seen were. 15% who were not – mostly defensible decisions – we are reviewing learning
- Data as at May 2021, 96% children with a record of being seen – 45% in person
- Continued **operational priority** on managers knowing **when children have ‘no record’**, what the reasons for this are and ensuring all children are seen
- Continued focus on the **quality and impact of the engagement with children** and the way this is recorded and reported

Quality of Remote Working – drawn from recent Heads of Practice survey of work with children 3 years and under

Summary of the findings

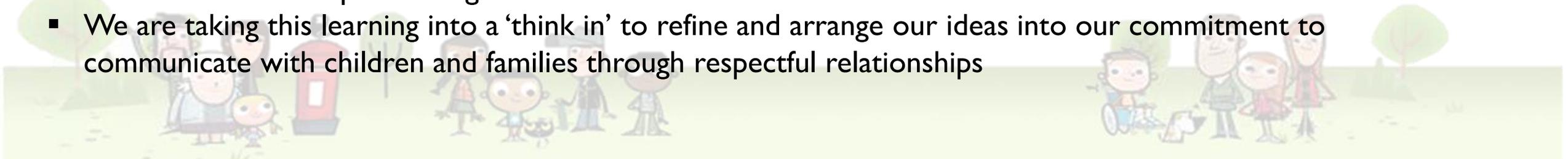
- Remote working requires us to adapt, adjust and innovate in order to ensure that good quality interactions with children continue
- Early planning of direct work is critical, whether remote or face to face
- There are some limitations to remote work in terms of gathering environmental and sensory information that can be gained via an in-person visit
- There are some good quality remote interactions taking place with this age group
- Assumptions are sometimes made early that due to a child's age they will not be able to express their views and wishes
- Practitioners want to visit and complete face to face work, whilst still recognising that remote working is appropriate in some instances
- Where contact observations take place, those that use the Child Observation Tool give far more information about the child, their behaviours and their interactions whether undertaken directly or remotely
- Additional support is needed to help our people strengthen their observational skills when working with young children and asking the right question of the professionals and people who know the child to form a clear picture of them
- There is a difference in the quality of recording – where sensory information was evidenced on face-to-face visits/direct work, the recordings are more descriptive and detailed
- In person visits don't automatically improve the quality of the social work if they are not planned and carefully considered – it's not just about seeing a child. It's about hearing, listening, absorbing their environment and giving them an opportunity to interact with you and observe their interactions with others



