



Board Meeting 7 July 2021

CEO headline messages with senior leadership team



COVID – 19, impact, practice and people

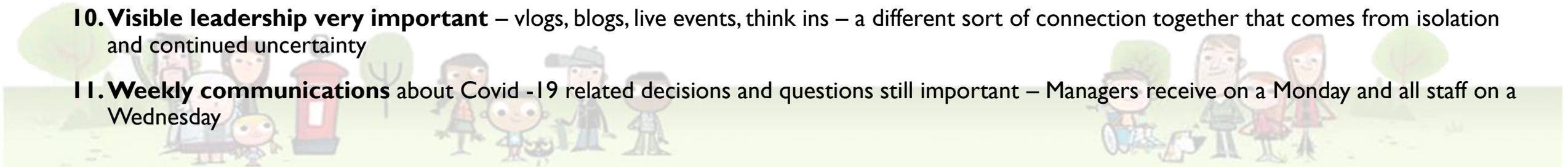


1. Covid – 19 Overview - JT
2. The numbers - JT
3. Prioritisation – next steps including the balanced scorecard – JC
4. Resourcing strategy and next steps on workforce strategy - AB
5. Seeing children – SP/JC
6. Principal Social Worker update - SP
7. Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes – SP
8. Domestic Abuse learning and development programme – SP – update on training
9. Budget - JB
10. Strategic planning – Transformation and Improvement – TW/JT/JB
11. Equality, Diversion and Inclusion - JB
12. Together – Values, in action, making the difference AND our launch plans
13. Annual Report and Accounts - TW



Covid-19 Overview

1. **Programme board continues to meet weekly** – likely to consider standing down Covid board gradually from September until end October
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 and decision every week .We have two areas needing to activate the prioritisation process – one is going live on 12 July, the other in mid August on current data. This is our only viable solution for families who are delayed in private proceedings – we have not however secured a decision from MOJ on the resource required to manage unallocated work.This is significant and is a point of note for today’s board discussion**
4. **Planning for an organisation after COVID – 19 with new ways of working now being tested including with business services officers – evaluation in September 2021**
5. **People data** – absence and turnover
6. **Morale and demand** remains front and centre – our live discussions are helpful and focused conversations with our staff. Service managers remain compromised with oversight volumes, supporting the frontline and expectations about future change and improvement.We need to review what is possible and realistic . Dedicated ‘think in’ planned
7. **Quality of practice and seeing children** remains a leadership priority. 96% of children seen have a recording – c 58% in person
8. **Trades unions** are actively engaged
9. **Family Justice System** – under pressure – but Cafcass feels to be carrying a disproportionate weight. Need to consider how well understood our fragility is in the context of volumes remaining high with slower throughput and the potential reduction in judicial sitting days
10. **Visible leadership very important** – vlogs, blogs, live events, think ins – a different sort of connection together that comes from isolation and continued uncertainty
11. **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 remains unmanageable without urgent action in at least two regions. 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 2 July there were **36,932 open active cases (where there is known future work for Cafcass)**.
3. **There is 22% more active work (+6695 cases / ~10,700 more children) compared to February 2020.** By type of proceedings, this means there has been an increase of **13% (1,553) in public law** and **28% (5,142) in private law**
4. **Case durations continue to increase** and therefore negatively influence caseload levels. Public law proceedings now average 43 weeks and Private proceedings 51 weeks.
5. **Private Law pre-first hearing (EIT) cases are +28.8% (+2,318 cases)** when compared to June 2020 snapshot.

The numbers (2)

1. **System throughput remains compromised – 2020/21 financial year throughput is 12% lower than 2019/20. Whilst the national rate of disposals is increasing, there are still fewer disposals than before the pandemic and the system is opening more work than it is closing.**
2. **Caseloads for social workers remain high** : work **after** first hearing is 22 sets of proceedings, with 62% of qualifying staff holding > 20 sets of proceedings with known future work. For private law case work **before** the first hearing, active caseloads average 52 due to increased delay in hearings and high demand
3. **1 in 4 FCAs carrying ‘above threshold’ caseloads (>40 in EIT and >25 in WAFH)**
4. **Duty allocations at 1,626 – 2,500 children** – close to highest since CAP in 2014. This is absorbing 25% of our service manager capacity and is causing us to be very concerned about their well – being and our ability to oversee practice safely. This is a significant factor in the decision to activate the prioritisation process in some areas.
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.
6. In terms of system capacity at Cafcass – long term teams are at **close to 90% saturation**. This means there is little headroom to allocate more work.

