



Draft

Cafcass Quality Committee Minutes Friday 5 February 2016, 14.00 - 16.00 21 Bloomsbury Street, Boardroom C

Present

Mary MacLeod, Chair of Quality Committee
Fay Selvan, Vice Chair of Quality Committee
Caroline Corby, Cafcass Board Member
Stuart Smith, Cafcass Board Member
Paul Grant, Cafcass Board Member
Deep Sagar, Cafcass Board Member
June Thoburn, 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
Helen Johnston, Cafcass Assistant Director (Policy)
Richard Green, Cafcass National Child Care Policy Manager
Nicola Blakebrough, Cafcass Corporate Strategist (Board Secretariat)
Elizabeth Morrison, Cafcass Board and Corporate Support Assistant (Minutes)

Apologies

Dr Elizabeth Gibby, Deputy Director, A2J Strategy and Specialist Policy, Ministry of Justice
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 and introductions were made. Apologies were received from Dr Elizabeth Gibby, Deputy Director, A2J Strategy and Specialist Policy, Ministry of Justice and Stuart Moore, Private Law Policy Lead (Legislation) & Cafcass Policy Sponsor, Ministry of Justice.

2. Draft Minutes from the Quality Committee meeting 18 September 2015

An amendment to the Research Governance Committee update was made, which was to note that more work could be done on understanding whether judges were following FCAs recommendations, and the Committee discussed the concept of a rating system to encourage service users to constructively review Cafcass. Following this amendment, the minutes of the Quality Committee Meeting on 18 September 2015 were agreed by the Committee as an accurate record.

3. Action Log / Forward Planner / Matters Arising

All actions are completed or on track.

The National Service Director agreed to circulate the Area Quality Improvement peer review methodology to the Committee. It was agreed that Cafcass' Key Performance Indicators will be an item at the joint Performance and Quality Committee meeting in May.

There were no further matters arising.

Action 1: The National Service Director to circulate the Area Quality Improvement peer review methodology to the Committee.

Action 2: Cafcass' Key Performance Indicators to be item at the joint Performance and Quality Committee meeting in May.

4. Update on Child Outcomes Framework (Oral Update)

The Director of Strategy gave an oral update on the development on the Child Outcomes Framework. An Innovation Working Group consisting of Cafcass staff and external performance specialists met in December 2015 to consider various approaches to outcome measurement. The outcome of the session was a proposal to work up an alternative (to those in use) holistic set of metrics focused on Cafcass' value to children. The second piece of work is concerned with producing a social earnings ratio metric. This proposal is under review for viability and affordability.

5. Update on the translation and interpretation service

The National Service Director presented an update on the translation and interpretation service supplied through Thebigword. It was noted that although the quality of the services provided has greatly improved, further and continuous improvements will be important.

The Committee discussed the possibility of producing clearer guidance for FCAs on discussing language needs with service users. The National Service Director will review this with OMT.

The National Service Director will circulate the latest figures on the percentage of service users using the translation and interpretation service. It was agreed that a future report would be given to the Committee to provide a further update on the quality of the service by service area.

Action 3: The National Service Director will circulate the latest figures on the percentage of service users using the translation and interpretation services.

Action 4: A future report to be presented to the Committee to provide a further update on the quality of the services by service area.

6. Learning and Development – Impact of Diversity Training Audit

The Committee reviewed the Impact of Diversity Training Audit. The aim of the audit was to assess the impact of diversity training either delivered internally or externally. The audit illustrates that significant improvements have been made as diversity training does impact on FCA's work and it is an area that needs to be further developed.

The audit showed that tools are not always effectively utilised to evidence work and this is an area that can be improved. The Committee will be sent an account of the range of tools

available to practitioners. Learning from the audit will be taken forward in a training plan and some diversity training, including training on the issue of radicalisation, will be made mandatory.

It was noted that mental health is an important diversity issue and this could be linked to the child outcomes framework. The Director of Strategy agreed to take this on board in her work and discussions about the framework as it develops.

Action 5: The Committee will be sent an account of the range of tools available to practitioners.

7. Child Protection Policy and Reports

The National Child Care Policy Manager presented his report into notifications of serious incidents and Cafcass input to serious case reviews (SCRs). He noted that a small but significant number of the current SCRs have a Special Guardianships Order in place.

