

## **Cafcass Strategic Delivery Plan Year Two (2021/2)**

In developing our programme for Year 2 we have identified four projects which will together set us on the path to the transformed service we want to see for children and families. These are longer term projects which will extend beyond the end of the current strategy period in 2023, but we need to start them now so that we build firm foundations for the future.

### **PRACTICE**

#### Transformation

Our transformation project within Practice is to launch and socialise **Together with children and families**: a new Practice Framework to hold children and families at the heart of our practice and to promote strengths-based practice, respectful relationships, clear analysis and decision-making in all we do. This framework will reinforce and bring alive the new values and culture we want all those we work with to experience.

#### Strategic improvement

##### **Delivery Priority 1: Practice-led**

*We need to build stronger relationships and trust so that we can better understand children's and families' experiences and ensure these are clear in our case plans and reports to court*

- ✓ a review of the **supervision arrangements and management spans** within social work roles
- ✓ Deliver the specific actions identified in our **Domestic Abuse Practice Improvement Plan**.

##### **Delivery Priority 2: Feedback informed**

*We need to listen and learn better when we have got things wrong. We will*

- ✓ Our work to develop and strengthen the ways we invite and act on **feedback from children & families**
- ✓ Design and test a **Listening Post**, a dedicated freephone number delivered by specialist staff for children and young people who need a safe, secure and supportive environment to seek support in working through issues emerging from their lived experience during and after our involvement in their family.

##### **Delivery Priority 3: Learn and improve**

*We want to show great ambition to improve through visible action to embed our best practice and tackle those areas where we need to strengthen*

- ✓ Deliver our updated **National Improvement Plan** following our Ofsted Monitoring Visit, connecting actions at national and local level
- ✓ Introduce the **Families Forum**, building on the development work in Year One, and ensure learning feeds into practice,
- ✓ Complete review of **Complaints Framework** and implement recommendations

### **PEOPLE**

#### Transformation

We need to maintain our focus on **attracting** and **retaining** brilliant people. But at the same time thinking carefully about the **shape of the organisation**, and the roles and responsibilities within it as

well as the spans of control. This will help us develop clear plans about how many people we need and in what roles and with what **skill sets**.

We also need a new **digital strategy** to **extend the range of activities** we conduct with children, their families, amongst staff and also with our partners in a **digital rather than physical or manual form**, where appropriate. We expect this to include the migration of the Co-Parent Hub to the Cafcass Website; and development of a new web presence for children and families; and development of hybrid digital and face-to-face models for the commissioned services we manage on behalf of MoJ.

#### Strategic Improvement

#### **Delivery Priority 4: Reward, Recognition, Recruitment & Retention**

*Without our people we are nothing. We need them to feel respected and valued which ever part of Cafcass they work for and whatever their background.*

- ✓ Deliver key components of our **Workforce and Organisational Development** Strategy, focusing in particular on enhancing our reputation as an exemplary employer and addressing some of the structural factors affecting the supply of social workers.
- ✓ Develop and pilot a new **leaders and managers development programme**
- ✓ Develop our **talent management programme** to ensure it provides opportunities to staff from all backgrounds and professions in Cafcass, including by extending the **Cafcass Academy**.
- ✓ Publish our new **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy** (brought forward from Year 1) and publish our first annual equalities report.
- ✓ Introduce an **annual staff survey** and wider staff engagement through think-ins and events.

#### **Delivery Priority 5: Efficient and effective systems and resources**

*Our people need work environments that are safe & support their wellbeing, and the information and resources to do their best work*

- ✓ Commence a programme of work to **digitise our historic paper archive** as part of our work to improve access to records later in life.
- ✓ We will find out from staff what concerns they have about their well being and use this to check we have the **fullest range of support and resources** to help them and develop new resources where needed.
- ✓ While we had always planned to take a **fresh look at our office condition and locations**, the pandemic has changed how we work so much that we need now to rethink about the **purpose of those offices** too.

#### **Delivery Priority 6: Lines of sight**

*We need effective leadership and oversight so that our delivery programme is focused on activity that makes a difference to children's outcomes*

- ✓ A new **success framework** which builds on enhanced and more **meaningful analysis of management information** and deeper insights from practice.

## **PARTNERS**

### Transformation

We need to work towards a revised operating model for delivering Cafcass private law that will support the **Private Law Reform** programme, incorporating the **Integrated Domestic Abuse Court**, and make more effective use of resources in our work to first hearing. As part of this work we will improve the interface between better use of **Private law** pathfinders to test a revised child arrangements programme in private law, and to deliver a more efficient, effective and tailored service in the work up to a first hearing.

### Strategic improvement

#### **Delivery Priority 7: Manage Demand**

*We must focus our attention on risk to children and keeping the system balanced on quality and throughput. To this end we need to*

- ✓ Create thinking space to exercise professional judgement through our work to **manage demand** through the development of an approach to prioritisation to protect FCAs from unsafe caseloads and thereby prevent a deterioration in the quality of practice and decision-making that could have a detrimental impact on the lives of children. This will include coordinated work with the courts to ensure work ordered from Cafcass will make a material difference to court decisions.

#### **Delivery Priority 8: Accountable for Outcomes**

*We need to share and use our knowledge so our partners have a better collective understanding about which children's outcomes are not being best served by our decision or approach, and what action we need to take to improve.*

- ✓ Continue our work to develop **agreed local datasets**, drawing on case management data from Cafcass, the courts and local authorities to improve collective local diagnosis and implement local strategies for reducing delay, prioritising the most urgent cases, and improving outcomes. In support of this work we will strengthen the interface between HMCTS and Cafcass case management systems.
- ✓ Establish a new **Partners Board**: as part of wider work to share what we are doing with key partners, to understand how we are seen externally, and identify opportunities to collaborate.

#### **Delivery Priority 9: Family Justice Reform**

*We need to agree with partners a reform programme that redesigns the system so it supports children and families to achieve sustainable change; and with an approach and pace of delivery that is manageable for practitioners.*

- ✓ In line with recommendations of the **Public Law Working Group** report, we will develop a public law version of our child impact assessment framework to provide a clearer framework in public law and support appropriate inter-professional challenge about the use of pre-proceedings, rationales for decisions to issue proceeding and strengthened care plans for children.

- ✓ We will work in **partnership with ADCS** to examine support for Care Orders at home, minimising the use of experts and revisiting the principles from the Children Act 1989, including the “no order” principle