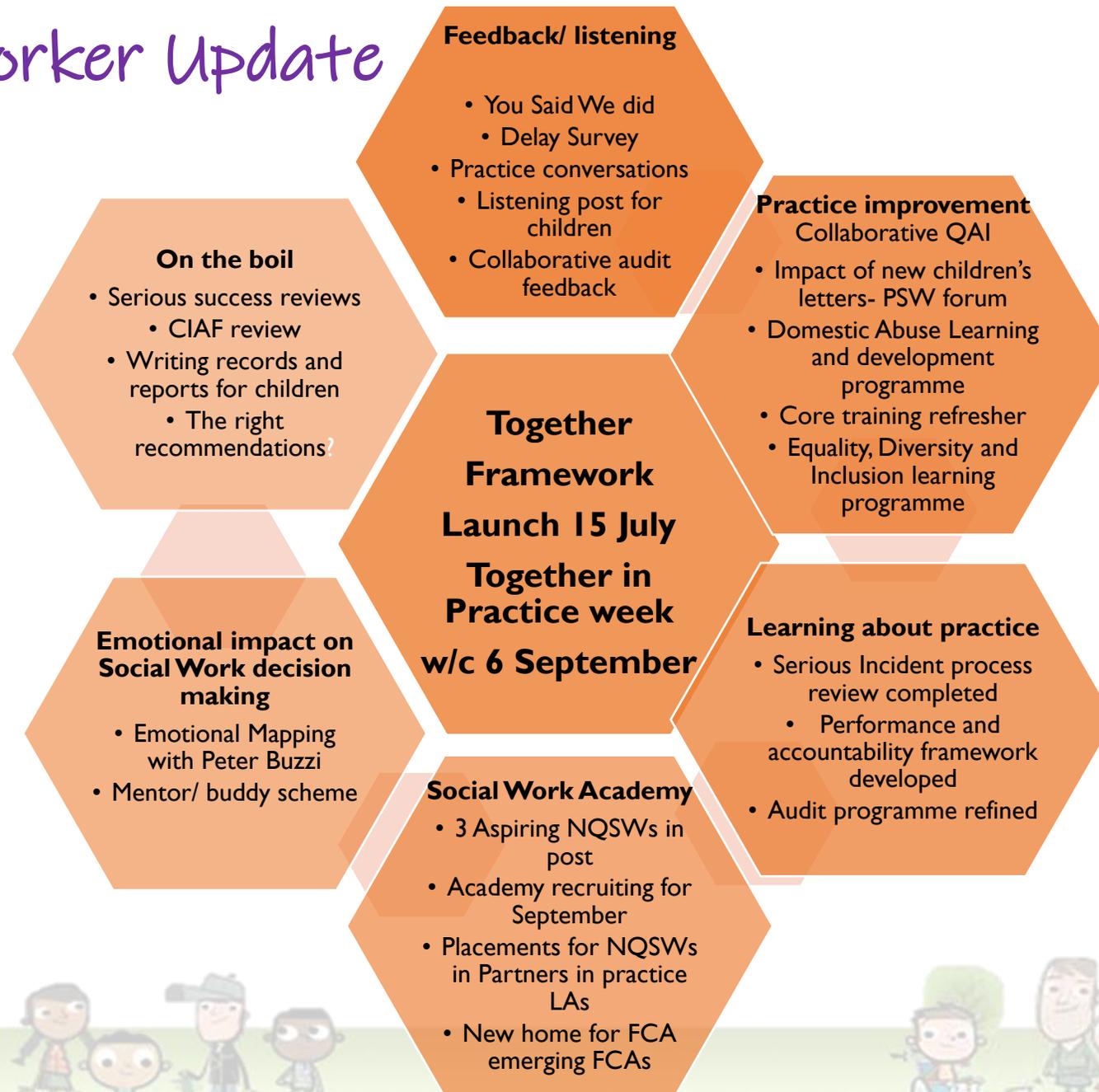
Delays for children and families – their voices from a survey we undertook in May 2021

- **100 randomly selected sets of proceedings** – 50 private law and 50 public law
- Wrote to parents/carers – **43 interviews in total (33 private, 10 public)**
- In private proceedings, **many could not quantify delay** - largely because they didn't know what to expect in the first place
- **63% of those spoken to in private proceedings didn't receive a kind/helpful explanation** about the delay
- **50% didn't know what to do about the impact of delay on their children**
- **Where families did receive an explanation, they said this was helpful** to them and their children
- 50% also said that the **impact of delay in private proceedings was profound for their children** – causing anxiety from continued uncertainty and in those instances where a non – resident parent was waiting for contact – the relationship with their child was badly damaged
- **All respondents were critical about remote work** and felt that much understanding was lost by the absence of in – person visiting – this was far more serious in the public law proceedings where parents/carers thought it was impossible to understand the complexity of a child's life remotely

- Their **hopes for the future were for better communication from Cafcass and more speedy resolution** of their proceedings
- We are taking this learning into a 'think in' to refine and arrange our ideas into our commitment to communicate with children and families through respectful relationships