Prioritisation – a reminder about why

Prioritisation is needed to protect our social workers, practice supervisors and frontline managers from overload that, unchecked, will have a negative impact on the quality of practice and decision making that affects the lives of children

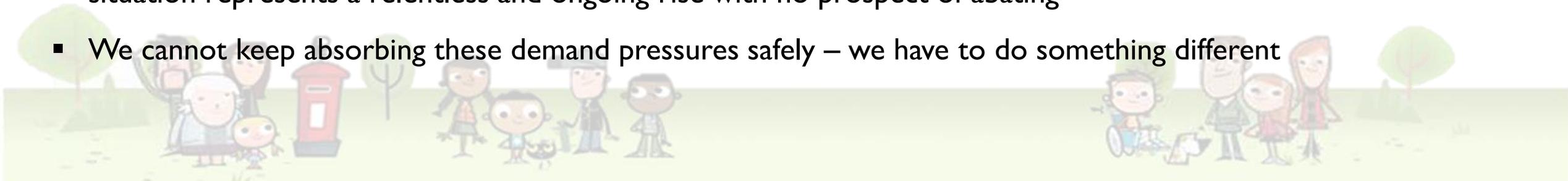
The volume of open active work is 22% greater than before the Pandemic

- ✓ 6,500 more active cases and close to 11,000 more children
- ✓ Practice Supervisors holding an average 14+ active cases so first line practice oversight is compromised
- ✓ 64% of staff over 20 sets of proceedings
- ✓ 26% over 25 set of proceedings
- ✓ 20-25% cases held by agency social workers and Cafcass Associates
- ✓ Duty system holding more than 1,500 cases and time to allocation has increased so management oversight is compromised

- 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

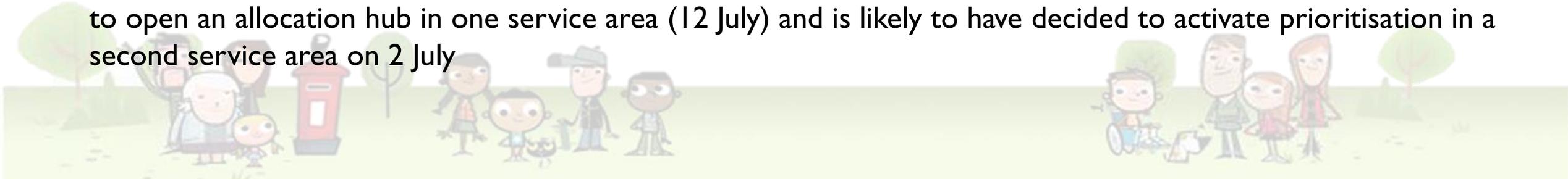
- Whilst previous peaks in demand have been managed effectively through our duty allocation system, the current situation represents a relentless and ongoing rise with no prospect of abating

- We cannot keep absorbing these demand pressures safely – we have to do something different



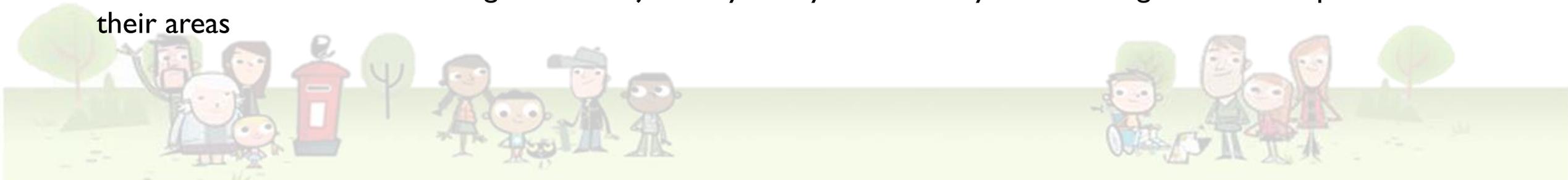
Prioritisation – so what will be different?

- We are committed to **bringing FCA caseloads down** to a safer level, **freeing up Service Managers** to undertake management oversight of the quality of practice and **releasing Practice Supervisors** to support best and consistent practice in working with children as well as practice improvements
- We are being **transparent** with Family Division Judges, the Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service that it is not sustainable or safe for children that Cafcass staff hold a system-wide problem – it will take the whole system to solve this situation and it is going to take time
- Prioritisation means that 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 and **with our partners, exhausting all the viable measures to prevent prioritisation within a reasonable timescale** and we will communicate openly with all parties
- We have now held 6 challenge meetings. The Covid-19 Board has made the decision to activate the protocol and to open an allocation hub in one service area (12 July) and is likely to have decided to activate prioritisation in a second service area on 2 July



Prioritisation – where next?

