



**Cafcass Performance Committee Minutes
Monday 12th October 2015
21 Bloomsbury Street, Boardroom B and C**

Present

John Lakin, Chair of Performance Committee
Claire Tyler, Cafcass Board Member
Nickie Aiken, Cafcass Board Member
Stuart Smith, Cafcass Board Member
Paul Grant, Cafcass Board Member

In attendance

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive
Christine Banim, Cafcass National Service Director
Anji Owens, Cafcass Assistant Director
Helen Watson, Cafcass Director of Strategy
Nicola Blakebrough, Cafcass Corporate Strategist
Elizabeth Morrison, Cafcass Board and Corporate Support Assistant (Minute- taker)
Stuart Moore, Ministry of Justice, Policy Lead on Private Law, Children Act and Divorce and Cafcass Policy Sponsor
Jelena Lentzos, Ministry of Justice Representative

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies were received.

2. Draft Minutes of the Performance Committee 11 May 2015

The minutes of the meeting on 11 May 2015 were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Draft Minutes of the joint Performance and Quality Committee 27 July 2015

The minutes of the joint Performance and Quality Committee meeting on 27 July 2015 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Action Log/ Forward Planner/ Matters Arising

The Committee reviewed the action log. The updated Venn diagram of the work programme of the Board and Committees would be brought to the Board meeting on 23rd October 2015. The Chief Executive noted that the annual report on the diversity of the workforce and the annual report on the culture of the workforce would be included as part of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2015-16, rather than as separate reports.

The Committee reviewed the forward planner. The Chair noted that a request had been made for the quarterly Freedom of Information reports to become a standing item for the Performance Committee. It was agreed that an update on Freedom of Information would be brought to the Performance Committee twice annually, to provide a mid-year report on trends and an annual update.

There were no further matters arising.

Action 1: The Freedom of Information Reports to be added to the Performance Committee Forward Planner.

5. HR Sickness Absence Update

The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development joined the meeting to present the Annual HR Sickness Absence report. The financial year 2014/15 saw an increase in sickness absence levels, with the average number of working days lost per person rising from 7.1 days in 2013/14 to 8.8 days. The work being done to support both those who are off sick and those in the work place is excellent and includes the launch of staff seminars and tailored 1-1 consultations on lifestyle factors such as sleep, nutrition, exercise and mindfulness/mind management; partnerships with charities to ensure we have in-house resources; and day-one intervention, local partnering and integration of HR colleagues with the front line, which provides direct support to staff who have short or long-term periods of sickness absence. Looking ahead, a realistic but stretching target of 8.0 days will be the aim for 2015/16, with a longer-term target to be in the 7.0 - 8.0 days range within 18 months.

The Committee discussed staff needs relating to caring responsibilities. The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development noted that our policy regarding staff caring for children was well managed, but that our policy in regards to staff caring for relatives needs to be more explicit and more work needs to be done in this area.

6. Performance Report

New Performance Report Format

The Assistant Director presented the Performance Report in the new format which had been circulated to the Performance Committee for consultation. She thanked the Committee for their feedback on the new format which had been well received.

It was suggested that a general narrative be added to the first slide of the report which would cover key themes, trends and issues; and that a brief glossary and service area map be attached to the report. It was also suggested that the report be expanded to include quality metrics, such as complaints, which would create a more rounded report. It was noted that there was a technical issue with members accessing documents embedded in the report and the Assistant Director confirmed that this would be resolved.

The Committee confirmed that, subject to their suggestions, they were satisfied with the overall format of the report. The Assistant Director agreed to incorporate their feedback from the consultation to the new format of the report.

Action 2: The Assistant Director to incorporate Committee members' feedback from the consultation into the new format of the Performance Report.

Performance Report

The Assistant Director presented the Performance Report and outlined the key themes of the paper, which include the rise in care and private applications. KPIs continue to exceed targets and all Cafcass Service Areas are achieving KPI requirements year to date.

Although KPI2 performance has increased from 0.5 to 0.6 days to allocate a Care Case it was suggested that the arrow should be green as this is still within the KPI target. The Assistant Director agreed to harmonise the arrows and colours within the report.