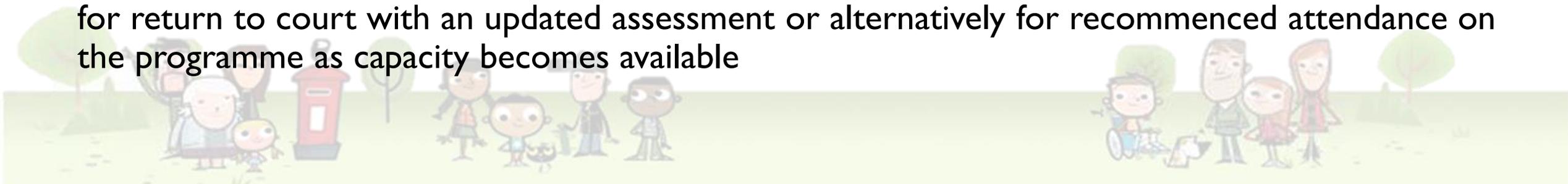


Principal Social Worker Update



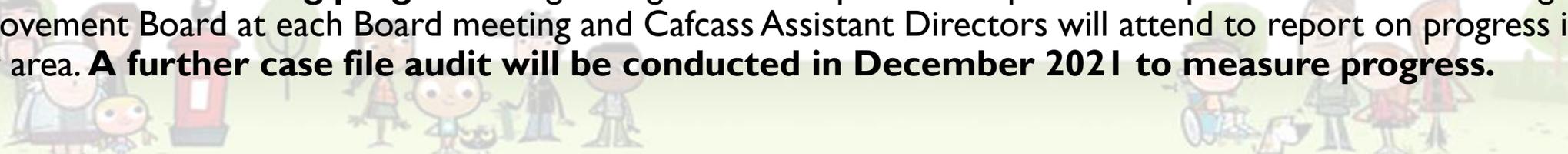
Domestic Abuse Perpetrator programmes (DAPP)

- CEO and Andrew MacFarlane, President of the Family Division (PFD) have jointly issued guidance which prioritises completion of the Programmes for the 700 families where the course has not commenced or is part completed due to the pandemic
- The guidance also covers arrangements for reviewing these families and for communicating with the children and families involved
- Ministry of Justice has approved the use of a proportion of the funding allocated to DAPP provision to review the children's situation where delay has occurred and to reassess their needs where circumstances have changed
- The DAPP Review Team is being established and their work will result in families being prioritised for return to court with an updated assessment or alternatively for recommenced attendance on the programme as capacity becomes available



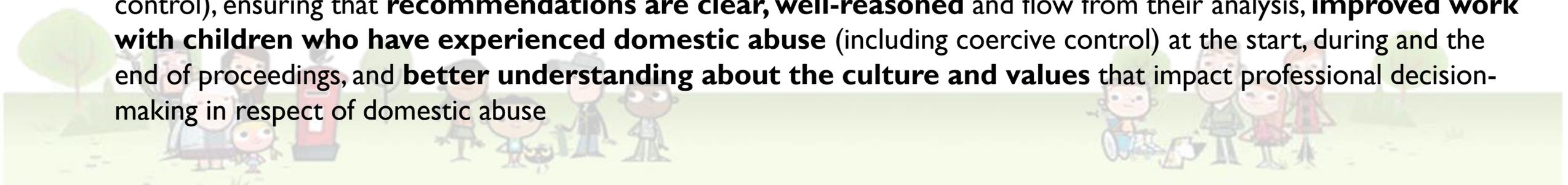
Domestic Abuse Learning and Improvement Plan

- In September 2020, Cafcass established a **Learning and Improvement Board** to oversee an improvement programme for Cafcass' work with children and families who have experienced domestic abuse. Co-chaired by Cathy Ashley (Chief Executive of Family Rights Group) and Angela Frazer-Wicks (Trustee of Family Rights Group and a founding member of their Parents' Panel), the Board is made up of professionals, and parents and young people who have lived experience of the family justice system
- The Board is overseeing the development of a **Cafcass Domestic Abuse Learning and Improvement plan** that draws on findings from the Ministry of Justice (Moj) Expert Panel on Harm in the Family Courts.
Work to date includes:
 - **A case file audit**, moderated by volunteer members of the Learning and Improvement Board.
 - **Four separate focus improvement groups** with Family Justice Young People's Board, Family Court Advisers and parents with lived experience.
 - **Scrutiny of improvement priorities** by Learning and Improvement Board members.
- We have a new **Cafcass Domestic Abuse Learning and Development Programme** that will roll out the updated Cafcass Domestic Abuse Practice Pathway over a number of months to embed learning. The programme went live this month and is mandatory for all Cafcass staff. We **aim to publish the Cafcass Domestic Abuse Learning and Improvement Plan by the end of June.**
- **Process for monitoring progress:** Progress against the improvement plan will be provided to the Learning and Improvement Board at each Board meeting and Cafcass Assistant Directors will attend to report on progress in their area. **A further case file audit will be conducted in December 2021 to measure progress.**



Domestic Abuse Learning and Development Programme

- Senior leaders, managers and all FCAs are **expected to complete the programme**
- The training is based on the updated Cafcass Domestic Abuse Practice Pathway and Guidance, which is now launched internally
- The programme is **not a one-off event**, it incorporates videos, workshops, time for reflection and application in practice, webinars hosted by our partners and with input from experts by experience
- Over 570 staff are already booked to attend either the Practice Supervisor, FCA sessions or the Managers' sessions We currently have 33 sessions set up between May and August with new dates for September to December being added shortly
- Managers will receive a **monthly report with an update on staff completion.**
- Training objectives include, a **strengthened ability to risk assess patterns of domestic abuse** (including coercive control), ensuring that **recommendations are clear, well-reasoned** and flow from their analysis, **improved work with children who have experienced domestic abuse** (including coercive control) at the start, during and the end of proceedings, and **better understanding about the culture and values** that impact professional decision-making in respect of domestic abuse



