



**Draft**

**Cafcass Quality Committee Minutes  
Friday 16 September 2016, 14.00 - 16.00  
21 Bloomsbury Street, Charles Dickens room**

**Present**

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

**In Attendance**

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive  
Christine Banim, Cafcass National Service Director  
Helen Watson, Cafcass Director of Strategy  
Richard Green, Cafcass National Child Care Policy Manager  
Nicola Blakebrough, Cafcass Board Secretariat  
Elizabeth Morrison, Cafcass Board and Corporate Support Assistant (Minutes)

**Apologies**

Fay Selvan, Vice Chair of Quality Committee  
Stuart Moore, Private Law Policy Lead (Legislation) & Cafcass Policy Sponsor, Ministry of Justice

**MINUTES**

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Professor Simon Hackett, Academic Advisor to the Committee, who was attending his first meeting. Introductions were made. Apologies were received from Fay Selvan, Vice Chair of the Quality Committee and Stuart Moore, Private Law Policy Lead (Legislation) & Cafcass Policy Sponsor, Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

**2. Draft Minutes from the Quality Committee 5 February 2016 meeting**

The minutes of the Quality Committee Meeting on 5 February 2016 were agreed by the Committee as an accurate record.

**Draft Minutes of the Joint Quality and Performance Committee 3 May 2016**

The minutes of the Joint Quality and Performance Committee 3 May 2016 were agreed by the Committee as an accurate record.

**3. Action Log / Forward Planner / Matters Arising**

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

The Committee reviewed the Forward Planner.

It was agreed that the item on Outcome Measures should be a recurring item in order for the Committee to be kept updated on the work on outcomes.

It was also agreed that an analysis of why there are a higher level of complaints in private law compared with public law, and what is in place to mitigate against the risk of higher numbers of complaints would be presented to the Board as part of the annual Board report on complaints, compliments and programmes on service user involvement.

**Action 1:** A report on the similarities and differences in public and private law complaints and management structure is to be presented to the Board as part of the annual Board report on complaints, compliments and programmes on service user involvement.

#### **4. Domestic Abuse Audit Report**

The National Service Director presented the report on the Domestic Abuse thematic audit. The audit was commissioned by the Operational Management Team (OMT) at the request of the Board, to assess the quality of practice in domestic abuse in private law proceedings. The results were generally very positive with the majority of cases assessed as good or outstanding. The Committee noted that 15% of cases audited required improvement and that plans have been placed around practitioners who need to improve, and that each service area has a local action plan in place.

The recommendations from the report have been agreed by OMT and will be reviewed again in six months. It was agreed that a further report detailing the progress made against the recommendations would be presented to the Quality Committee.

The Committee discussed how to ensure that learning emanating from casework assessed as Outstanding can be widely shared to improve practice. The National Service Director confirmed that learning is cascaded through team meetings, case discussions about outstanding pieces of work, and the Quality Assurance and Impact (QAI) framework assists Family Court Advisers (FCAs) in understanding the components of Outstanding work.

It was noted that the child engagement tools are not being used consistently across all service areas. The National Service Director agreed to add this as a recommendation to the report and noted that further work is underway by OMT on the use tools as this is a priority area for the organisation.

**Action 2:** A further report detailing the progress made against the recommendations in the Domestic Abuse audit will be presented to the Quality Committee.

#### **5. Annual Safeguarding Report**

The Committee reviewed the Annual Safeguarding report.

Cafcass contributed to 25 Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) in 2015/16, a figure that is consistent with the two previous years. It is likely there will be fewer SCRs in the future as the government

intends to replace the current system of SCRs with a new national learning framework, a key component of which will be faster and more targeted local learning enquiries. It was noted that delays in SCRs are often due to concurrent proceedings and the need to wait for proceedings to end prior to publication, though it is important to note that learning can be taken forward prior to this.

The National Child Care Policy Manager noted that the Annual Individual Management Reviews (IMR) report will be completed again in 2016-17. It was agreed that a section on the domestic abuse audit should be added to the Annual Safeguarding report. It was suggested that greater detail and data regarding individual IMRs be added to the Annual IMR report which the National Child Care Policy Manager will consider.

The Committee discussed the possibility of rationalising some of Cafcass' annual reporting as there are multiple different forms of annual reports across the organisation which could possibly be consolidated. It was agreed that CMT will conduct a stocktake to review the range of annual reports being produced and make recommendations for consolidation.

Action 3: CMT to review the range of annual reports and to feedback their recommendations in regards to the Quality Committee at the 2nd December 2016 meeting.

## **6. Learning and Development audit**

The National Service Director presented the report on the Learning and Development internal audit (April 2016) and work plan to address the recommendations from the audit. Four of the five recommendations made have been completed, and the fifth to be completed during September.

It was suggested that the Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB) could review Cafcass' training and learning and development plan. It was agreed that a further report regarding mandatory training and levels of compliance will be presented to the Committee.