- The balanced scorecard is reviewed monthly by the National Director for Operations and the Assistant Directors considering the data together through Challenge Meetings to review at a service area level:
 - ✓ *Demand over the last 4 weeks compared to a 6 month average*
 - ✓ *Duty allocations to Service Managers*
 - ✓ *Number of FCAs and locum FCAs with over 25 sets of proceedings*
 - ✓ *Number of practice supervisors with over 12 sets of proceedings*
 - ✓ *Status of starters and leavers – ie workforce pressures*
 - ✓ *Quality of work*
- Covid-19 board remains the decision maker after a recommendation from the National Director for Operations
- Negotiations are ongoing with the President of the Family Division and the Ministry of Justice to gain their trust in the option of prioritisation or to find a different way forward in managing the demand pressures safely
- The President of the Family Division is issuing a ‘ways of working’ paper proposing 5-6 measures that will help to reduce demand
- Assistant Directors are meeting with local judiciary to try and find ways of reducing the demand pressures in their areas



Resourcing strategy

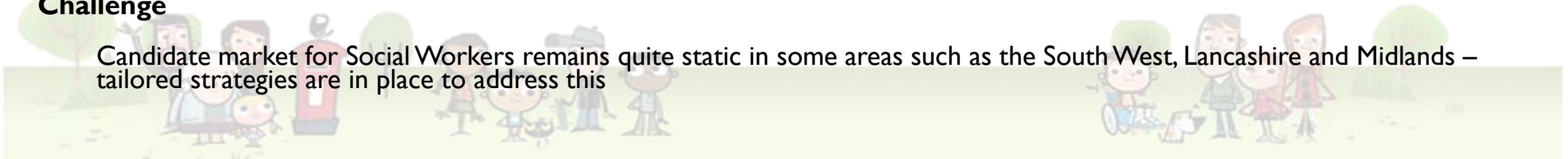
- Headcount – additional 168 (Covid-19 funded) since April 2020
- Further 86 projected new starters over next 3 months (1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021)
(77 are frontline – 75 FCA and 2 Service Managers)
- 159 agency staff of whom 123 are family court advisers. 45 are supernumerary.
- Known leavers (over next 3 months, incl retirements (1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021): 36 (34 are frontline)
- 12 Month Turnover is starting to increase -10.8% (28 June 2021) compared to 9.1 % last year (30 June 2020)

Priorities

1. **Talent pipeline** – Social Work Academy programme selection will be concluded in July. Continuing to convert talented agency workers onto permanent Cafcass contracts.
2. **Forward recruitment linked to workforce planning** – has better anticipated requirements to bring in capacity in advance of leavers exiting the organisation.
3. **Working with our recruitment partner Penna** on a programme 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



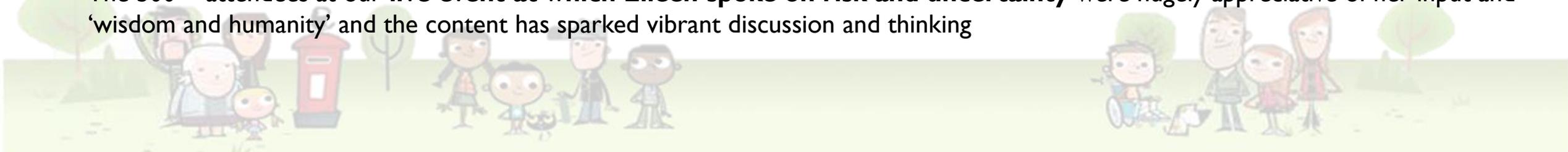
Our most important responsibility – to see children and to advise the family courts