Budget

a) Outturn position for 2020/21

- The final outturn for 2020/21 was an overspend of £2.9m, compared to an in year forecast of £3.4m as previously reported. The main areas of reduction were in staffing costs and IT projects. The final position remains subject to audit which is scheduled for September 2021.

b) Budget 2021/22

- Grant funding for the current financial year from the MOJ has increased by £8m compared to the previous year. A forecast of commitments was carried out in late April 2021 to support the setting of the budget. Formal forecast reporting will commence from the end of May 2021.



Ofsted – focused visit April – Final letter 7 June

“There is a passionate culture centred around doing the right thing for children.”

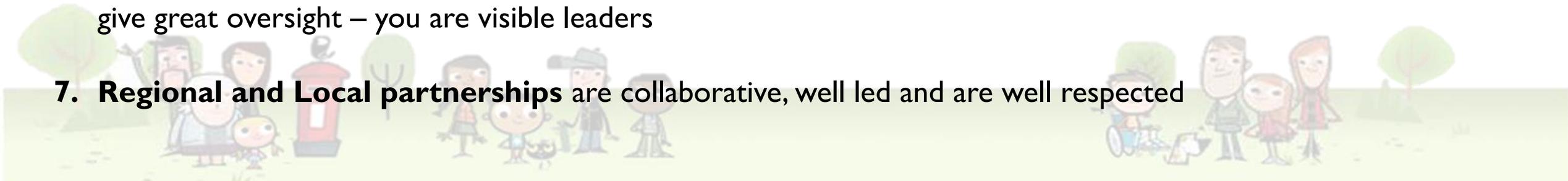
“Leaders and the board have sustained and improved Cafcass’ track record of placing children, their welfare and safety at the centre of their work across all teams”

“Inspectors observed accomplished FCAs patiently working with children at their own pace, helping them to understand what is happening so that they can tell their story.”



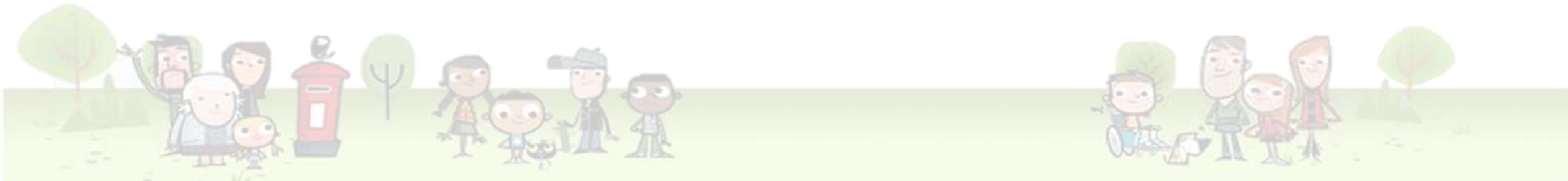
The good stuff we can build on

1. **Safeguarding letters** – recommendations that are balanced, focused on children and help the court to make decisions
2. **Section 7 reports** – show strong work with parents and children to resolve difficulties and end proceedings and where they are good reports, they show clear analysis of risks to children
3. **Public Law** – timely allocation, good analysis in reports, good evidence of discussion with local authorities about why proceedings are issued and whether care plans are strong enough. Good engagement with IROs
4. Our **focus on children** is evident – the new introductory letters and the later in life letters were singled out as strengths where they are in use . Ofsted say our culture is open and makes this work easier
5. Cafcass is a **supportive place to work** and we **promote the health and well – being** of our people
6. Our **Duty allocations** system is used to prioritise the children in most need of help and to manage demand well. It is protective of our staff, is said to be mature and effective, enabling managers to assess risk well and to give great oversight – you are visible leaders
7. **Regional and Local partnerships** are collaborative, well led and are well respected