The Committee reviewed the Public Law heat map as part of the report. It was noted that the scale of the open stock and demand forecast was too high. The Assistant Director confirmed that the scale will be adjusted. She also agreed to correlate case demand and case duration on one graphic and add this to the report.

The Committee noted that the DFJ Care duration has stalled at 30 weeks and discussed the contributing factors such as more final hearings and varying judicial culture.

Age distribution of children entering Cafcass' service

The Assistant Director presented the paper on the age distribution of children entering Cafcass' service, following a request at the Joint Quality and Performance Committee meeting in July. This report provides an update on the age distribution of children entering Cafcass' service for the latest recorded 12 month period (1 September 2014 to 31 August 2015). The proportion of children under 1 year on the new cases received for public law is much greater in public law (22%) compared to private law (6%). For both law types, more than 75% of children are 10 years or younger at the time of application.

The Committee noted the helpfulness of the paper and that it would be useful for an update paper to be provided should there be significant changes to trends and developments in this area.

7. Update on Care Case stock duration and activity (to introduce the new report that demonstrates care case stock duration alongside case activity)

The Assistant Director presented an update on care case stock duration and activity, following an action from the Committee in May. The report provides information on the duration of current open care cases. There were 8,263 total open care cases with an average duration of 23 weeks between first application and the snapshot date. Post PLO cases account for 8,099 of the national total of open care cases with an average open duration of 21 weeks. The number of pre-PLO (legacy) cases had reduced from 621 cases (24 April 2015) to 164 cases (22 September 2015), this is a reduction from 7% to 2% of the national total of open care cases.

The Assistant Director informed the Committee that the Management Information Service are undertaking further analysis regarding case activity, and particularly around cases showing inactivity, to identify potential improvements or action required; all significant findings or recommendations will be shared with the Performance Committee at a later date.

8. Strategic Plan Dashboard

The Director of Strategy presented the Strategic Plan Dashboard updated for Quarter 2. She provided an overview of the report and noted that good progress is being made against all five strategic priorities.

The Ministry of Justice representative noted that going forward future innovative developments should be added to the Family Justice Innovation section on the dashboard. The Committee also agreed that the section on Efficiency and Effectiveness should include details of all the work in this area in regards to the Spending Review. These amendments will be added to the Dashboard.

Action 3: In the Strategic Plan Dashboard, the section on Family Justice Innovation to be updated with future innovative developments. The section on Efficiency and Effectiveness to be updated to include detail of the work in regards to the Spending Review.

9. Review of Strategic Risk Register

The Chief Executive updated the Committee on the nature and level of risks within the Strategic Risk Register where the Performance Committee has lead assurance. For Strategic Risk S5, Workforce, it was noted that it is important that the relationships between issues of sickness, motivation, caseload and pay are kept under close review.

10. Corporate Services Presentation – Finance

The Director of Resources joined the meeting to give a presentation on Cafcass' Financial Performance. Cafcass' overriding financial objective is to achieve the best value for money we can to provide equality of access to our services for all children and their families. We are in the process of implementing a new Finance system which is due to go live in November 2015. The presentation outlined the areas of work for the Finance department and included two new areas of work: direct work with children and intense sponsor scrutiny. In regards to Cafcass' direct work with children, the Finance team is a corporate signatory to the Access Accountancy programme. This programme is a collaboration of employers who are aiming to improve access to the accountancy profession. It was suggested that looked after children in particular should be encouraged to join the programme. The Director of Resources agreed to look into how this could be achieved.

The Chair thanked the Director of Resources for the informative presentation.

11. Any Other Business

There was no further business.

DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: 25 January 2016, 11.00 – 13.00

Action Summary

Action 1: The Freedom of Information Reports to be added to the Forward Planner.

Action 2: The Assistant Director to incorporate Committee members' feedback from the consultation into the new format of the Performance Report.

Action 3: In the Strategic Plan Dashboard, the section on Family Justice Innovation to be updated with future innovative developments. The section on Efficiency and Effectiveness to be updated to include detail of the work in regards to the Spending Review.