- As restrictions ease it is our priority 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 in some cases more) means having to prioritise and balance all children with those most in need and at risk - rationale needs to be clear to the child, their family and the court and recorded contemporaneously
- As at 21 Jun 2021 **95.9% of children with open cases were recorded as having had a meeting** with their Family Court Adviser, with **58.5% of children having had a ‘seen in person’** record added
- This is an increase from 45% with an in person meeting in May 2021
- Our **focus remains on ensuring all children have a record of the engagement with them, on the quality of the interaction, that they have a say about how the engagement occurs, and that the rationales for the decisions regarding, timing and method of meeting are recorded**
- To support the practice and the policy on child engagement we are working on **Management Practice Quality Standards** and we are undertaking a **dip sample audit into the decisions taken for children in public law proceedings not to have a meeting in specified timescales , currently circa 900 of 1,500 children**
- We continue to **investigate and formally manage the process for the children for whom there is no record** of being seen , currently circa 1,200 children



Principal Social Worker Update

- My first point is to reflect on the ongoing and **deepening impact of the increased numbers of families** Cafcass are working with. The impact is being felt right across the organisation
- The concern is on the **impact on the well being of our staff**, but of course fundamentally on the real anxiety about and potential for this to impact on the quality of our service too children and families
- Our **first major national audit in the 2021/22 programme** is almost complete and we're analysing outcomes ahead of reporting on these. However at this point it's possible for me to say, as was recently found by Ofsted , **this audit is not finding evidence of a worsening picture on quality of practice**
- The audit programme this year has been designed to test the **impact of the improvement actions in the National Improvement Plan**, for example the extent to which social work analysis has been strengthened and explanation provided about how and why recommendations have been made
- Leaders have been focused on preparing to launch our **Practice Framework 'Together'** on 15 July and to plan for 'Together in Practice' week in September
- We're continuing to **listen to families' experiences of delay** and their feedback on our service during this period and to identify key improvements to respond
- The **Learning and Development programmes** particularly in respect of Domestic Abuse and Equality Diversity and Inclusion are gathering pace and excellent feedback from participants, who are finding time to access and engage in spite of the continuing challenges of high caseloads
- Similarly, **staff are actively engaged as we work with them to find efficiencies** in process and practice, particularly in the Early Intervention Teams to support them to continue to deliver the best possible service to children and families
- The 500 + attendees at our **live event at which Eileen spoke on risk and uncertainty** were hugely appreciative of her input and 'wisdom and humanity' and the content has sparked vibrant discussion and thinking



Domestic Abuse Perpetrator programmes (DAPP)

- In person delivery of the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator programmes is recommencing in many parts of the country and there are early signs for the families who have experienced significant delay of the provision becoming available
- It is going to take time to work through
- Planning for our specialist team dedicated to reviewing children's circumstances and exploring options with them and the courts is well underway – this is specifically for the 700 families waiting for a DAPP
- The aim is for this team to commence its work at the end of July



Domestic Abuse Learning and Development Programme – training update

The table below provides detail on Phase 1 completion and workshop booking numbers broken down by element as of 30/06/2021.

	Domestic Abuse Practice Pathway and Guidance	Domestic Abuse Learning & Development Programme 2021: Videos x 3	Domestic abuse Guidance workshop	Booked
FCA/PS	232	181	242	585*
SM/HoP	26	26	35	77
Total	258	207	277	662

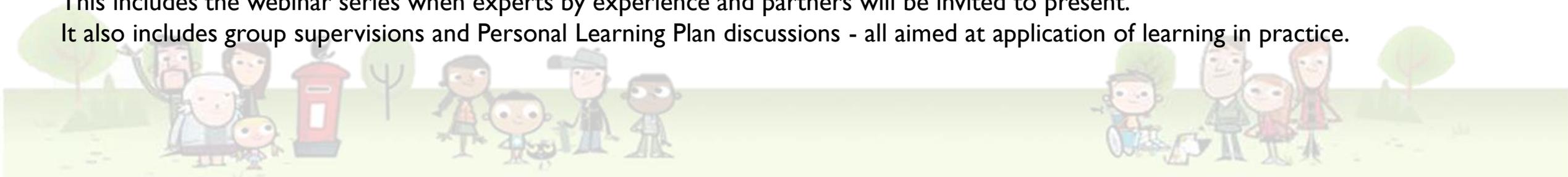
*this includes Cafcass Associates (87)

There are a total of **1,698** practice staff including managers and CMT. The intention is for all to have completed these elements of the programme by December 2021

Phase 2 of the programme is scheduled for the autumn.

This includes the webinar series when experts by experience and partners will be invited to present.

It also includes group supervisions and Personal Learning Plan discussions - all aimed at application of learning in practice.