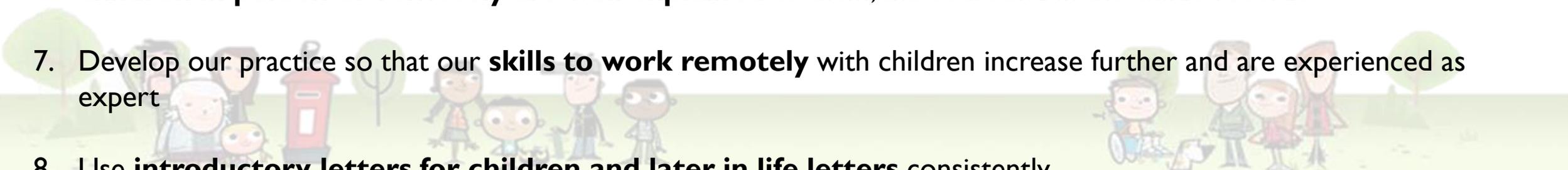
The good stuff we can build on (2)

8. **Business Services** and our **National Business Centre** is a critical start to all the work that happens and remains impressive
9. Our **practice framework** will be central to the further improvements we want to make in practice – the **case plans** are an example of where we can do even better
10. **FJYPB** – they are more connected to and involved in our work
11. Our **leadership throughout the pandemic**, at all levels, has been strong and has made a difference to recovery and solutions
12. **Local leadership in the service areas and regions** is visible and making all the difference to what is happening for children .We are enabling **open and transparent feedback** from all colleagues



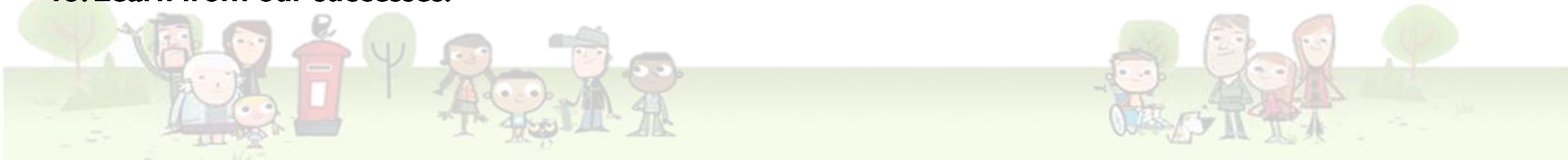
What more can we do for the children and families we serve?

1. Provide more opportunities for **practice supervision and reflective case discussion** - for all and including **newly qualified social workers (NQS)**
2. Show a clearer connection between **managers, leaders**, the value added to **complex case decisions** and **impact on the quality of practice**
3. Develop our practice so that our **understanding of strengths and risks, rationales and analysis** are consistently clear and reports are **shared with families and children**
4. Develop our practice so that the **uniqueness of children** is much clearer in our assessments about them and our recommendations – particularly White British children
5. Develop our practice so that any **identified risks for a child are considered for all children living in or visiting** the household
6. Fully **implement and lead our 'seeing children' policy** and develop our practice so that our **decisions to see children in person or remotely are well explained** to them, the court and in the child's records
7. Develop our practice so that our **skills to work remotely** with children increase further and are experienced as expert
8. Use **introductory letters for children and later in life letters** consistently



What more can we do for the children and families we serve? (2)

9. **Encourage children to write letters to judges** expressing their wishes and feelings
10. At the start of **public law proceedings**, share our **early thinking and reflections** with the local authority, including **arrangements for seeing children in person**
11. In **public law proceedings**, consistently **submit final analyses from the Guardian in preference to a position statement**
12. Spend more time **understanding the specific and complex needs of children who are the subject of an application to restrict their liberty** and setting out our view to the court
13. Revise and implement a **new case plan** so that what is happening for the child is clear, **our assessment of the impact on them is presented and our next steps are set out**
14. Revise the **case management system so that chronologies and case summaries are present**. This should include a clearer and more child focused contact log alongside a clearer account of wishes and feelings.
15. **Learn from our successes!**

