



FAMILY JUSTICE YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOARD UPDATE

1. Voice of the Child Conference 2016

The Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB) have been busy preparing for this year's Voice of the Child conference which will take place on 27th October 2016 at Glaziers Hall, London. This year's theme is '*COMMUNICATION. INFORMATION. RESOLUTION: The key to improving experiences and outcomes for children and young people involved in family justice*'. We are pleased to confirm that the Minister Dr Phillip Lee will be opening the event with Anthony Douglas and Claire Tyler closing the event.

This is another child and young person led conference focusing on the voice of the child in family justice.

2. Working with NIS on E-Learning Module (Voice of the Child)

The aim is to produce an e-learning tool that can be shared with all professionals who work directly with children and young people in family justice, focusing on the Voice of the Child (VoTC). The FJYPB have enlisted the assistance of the National Improvement Service (NIS) team to assist with the production of this tool.

Khadija, Andrew, Sasha, Saffron and Farhana along with Jenn and Claire have met with the Cafcass NIS team and have produced the rough draft of the E-Learning module. Some great ideas were shared about what improvements the Board thought could be made.

We are hoping that the E-Learning module will be ready for release in early 2017. It will initially be available within Cafcass and we are working with the IT team to see how we can share it wider to other services such as local authorities.

3. Past and Future Research Projects

a. Unlocking Children's Rights – Coram Children's Legal Centre (August 2016)

FJYPB members Saffron and Matthew with Claire supported Coram Children's Legal Centre in looking at Children's Rights and how they can be better promoted in professional training. It is hoped that if staff are better informed and reminded about children's rights then they will be better able to support the children and young people that they work for.

b. Creating Pathways to Family Justice – Exeter University (August 2016)

The FJYPB took part in a focus group with mediation professionals, Cafcass and Exeter University. Jack, Farhana, Saffron and Andrew attending with Jenn. Members shared

their views on how children and young people could be involved in family mediation. They also shared ideas on how to improve the information that is available to children and young people about mediation.

c. Research in Practice – Family Justice Observatory Scoping Study (November 2016)

The FJYPB have been approached by Research in Practice to take part in a young person's focus group, together with young people from The Who Cares? Trust, to gather ideas about a family justice observatory. The focus group's aim is to find out from young people who have had experience of the family justice system and seek their views about what information is available to young people, what information they would like to have access to and how family courts can develop to make the best decision for children and young people.

The information provided by the FJYPB in the focus group will be written up into a report, alongside the views and experiences of others who take part and other information that is collected. The final report will be published in 2018. The report will go to the Nuffield Foundation to inform next steps on the observatory concept.

d. Exeter University - Delegalized Space and DIY Family Justice

The FJYPB have agreed to support the Delegalized Space and DIY Family Justice Project that is being assisted by Exeter, Cardiff and Bristol Universities. They have asked the FJYPB to help in the research around designing appropriate materials and perhaps testing out some searches. We have also agreed to sit as part on the Project Advisory Board to ensure children's voices are heard. We expect that there will be one meeting a year over 5 years. Additionally the FJYPB will be taking part in workshops to review online information about issues to do with family breakdown, to identify what improvements could be made to ensure that they are accessible for children and young people.

e. Siblings Relationships (January 2017)

The FJYPB have been approached by Daniel Monk from the University of London to support the Siblings and Child Law project. The aim of the research is to examine the extent to which and the ways in which sibling relationships are understood and taken into account in private and public legal processes and proceedings. The proposal for this research has been shortlisted for support by the Nuffield Foundation. We are waiting for Daniel's application to be announced in November 2016, with a view to the project starting in January 2017.

4. Wales – court reviews and office inspections

The FJYPB have now completed all of the commissioned Court Reviews and Cafcass Office inspections across Wales.

Cafcass Cymru have also commissioned the FJYPB to plan and deliver two participation workshops in Cardiff and Llandudno which will be held in February 2017.

5. Update on membership and recruitment

The FJYPB have reviewed the recruitment processes and supporting paperwork with HR and Fay Selvan, Cafcass Board member to maximise safeguarding for the Board. This includes more in-depth checks with local authorities if a child or young person is known to a LA, a review of Cafcass files and also an expectation that the FJYPB Secretariat are informed if any concerns arise regarding a child or young person once they are a member of the Board. The FJYPB handbook is also being updated to reflect these changes.

The next round of recruitment will focus on engaging more younger and more male members for the FJYPB.

Jack Perring

Member, Family Justice Young People's Board

Fahmida Ahmed

Member, Family Justice Young People's Board