Section 7 Hub – part of backlog handling – no longer a viable option

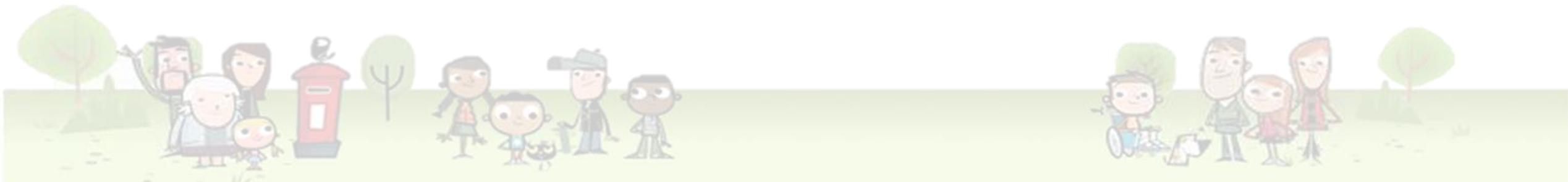
- The S7 Hub was established in October 2020 as part of an innovation to manage unprecedented demand upon Cafcass services.
- The hub was set up as a **national remote team** to specifically complete S7 assessments, received on a quota basis from operational areas.
- The team consisted of 8 FCAs employed on an agency basis and 2 managers. They produced on average 2 to 3 reports each per week
- The team benefited from a bespoke induction programme. They also made use of supervision and reflective team meetings and the quality of work for children was good, for example all children received introductory and outcome letters
- However, due to the need to recommence meeting in person with children and the challenges of funding the hub, which was not as cost efficient as area based teams, the **decision has been taken to close the hub** on a phased basis, by the end of July
- The learning will be taken forward in respect of the specialist induction and in other ways, including:
- Being an excellent testing ground for developing practice of **Together**, the new practice framework, promoting a child centre-outcome culture drawing on the Cafcass Positive co-Parenting Programme and restorative practice



Budget

Budget 2021/22

- Grant funding for the current financial year from the MOJ has increased by £8m compared to the previous year.
- Our management accounts to the end of May 2021 indicated the level of spending in the first two months was consistent with the profiled budget.
- Our forecast of current commitments however, exceeds the level of budget remaining and thus represents a risk to the budget in the order of c£2.5m.
- The June management accounts and updated forecasts will be reviewed by CMT in July 2021 in order to decide on the extent to which this financial risk can be mitigated and the consequences of any measures to do so.



Our Strategic Priorities for 2021/2

Practice

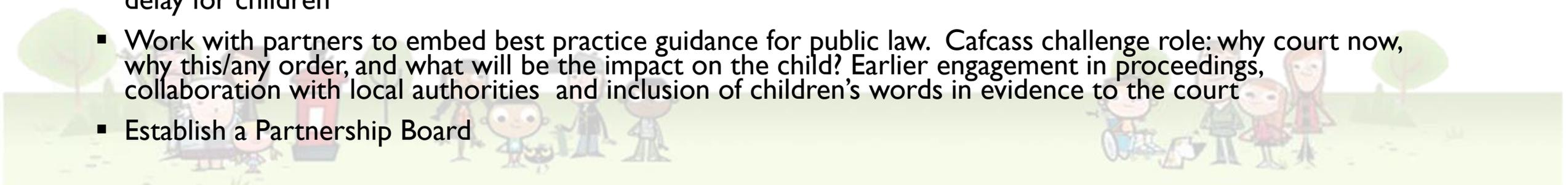
- National Improvement Plan
- Domestic abuse practice improvement plan
- Management oversight and supervision which strengthens practice in complex cases
- Feedback: Family Forum, improved analysis of complaints and other feedback, new 'listening post' – staffed service to listen to children's feedback

People

- Develop post-Covid operating model - efficiency and improvement
- New Equality, Diversity & Inclusion strategy
- Estates strategy, infrastructure and systems for the longer term
- Success framework and supporting data and insight

Partners

- Improved joint analysis and working to manage and reduce the increased backlogs which result in risk and delay for children
- Work with partners to embed best practice guidance for public law. Cafcass challenge role: why court now, why this/any order, and what will be the impact on the child? Earlier engagement in proceedings, collaboration with local authorities and inclusion of children's words in evidence to the court
- Establish a Partnership Board