The Director of Strategy gave an overview of the Video Enhanced Observation (VEO) presentation that was given to the Strategic Innovations Task Group (SITG) meeting 5 July. VEO is an observation based training and learning development tool, and is used by schools, the NHS and Barnardos. Following the VEO presentation at the SITG meeting, Cafcass is exploring the possibility of a workable small-scale pilot though the resource costs of any pilot must be carefully considered given the increasing rise in demand.

Action 4: A further report containing information on mandatory training and levels of compliance will be presented to the Committee.

## **7. Child Protection Policy and Reports**

The National Child Care Policy Manager presented his reports into notifications of serious incidents and Cafcass input to SCRs.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to rebase what is reported to the Quality Committee in the Child Protection reports as although the information provided is useful other information could be included such as best practice examples, or a summary of case law which may be helpful for the Committee. This will be conducted as part of the review of the items and reports that are received by the Board and Committees (action 3).

## **8. Quality Account – Consideration of Future Format**

The Director of Strategy presented a paper on the Cafcass Quality Account, following discussions had earlier in the year in regards to the future format and purpose of the document. The Quality Account is used to present Cafcass' key achievements and improvements in regards to quality. The Committee were invited to consider the future format and purpose of the Quality Account.

The Committee supported the Quality Account as it is important for Cafcass to present what it has achieved. However, it was agreed that the document should be made simpler and clearer, and be used to rationalise Cafcass' work on quality into one report. The Committee discussed the need to identify the audience for the report and target the report accordingly. The report should set out Cafcass' work to maintain and improve quality; measures employed; outcomes; and priorities for the following year and how these will be achieved.

It was agreed that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) would review the Quality Account and present a list of recommendations to the Committee.

**Action 5**      The Corporate Management Team (CMT) will review the Quality Account and present a list of recommendations to the Committee and/or to the wider Board as these recommendations may affect all committees.

## **9. Discussion on Quality Measures**

The National Service Director led the discussion on Quality Measures. At the joint meeting of the Performance and Quality Committees in July there had been a presentation of the new Quality Assurance framework. This framework feeds into the Quality Assurance and Impact (QAI) Dashboard, and the National Service Director presented a screenshot of the dashboard for the Committee's information. The dashboard provides high-level detail on quality assurance at a national, team and service area level and gives a measure of the levels of quality in casework.

The National Service Director provided assurance around work that is not met. Corrective actions are recorded and given to individual FCAs and these are followed up through Performance Learning Reviews.

The Committee discussed the possibility of producing a quality measure based upon the information generated from the QAI dashboard. The National Service Director agreed to look into this. It was noted that the issues of quality and demand are closely linked and that quality measures could be an indicator of unmanageable levels of demand, if the quality of work decreases. The paper on Child Outcomes for the October Board seminar should aim to use the data from the QAI Dashboard to capture possible quality measures which can be translated into Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or a visual measure.

## **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.

It was noted that several of the residual risk ratings were assessed as amber and the Committee discussed whether some risks were closer to having a red rating. The Chief Executive noted that risks should remain amber until there is no ability to mitigate the risk and all three lines of defence are deemed insufficient.

Under Strategic Risk S2 – Effective Commissioning Services & Partnership Working it was noted that improvements have been made to the commissioning and partnerships services in regards to the management of the service and the choice of contractors.

The Committee discussed a possible risk around complaints and that an increase in complaints could be a reputational risk to Cafcass. The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the organisation is working heavily on this issue and this matter falls under Strategic risk S1 Service user and staff engagement. The Chief Executive would consider a possible control to further try to understand the issues behind complaints.

The Committee discussed whether the UK's decision to leave the European Union had had an impact on international issues and on individual cases. The Chief Executive confirmed that there had been little to no impact on individual cases at present. The Chief Executive would discuss with Mark Hedley, Board member about the possibility of providing assurance to service users on this matter, possibly through a news item on the Cafcass website.

## **11. Any Other Business**

Joanna Nicolas, Advisor to the Quality Committee, informed the Committee of a seminar on the provision of health services for transgender children and young people which could be of interest to Committee members. Details of the seminar would be circulated to the Committee.

Joanna Nicolas had met with an FCA and had received very positive feedback that included the effectiveness of the psychology service and practitioners having time to meet with children. However, she had received feedback that children meeting with judges can be confusing for children as the purpose of this activity can be unclear and it is very resource and time demanding for Cafcass. The National Service Director noted this feedback.

There was no further business.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: Friday 2 December 2016, 14.00 – 16.00

### Action Summary

- Action 1: A report on the similarities and differences in public and private law complaints and management structure is to be presented to the Board as part of the annual Board report on complaints, compliments and programmes on service user involvement.
- Action 2: A further reporting detail the progress made against the recommendations in the Domestic Abuse audit will be presented to the Quality Committee.
- Action 3: CMT to review the range of annual reports and to feedback their recommendations in regards to the Quality Committee at the 2nd December 2016 meeting.
- Action 4: A further report containing information on mandatory training and levels of compliance will be presented to the Committee.
- Action 5: The Corporate Management Team (CMT) will review the Quality Account and present a list of recommendations to the Committee and/or to the wider Board as these recommendations may affect all committees.