



Draft

**Cafcass Quality Committee Minutes
Friday 2 December 2016, 14.00 - 16.00
21 Bloomsbury Street, Charles Dickens room**

Present

Mary MacLeod, Chair of Quality Committee
Fay Selvan, Vice Chair of Quality Committee (via Video Conference)
Caroline Corby, Cafcass Board Member
Paul Grant, Cafcass Board Member
Deep Sagar, Cafcass Board Member
Professor Simon Hackett, Adviser to the Quality Committee (via Video Conference)
Joanna Nicolas, Adviser to the Quality Committee

In Attendance

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive
Christine Banim, Cafcass National Service Director (via Video Conference)
Elizabeth Morrison, Cafcass Information Assurance Officer (Minutes)
Stuart Moore, Private Law Policy Lead (Legislation) & Cafcass Policy Sponsor, Ministry of Justice

Apologies

Helen Watson, Cafcass Director of Strategy
Richard Green, Cafcass National Child Care Policy Manager
Stuart Smith, Cafcass Board Member

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Helen Watson, Cafcass Director of Strategy; Richard Green, Cafcass National Child Care Policy Manager and Stuart Smith, Cafcass Board Member.

2. Draft Minutes from the Quality Committee 16 September 2016 meeting

The minutes of the Quality Committee Meeting on 16 September 2016 were agreed by the Committee as an accurate record.

3. Action Log / Matters Arising

The Committee reviewed the Action log. All actions were noted as having been completed or as being on track.

The Committee discussed the next steps for the work on child outcomes which had been an item at the October 2016 Board meeting. It was agreed that child outcomes would form part of the exceptions reporting list to the Quality Committee and would include items based around policy and practice developments and data around child outcomes, where new or relevant data was emerging or being produced. There will be an item at the March 2017 Quality Committee meeting which will cover the present position on outcomes and the next stages.

There were no further matters arising.

Action 1: There will be an item at the March 2017 Quality Committee meeting on the position at that time on child outcomes and the next stages of this workstream.

4. Update on the Translation and Interpretation Service

The National Service Director presented an update on the translation and interpretation service supplied through Thebigword and gave an update on the progress made to improve the quality of services delivered. The report showed that a switch to telephone interpreting from face to face meetings is evident and that the services provided are being used more effectively. It was agreed that a review of the Cafcass website would be undertaken to ascertain whether more detail could be published to make clear to service users that a translation and interpretation service is available. Information on the demographic of users and of local populations; the use of Skype for translation and the work being done to increase the use of telephone interpreting were agreed as areas of work to be considered by the Equality and Diversity task and finish group.

Action 2: Review of the Cafcass website to be undertaken to ascertain whether more detail could be published to make clear to service users that a translation and interpretation service is available.

5. Assessment and Accreditation of Child and Family Social Workers – interim update

The Committee reviewed a paper on the proposed assessment and accreditation of child and family social workers, which is being developed by the Department for Education (DfE). The paper set out the latest position on the proposed accreditation system and the implications for Cafcass. The transition to accreditation and assessment can be eased by sensible preparation but there are a number of issues to consider including: how accreditation will affect the supply of social workers; if agency staff will be endorsed; if independent social workers will be endorsed in the same way as agency social workers; and the cost of the tests. Some of these issues which will form part of the policy proposals in the consultation paper on the proposed assessment and accreditation system.

The Chair thanked the National Service Director for her informative paper and looked forward to hearing about further progress on the proposed system.

6. IRO Liaison in Public Law Cases

The National Service Director presented a paper on Public law practice in relation to liaison with Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs). The paper outlined the improvements in Cafcass' liaison with IROs and proposals for initiatives which would lead to yet stronger engagement. The Committee discussed the reasons why there are fewer referrals from IROs to Cafcass than from Cafcass Family Court Advisers (FCAs) to IROs and noted that most IROs work for a Local Authority so it is difficult to make individual referrals. It was noted that it is important to have effective handovers from Cafcass to IROs as the impact of liaison on the child is generally improved by dialogue between the IRO and FCA throughout the life of a case. Continued improved practice in this area will have a positive impact on children and their families.

7. Head of Practice – Overview of the Role

Alex Kemp, Head of Practice and Carole Goodman, Assistant Director joined the meeting to present a report on the role of Heads of Practice (HoP). HoP have been in place since December 2015 when the existing Heads of Service were re-designated and additional HoP posts were recruited through an internal process. All Assistant Directors are linked to a HoP and the two roles work together on the practice improvement of the Towards Outstanding agenda. The re-designation has meant HoP have moved away from the management of a service and towards practice leadership, placing emphasis on practice and the quality of work. The HoP meet on a quarterly basis which enables a consistent approach across the country to be applied and also builds a supportive peer relationship enabling staff to draw on each other's expertise.