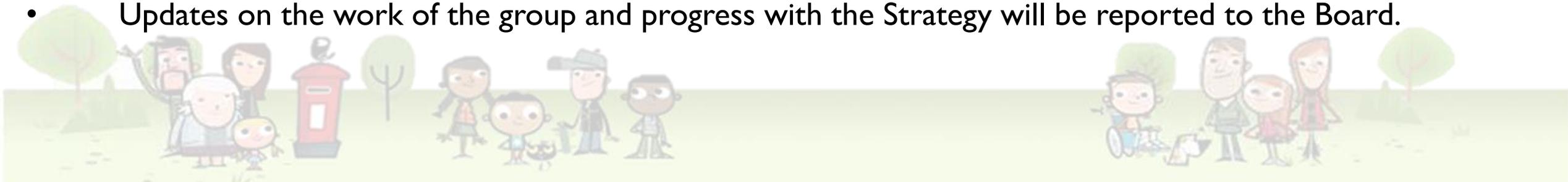
Our 4 Transformation priorities for 2021/2

- ❑ **Together for children and families** – a practice framework for ALL staff to transform our culture and relationships in all we do so that children and families are clear what to expect, know how we have reached decisions based on an understanding of their experiences and can expect a consistent quality of practice wherever they access our services *Led by National Director of Operations*
- ❑ **Digicafcass:** exploiting digital opportunities to enhance the voices of children in the family court process and construct a more efficient and convenient platform for our work. *Led by Director of Resources*
- ❑ **Internal planning for Private Law Reform:** Transforming our Early Intervention Service to provide a tailored mix of assessment and access to coordinated child-focused help/services so that first hearings are more effective; improved assessment and support for families with complex/safety needs who need our ongoing involvement and review of professional competencies in work to first hearing teams *Led by Director of Strategy*
- ❑ **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, through new leadership and management standards and a strengthened learning offer. *Led by Director of Resources*
- ✓ No new resource: realigning and prioritising what we have in a single plan that **harnesses the energy of corporate and operational functions** together
- ✓ One **single Transformation board to track progress with corporate senior leader** reporting to Corporate Management Team: now meeting 6 weekly
- ✓ Aligned with the **performance and accountability framework**



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- The Board approved the outline Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-24 at its meeting in May 2021. Arrangements for the oversight of the implementation of the strategy, including measuring its impact, are being overseen by our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group. This group reports to CMT and will meet 6 weekly, chaired by the Director of Resources as CMT lead in this area. Membership of the group includes:
 - CMT member leads for each of the 4 strategic objectives
 - Board member lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead
 - Head of HR & Organisational Development
 - Representative from the Diversity Network Chairs
 - Representative from the FJYPB
- Updates on the work of the group and progress with the Strategy will be reported to the Board.



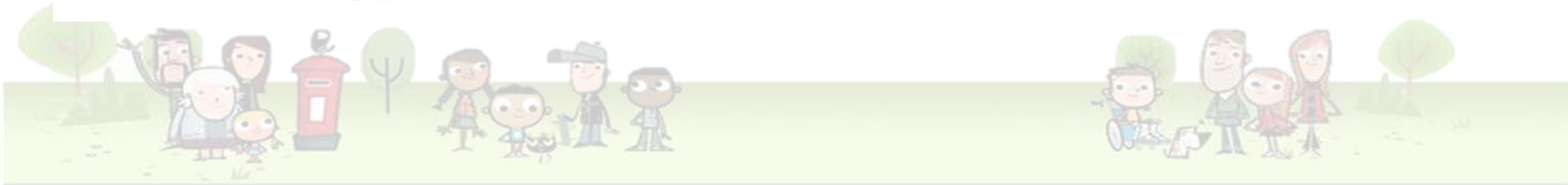
Together with Children and Families Our Logo



Together - Launching Wednesday 15th July



- Leadership live event for launch (to include practice learning from pilots, launch of practice materials and request for service area planning to deliver hard launch in September)
- A 'think in' for each region – planning to implement the case plan, consistent use of introductory letters and one other practice improvement depending on regional need/choice
- FJYPB leadership on success measures
- Leadership pledges – what people can expect
- Developing our Avatars..... 'a child in mind'
- Personal statements/ commitments recorded in PLR



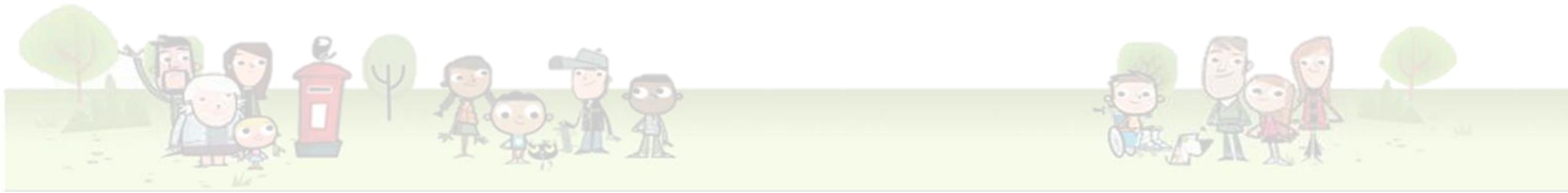
Together – How we hope it will work.....