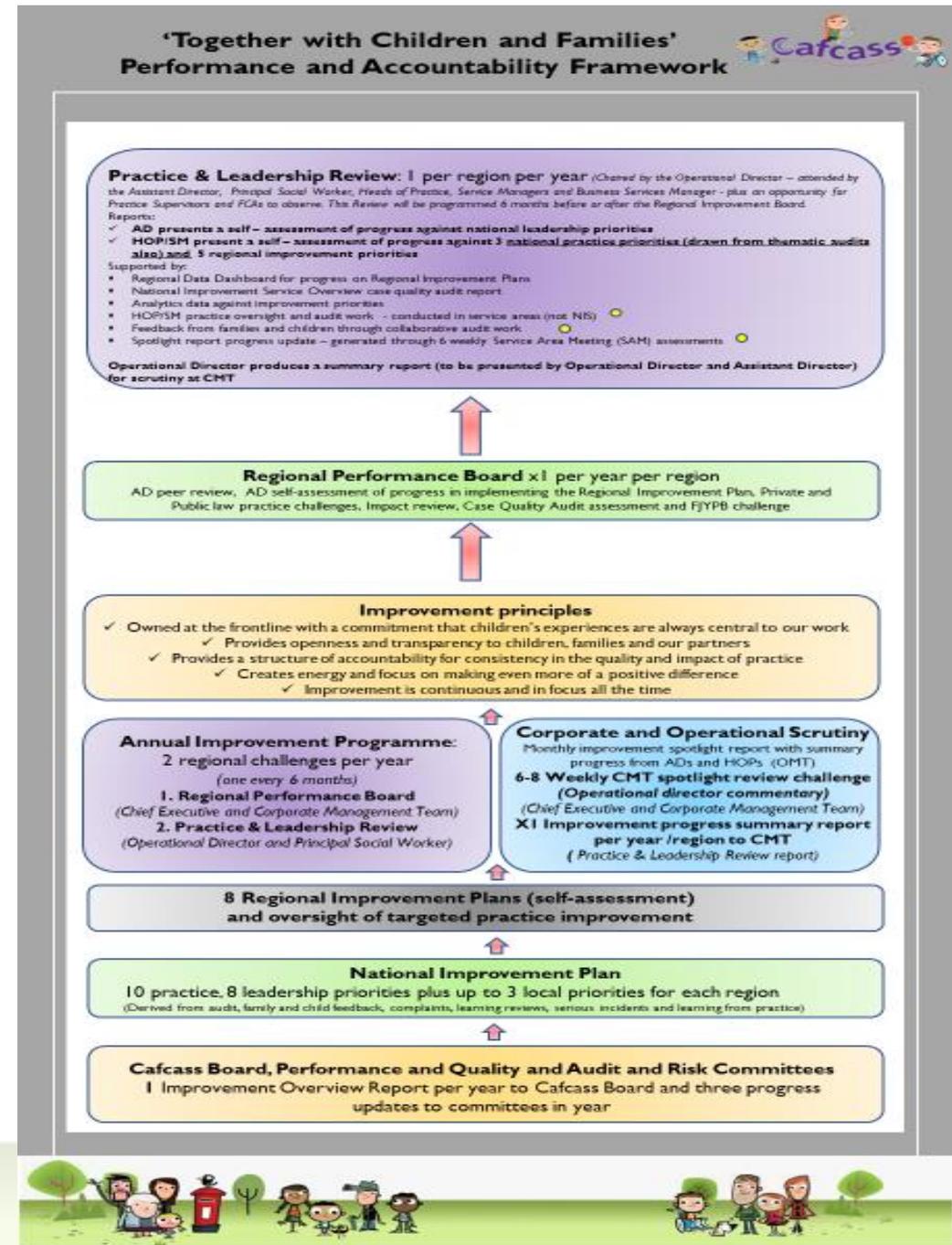


Performance and accountability

- i. **XI Spotlight report** (identified practice issues and selected national improvement priorities) monthly to **OMT with AD regional updates** - Areas of practice risk cross referenced to strategic risk register
- ii. **XI Spotlight report** 6-8 weekly to **CMT** with **Director's progress commentary**
- iii. **XI Regional Performance Board** per year
- iv. **XI Practice and Leadership Review** per year

NOTE: informed by Heads of Practice assessments from Service Area Meetings each month where improvement priorities are reviewed

- i. **XI annual improvement progress overview /region/year** by operational director to CMT
- ii. **X3 reports to Performance and Quality Committee** per year (summarising regional annual improvement reports)
- iii. **XI Annual improvement report to Cafcass board** per year



Performance and accountability (2)

Practice & Leadership Review: 1 per region per year (Chaired by the Operational Director – attended by the Assistant Director, Principal Social Worker, Heads of Practice, Service Managers and Business Services Manager - plus an opportunity for Practice Supervisors and FCAs to observe. This Review will be programmed 6 months before or after the Regional Improvement Board.