The Committee discussed the possibility of developing a pathway around child impact analysis to bring alive the experiences of children and young people to parents. The Assistant Director noted that the National Commissioning Team (NCT) are looking at more ways to capture the voice of the child through the commissioned programmes. It was agreed that the NCT presentation which would be an item at the December Performance Committee would be circulated to the Quality Committee for information. It was agreed that a presentation from the practice leaders group would be an item for the Quality Committee on an annual basis.

Action 3: The NCT presentation which is an item at the December Performance Committee will be circulated to the Quality Committee for information.

Action 4: A presentation from the practice leaders group will be an annual item for the Quality Committee.

8. Serious Incident Notifications and Submissions to Serious Case Reviews

Alex Kemp, Head of Practice presented the report on Serious Incident Notifications and Submissions to Serious Case Reviews. The report structure had been amended following discussion at the last meeting of the Quality Committee. The quarterly rolling data and individual management reviews are now provided in one report. The focus is now on a succinct analysis of learning derived from reviews conducted within Cafcass.

The Committee were pleased with the new format of the report. It was agreed that further detail about how Cafcass will ensure learning is carried out and embedded in the organisation will be added to future reporting. It was noted that the term 'suicide' should be amended to be 'took his/her own life'.

The Chair thanked the Head of Practice for the report.

9. Proposals regarding rationalisation of the Quality Account and Board/Committee Reports

At the 6 September 2016 Quality Committee, the Committee discussed rationalising some of Cafcass' annual reporting to the Committee in order for the Board to receive more analytical reports which were focussed on areas of Cafcass practice needing either to be highlighted or improved. It was then agreed that the Executive would review all Board and Committee reports with the same objective in mind. The proposed approach is based upon a rationalisation of Cafcass' annual reporting. By moving towards concise summaries, sometimes with a bespoke

dataset, rather than lengthy reports and consolidating the number of reports produced this will draw committees' attention to the relevant, contemporary issues in a more targeted manner.

As part of the approach, several of the previous annual reports, such as the diversity report, will be consolidated as statements into the Annual Report and Accounts. Exception reporting will ensure the Board and Committees still have sight of these substantive matters and will ensure that the issues are still considered and scrutinised in their own right. The final agreed schedule will be an item at the 27 January 2017 Board meeting. The new reporting schedule will be introduced for the March 2017 cycle of meetings.

It was agreed that the annual report of complaints, compliments and initiatives for/with service users (including Parliamentary and Health service Ombudsman activity) will go to the joint Quality and Performance Committee meeting in May 2017 to enable the Quality Committee to scrutinise the report.

Action 5: The annual report of complaints, compliments and initiatives for/with service users (including Parliamentary and Health service Ombudsman activity) will go to the joint Quality and Performance Committee meeting in May 2017.

10. Review of the Strategic Risk Register

The Committee reviewed the strategic risk register and discussed the risks where the Quality Committee has lead assurance.

The risk relating to Workforce (S4) has been split to create a Priority category risk around Capacity (new P4), and a separate Strategic category risk for Engagement (S4). This change has been made to acknowledge that the Capacity element is assessed as Red and there is rising pressure on staff through increasing demand and a deficit in FTE. The impact of this is higher workloads for staff. We are also seeing an increase in absence levels. To date the increasing demand and workloads has not impacted KPIs or quality of work however the risk is being kept under close review.

For Priority Risk P2, Quality of casework, it was suggested the risk could be expanded to include outcomes for children and families and that mitigations for the risk could be reviewed to include more quality based work/actions such as the practice leadership group.

11. Any Other Business

It was agreed that Cafcass acronyms would be removed from Committee papers going forward to avoid confusion and a clear table of acronyms will be included in papers to aid comprehension.

There was no further business.

12. Forward Planner

Following recent discussions about the rationalisation of Board papers, the Forward Planner for the Committee which was previously taken early in the meeting has been moved to the end of the agenda. This is to provide the members with an opportunity to both review what is due to come to the next meeting, but also to allow a brief discussion on what the collective expectation of the exceptions reports are so that the papers can be properly targeted.

It was agreed that work on brother and sister relationships should go to the joint Quality and Performance Committee meeting in May and that the work of the Research Governance would be an item at the March Committee meeting. It was also agreed that there would be a standing item for the Committee on a presentation on good practices and initiatives around quality improvement.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: Friday 3 March 2017, 14.00 – 16.00

- Action 6: An item on Cafcass' work around brother and sister relationships will go to the joint Quality and Performance Committee meeting in May 2017.
- Action 7: The work of the Research Governance Committee will be an item at the March Quality Committee meeting.
- Action 8: A standing item on a presentation on good practice around initiatives to improve quality will be added to the Quality Committee forward planner.

Action Summary

- Action 1: There will be an item at the March 2017 Quality Committee meeting on the position at that time on child outcomes and the next stages of this workstream.
- Action 2: Review of the Cafcass website to be undertaken to ascertain whether more detail could be published to make clear to service users that a translation and interpretation service is available.
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