Our values

In practice

**Making this
difference**

**Practice
Framework**



1

Our values

In practice

Making this difference

Practice Framework



Always looking for the strengths and risks



Through our relationships, we make balanced decisions



'Our reports and our records are fair and balanced, showing the strengths and difficulties for families and how these affect the children'

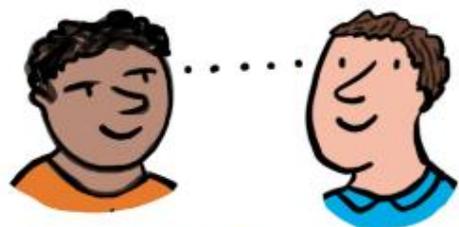
'With' not 'to'



Reflective and group supervision



Our values



Believing in respectful relationships

In practice



We listen and act with care and understanding

Making this difference

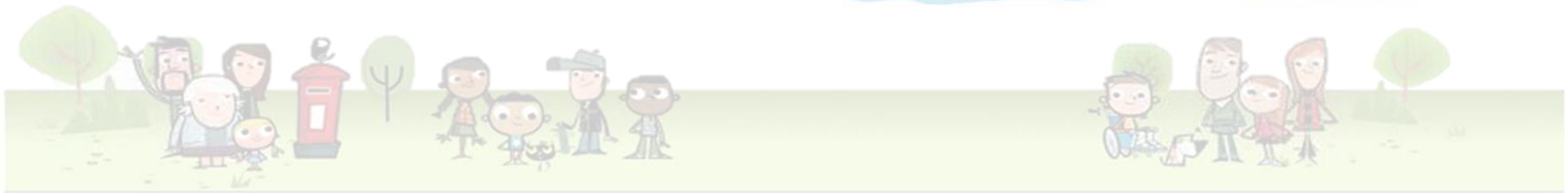


'When we work with children and each other, they and we feel respected and valued'

Practice Framework



Appreciative Inquiry



Our values



Decision making is clear and reasoned

In practice



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

Making this difference



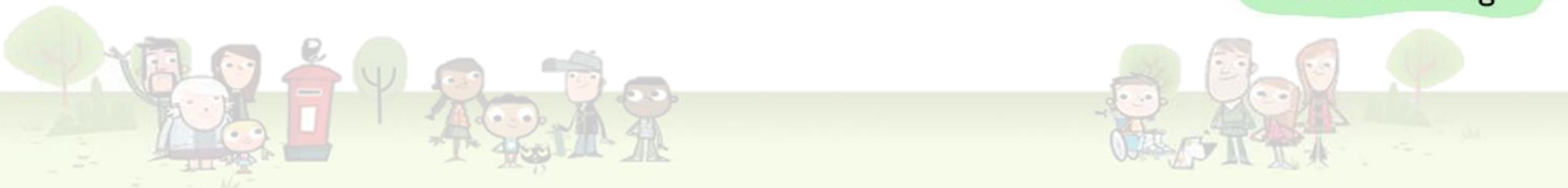
'Children and families know and understand what has happened at the end of their proceedings'

Practice Framework

No surprises when reports are filed



Assessment and Case Planning



Our values



Holding children and families at the heart of our practice

In practice

I will make sure that I tell others how to make you feel safe and happy



We promote the safety and welfare of children

Making this difference

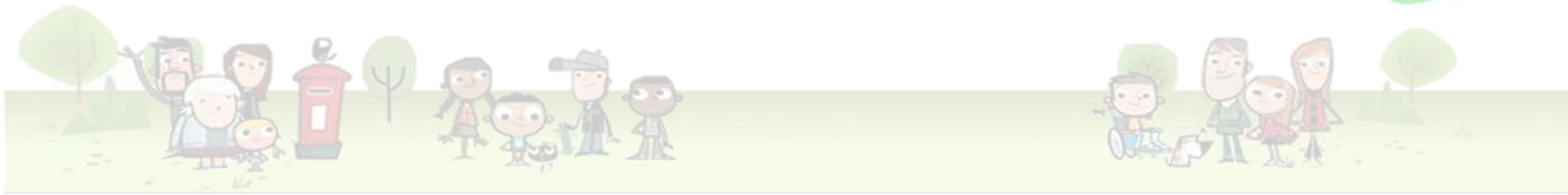


'Children and families feel they are understood and that their views and experiences have been heard'