The Committee acknowledged that greater risks lie in public law as these are invariably high risk cases by definition. There is a need to try to better foresee risk though it was agreed there is difficulty in drawing strong conclusions and making predictions due to the basic unpredictability of human behaviour. The National Child Care Policy Manager agreed to discuss the possibility of further research into this area to the Nuffield Foundation. .

It was suggested that it would be worthwhile reviewing SCRs where Cafcass are not necessarily involved to identify the historic decisions, particularly Cafcass' involvement at the start of a case to contribute to learning from SCRs. The National Child Care Policy Manager agreed to take this forward.

8. Complaints Update

The National Service Director presented the annual complaints update which had also been reviewed by the Performance Committee. She noted that significant progress had been made in providing an effective complaints process. The overall number of complaints has reduced over the last year, however the overall complexity of those received is increasing. More work is being done with the Family Justice Young People's Board in regards to children's complaints. The rate of compliments continues to improve.

It was noted that it would be helpful for the report to include data on the nature of complaints, and to be broken down by law type and location. The Committee also requested further information regarding why complaints were upheld and partly upheld by the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman. It was agreed the content of the report would be reviewed and expanded for the joint Performance and Quality Committee meeting in May.

Action 6: The annual complaints report to be updated for the joint Performance and Quality Committee meeting in May.

9. 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 Committee discussed Priority Risk P2, Quality of Casework. It was recognised that both Public Law and Private Law demand continues to rise. It was agreed that the Risk Assessment and Variations section of the risk should include a note of rising demand and the need to monitor the possibility of the quality of casework being compromised as a consequence.

For Strategic Risk S2, Influencing wider policy areas, the work of the Model Office and the Strategic Innovations Task Group would be added to the Key Controls section of the risk.

Action 7: The Risk Assessment and Variations section of the Priority Risk P2, Quality of Casework risk to include a note regarding the need to monitor the possibility of the quality of casework being compromised. The Key Controls section of Strategic Risk S2, Influencing wider policy areas to note the work of the Model Office and the Strategic Innovations Task Group.

10. Research Governance Committee update

The Assistant Director for Policy presented the Research Governance Update which gave a review of research for 2015/16 and priorities for 2016/17. The paper also outlines core recommendations for the Research Governance Committee. These are concerned with tightening up the Research Governance process, and influencing our external research programme by forging links to other organisations conducting similar work. The Committee accepted the recommendations.

It was recommended that we consider publishing more of our research work. The Research Governance Committee agreed to put a stronger emphasis on promoting and publicising Cafcass research.

It was noted that the Child Outcomes Development group would look at the viability of a proxy KPI regarding judge's acceptance of FCA's recommendations, as this could be a possible outcome measure as part of the Child Outcomes Framework. It was also noted that it would be useful to bring some of the research projects to Board seminars.

The National Child Care Policy Manager and Rebecca Dale, Corporate Support Officer, gave an oral update on the findings of this years' Service User Survey. The survey was focused on proxy interim outcomes, and involved interviewing adult service users in Private Law cases, whose cases had closed six to nine months prior to the survey. Although the sample size was modest, the immediate findings are encouraging. The majority of respondents believe the decision the court made was in their child's best interests. In over half of cases, the same child arrangements were in place as had been decided in court.

11. Any Other Business

There was no further business.

[Action Summary](#)

- Action 1: The National Service Director to circulate the Area Quality Improvement peer review methodology to the Committee.
- Action 2: Cafcass' Key Performance Indicators to be an item at the joint Performance and Quality Committee meeting in May.
- Action 3: The National Service Director will circulate the latest figures on the percentage of service users which use the translation and interpretation services.
- Action 4: A future report to be presented to the Committee to provide a further update on the quality of the translation and interpretation services by service area.
- Action 5: The Committee will be sent an account of the range of tools available to practitioners.
- Action 6: The Annual complaints report to be updated for the joint Performance and Quality Committee meeting in May.
- Action 7: The Risk Assessment and Variations section of the Priority Risk P2, Quality of Casework, to include a note of rising demand and the need to monitor the possibility of the quality of casework being compromised. The Keys Controls section of Strategic Risk S2, Influencing wider policy areas to note the work of the Model Office and the Strategic Innovations Task Group.