Reports:

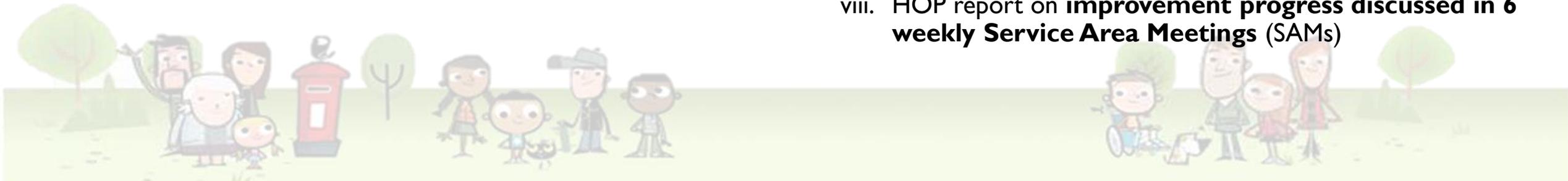
- ✓ **AD presents a self – assessment of progress against national leadership priorities**
- ✓ **HOP/SM present a self – assessment of progress against 3 national practice priorities (drawn from thematic audits also) and 5 regional improvement priorities**

Supported by:

- Regional Data Dashboard for progress on Regional Improvement Plans
- National Improvement Service Overview case quality audit report
- Analytics data against improvement priorities
- HOP/SM practice oversight and audit work - conducted in service areas (not NIS) 🟡
- Feedback from families and children through collaborative audit work 🟡
- Spotlight report progress update – generated through 6 weekly Service Area Meeting (SAM) assessments 🟡

Operational Director produces a summary report (to be presented by Operational Director and Assistant Director) for scrutiny at CMT

- i. **AD self assessment** against **10 National Leadership Priorities**
- ii. AD narrative on **regional performance data dashboard**
- iii. Report on **practice issues** (strengths and areas for development) arising from **regional case quality audits**
- iv. **Analytics report on improvement priority data**
- v. **HOP self assessment** against **3 national practice priorities** (thematic audits as well as national improvement plan) and **5 regional improvement priorities**
- vi. HOP/service manager report from **own audits and practice oversight** (not NIS generated)
- vii. HOP report on **themes from family feedback** in collaborative audits
- viii. HOP report on **improvement progress discussed in 6 weekly Service Area Meetings (SAMs)**

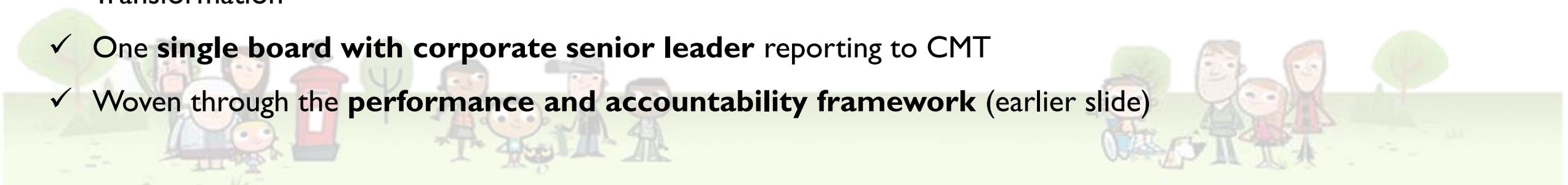


Strategic planning and transformation

- ✓ Preparing to lead our year 2 priorities with new energy – thinking event 26 May 2021, publication of year 2 plan – end June
- ✓ 25 projects, within 9 delivery priorities – all a combination of improvement or Transformation

Transformation priorities:

- ❑ **‘Together for children and families’** – practice framework: Transforming our culture and relationships in all we do
- ❑ **Digicafcass:** exploit digital opportunities to enhance the voice of the child in the family court process and construct a more efficient and convenient platform for our work
- ❑ **Internal preparation for Private Law Reform:** Transforming our Early Intervention Service and piloting new early pre- court arrangements in the work to first hearing, including improved links to pre – court services. Improved assessment and support for families with complex needs
- ❑ **Workforce Matters** :Transforming recruitment, retention, our brand and our pay and reward. Helping our people to help children and their families to the best standard possible
- ✓ Determined to **harness the energy of corporate and operational functions** together in Transformation
- ✓ One **single board with corporate senior leader** reporting to CMT
- ✓ Woven through the **performance and accountability framework** (earlier slide)