Practice Framework



Family Story Boards



Our values

In practice

Making this difference

Practice Framework

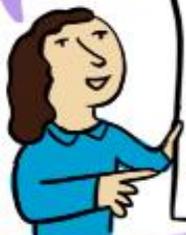
What's important to you?



Being happy with my mum and playing piano!

Wanting to know more about you and what is important in your life

Like this?



INTRODUCTORY LETTER

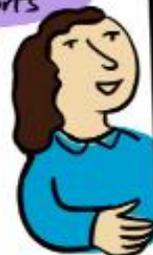
Fatima would prefer to live with her mum and keep playing piano

Yes, thanks



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

And this is going to the courts



REPORT

Fatima to stay with mum & keep playing piano

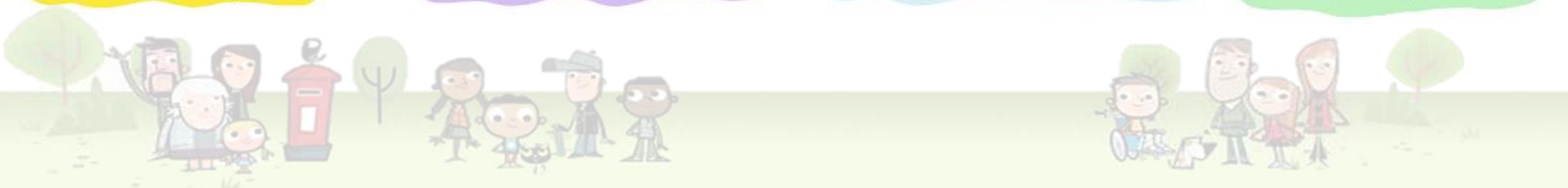


Great, it really stands out!

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



Introductory letters and reporting to court



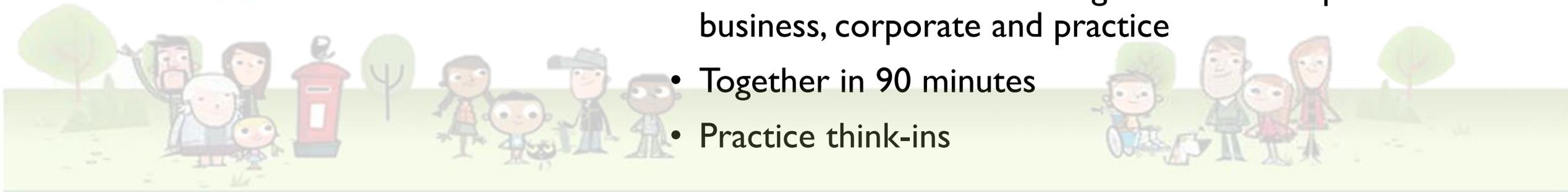
Together in practice week 6th – 10th September

**COMPETENCY
BREEDS CONFIDENCE**

I feel
able +
uplifted!



- The whole organisation in focus – for 5 days
- FJYPB leading reviews of successful implementation
- Leadership Live every day
- Personal statements/commitments - how far have you got and how do you know?
- Teach-ins
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Live Appreciative Inquiry every day
- Collaborative Audits
- Collaborative Case Planning – leaders and practitioners – business, corporate and practice
- Together in 90 minutes
- Practice think-ins



Forthcoming Annual Report & Accounts for 2020/21

- ✓ To be signed off at the Cafcass October Board
- ✓ Planned laying before parliament by the end of 2021 (**version for children and young people alongside**)

Coverage:

- Introduction and overview of our work with children
- The impact of Covid-19 and our organisational response
- Our Key Performance Indicators and supporting metrics
- Our people and practice
- Our learning and improvement
- Our ambition and progress against our strategic plan priorities
- Accountability report & annual accounts

Key themes

- relentless focus on engagement with children & families
- impact of Covid & leadership response
- working with partners to manage pressure & delay in the system
- supporting, engaging & challenging staff to develop and improve practice
- Improved focus on equality, diversity and inclusion

