



Minutes of the Quality Committee
Friday 18 September 2015, 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
Paul Grant, Cafcass Board Member
Deep Sagar, Cafcass Board member

In Attendance

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive
Christine Banim, Cafcass National Service Director
Neville Hall, Cafcass Assistant Director and Head of Service, A11 and A13
Helen Watson, Director of Strategy
Ross Sanger, Family Justice Policy, Ministry of Justice
Nicola Blakebrough, Cafcass Corporate Strategist (Board Secretariat)
Elizabeth Morrison, Cafcass Board and Corporate Support Assistant (Minutes)

Apologies

June Thoburn, Adviser to the Quality Committee
Richard Green, Cafcass National Child Care Policy Manager
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. Apologies were received from June Thoburn, Adviser to the Quality Committee; Richard Green, Cafcass National Child Care Policy Manager; and Stuart Moore, Private Law Policy Lead (Legislation) & Cafcass Policy Sponsor, Ministry of Justice.

2. Draft Minutes from the Quality Committee meeting 28 April 2015

The minutes of the Quality Committee Meeting on 28 April 2015 were agreed by the Committee as an accurate record.

3. Draft Minutes from the Joint Quality and Performance Committee meeting 27 July 2015

The minutes of the Joint Quality and Performance Committee Meeting on 27 July 2015 were agreed by the Committee as an accurate record.

4. Action Log / Forward Planner / Matters Arising

All actions were noted as being complete or on track. The Chair noted that the Board lead role for developing Child Outcomes would need to be reassigned, following Honor Rhodes' departure from the Board. The Chief Executive confirmed that he and the Board chair were still in discussions regarding Board member lead roles.

There were no further matters arising.

5. Review of the Case Management Assurance Map

The Quality Committee reviewed the Case Management Assurance Map following an action from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). The Quality Committee were asked to review the appropriateness of the second and third lines of defence for casework outlined within the map to ensure there is no duplication or use of unnecessary controls.

The Committee agreed that the systems are impressive and help to minimise the risk of mistakes. The National Service Director noted that the map did not highlight the proportionate approach to the systems and that these systems are required to ensure quality of casework.

The Chair agreed to report back to the ARAC that the Case Management Assurance Map is proportionate and that the Committee are satisfied with the appropriateness of the second and third lines of defence for casework outlined within the map.

6. NIS National Thematic Audit on the use of Position Statements in Public Law

The National Service Director presented the NIS National Thematic Audit on the use of Position Statements in Public Law. The audit found that in the main Position Statements are being used effectively to outline to the Court the position of the Children's Guardian and to ensure that the Court is provided with relevant information on which to base its judgments. There were a minority of cases where recording was not clear, and the Position Statement was not endorsed. The National Service Director confirmed that the next stage is to target the 'Not met' cases for improvement.

7. Ofsted Action Plan

The National Service Director presented the completed Ofsted Action Plan to the Quality Committee for sign off. She confirmed that this piece of work is completed and that all aspects of the plan have been addressed, including informal recommendations. The Committee agreed that the action plan was a detailed and impressive piece of work.

Following the review of the Action Plan, the National Service Director agreed to provide an update on the work of the organisation which provides translation and interpretation services for Cafcass at the next Quality Committee meeting in February 2016.

The Quality Committee agreed to formally sign off the action plan.

Action 1: [The National Service Director agreed to provide an update on the work of the organisation providing translation and interpretation services to the next Quality Committee meeting in February 2016.](#)

8. Child Protection Policy and Reports

The Assistant Director and Head of Service for A11 and A13 joined the meeting to present the Annual Safeguarding report and the reports in relation to notifications of serious incidents and Cafcass contributions to serious case reviews.

8a) Annual Safeguarding report

The Committee reviewed the Annual Safeguarding report.

It was suggested that some examples of specific learning be added to the paragraph on page four of the report, regarding learning which has been derived from Cafcass' SCR involvement.

The Director of Strategy noted that the Significant Incident Learning Process (SILP) for conducting SCRs is an effective methodology in enabling professionals from different agencies to come together to challenge what went wrong in cases and to develop multiagency learning. The Chief Executive confirmed that going forward the Director of Strategy and the Assistant Director and Head of Service, A11 and A13 will be looking into this particular methodology in more detail.

The Committee asked that a section should be added to the report detailing how Cafcass came out of each of the 26 SCRS in 2014/15 to which the organisation contributed. The Assistant Director and Head of Service, A11 and A13 agreed to add this to the report.

It was noted that the number of serious incidents have doubled since 2011. The Assistant Director and Head of Service, A11 and A13 noted that the increase may be due to the tightening up on the serious incidents process in order to capture as many incidents as possible. The categories of serious incidents have also been broadened. It was agreed that an explanatory note of this will be added to the report. The Chief Executive confirmed that both he and the National Service Director are notified of all serious incidents and this detail will also be added to the report.

The agreed amendments will be made to the report and the report will then be presented to the Board.

Action 2: The agreed amendments will be made to the Annual Safeguarding Report and the report will then be presented to the Board.

8b) Barnsley Serious Case Review

The Chief Executive noted that this case illustrates the high risks in private law cases that are not always foreseeable, and that it is important not to underestimate the risks in such cases.

The critical learning taken from the case is the importance of Cafcass' work on children's lives, and that every intervention undertaken has an impact on vulnerable children. The National Service Director confirmed that this learning has been fed back to OMT, team

meetings and area team meetings and this learning will be taken right through the organisation. Reviews of Cafcass training are also being conducted as part of this learning.

The Director of Strategy will be working with Women's Aid and other voluntary organisations on sensitising services within the court process.

8c) Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews

The Committee reviewed the Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews rolling report. The Committee noted that it is important we have a good system for disseminating learning and for recognising trends in SCRs.

8d) IMRs– Learning and Actions taken

It was noted that tardiness in Local authorities' responses to safeguarding checks has been a longstanding issue. The Assistant Director and Head of Service, A11 and A13 confirmed that this was a continuing discussion with Local Authorities but noted that have been improvements made in this area.

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. For Priority Risk P2, Quality of Casework, it was suggested that the use of risk assessment tools by practitioners could be part of the first line of defence.

It was suggested that Strategic Risk S1, High Impact service user and staff engagement, residual risk should be considered as green rather than amber due to the considerable improvement in engagement.

All other risks were noted with no further changes.

10. Research Governance Committee update

The Chief Executive presented the most recent update from the Research Governance Committee. The update paper outlined the ongoing internal research and external projects to which Cafcass is making a contribution.

The Committee discussed the possibility of more work being done to understand whether judges were following FCAs recommendations, and the concept of a review or rating system to encourage service users to constructively review Cafcass.

It was noted that Helen Johnston, Assistant Director for Policy would now be chairing the Committee and that she was reviewing all the research Cafcass reports and commissions to ensure these are the most appropriate and useful group of studies. The Assistant Director of Policy will also conduct work on integrating Cafcass' research into its mainstream work and will bring this to the Quality Committee for review, as part of the Research Governance standing item.

11. Any Other Business

There was no further business.

Action Summary

- Action 1: The National Service Director agreed to provide an update on the work of the organisation providing translation and interpretation services for Cafcass at the next Quality Committee meeting in February 2016.
- Action 2: The agreed amendments will be made to the Annual Safeguarding Report and the report will then be presented to the Board.