2021/22 Priorities Programme

2021/22 Priorities Programme	CMT Lead	Change type	2021/22 Priorities Programme	CMT Lead	Change type
			Supervision	Operational Director	Strategic Plan
Together - Practice Framework	Operational Director	Transformation	Feedback from children & families	Director of Strategy	Strategic Plan
			Families Forum	Director of Strategy	Strategic Plan
Private Law Reform	Director of Strategy	Transformation	Prioritisation to manage demand	Operational Director/Director of Strategy	Strategic Plan
Digital offer	Director of Resources	Transformation	Public Law Toolkit	Operational Director	Strategic Plan
			Demand reduction programme	Director of Strategy	Strategic Plan
			Establish Partnership Board	Director of Strategy	Strategic Plan
Workforce Strategy	Director of Resources	Transformation	Review MI	Director of Strategy	Strategic Plan
			Archiving Arrangements	Director of Resources	Strategic Plan
			Infrastructure and system changes	Director of Resources	Strategic Plan
			Estates Strategy	Director of Resources	Strategic Plan
Ofsted National Improvement Plan	Operational Director/Principal Social Worker	Practice Improvement	Leadership & management expectations	Director of Resources	Strategic Plan
			Improvements to Corporate Governance Arrangements	Director of Resources	Strategic Plan
Post-pandemic operating model	Director of Resources	Business As Usual	Success framework	Director of Resources	Strategic Plan
			ED&I Strategy	Director of Resources	Strategic Plan

A final suite of values, principles and 'what difference' measures – phew!



Through our relationships, we make balanced decisions

'Our reports to the court and our records are balanced. They set out the strengths and difficulties for families'



We listen and act with care and understanding

'Our work with each other will seek to understand our own and other's strengths; including children and families'



We work with risk and uncertainty to create better and safer outcomes for children

'Children and Families have an outcome during and at the end of their proceedings that they know and understand'



We promote the safety and welfare of children

'Children and families feel they are understood and that their views and experiences have been heard'

Being curious about what is important to you and your life

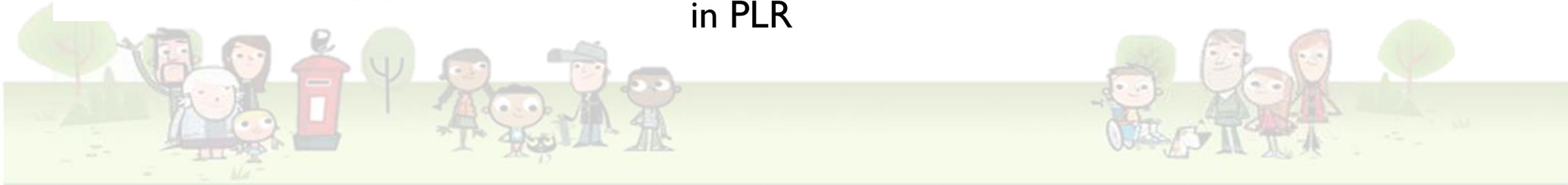
We respect and value the uniqueness of each child, family and colleague

'Children and families feel that their individual circumstances, needs and personal characteristics have been recognised'

Together - Launching Wednesday 15th July



- Leadership live event for launch
- A 'think in' for each region
- Practice sharing from our evaluation pilots
- FJYPB leadership on success measures
- Restorative practice
- Leadership pledges – what can people expect
- What are the three things to start us off?
- Developing our Avatars..... 'a child in mind'
- Personal statements/ commitments recorded in PLR



Together in practice week 6th – 10th September

**COMPETENCY
BREEDS CONFIDENCE**

I feel
able +
uplifted!



- The whole organisation in focus – for 5 days
- FJYPB leading serious success implementation reviews
- Leadership Live every day
- Regional peer reviews
- ‘On the road’ tours
- Personal statements/commitments - how far have you got and how do you know?
- Teach in’s
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Live Appreciative Inquiry every day
- Collaborative Audits
- Collaborative Case Planning – leaders and practitioners – business, corporate and practice
- Solution Circles
- Together in 90mins
- Practice think-ins

