



Cafcass Board Meeting Minutes Friday 19 June 2015, 10.40am

Present

Baroness Claire Tyler, Cafcass Board Chair
Mary MacLeod, Cafcass Board Deputy Chair
Kamaljit Singh, Cafcass Board Member
Honor Rhodes, Cafcass Board Member
Francis Plowden, Cafcass Board Member
John Lakin, Cafcass Board Member
Stuart Smith, Cafcass Board Member
Geoffrey Bush, Cafcass Board Member
Nickie Aiken, Cafcass Board Member
Caroline Corby, Cafcass Board Member
Deep Sagar, Cafcass Board Member
Paul Grant, Cafcass Board Member

In attendance

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive
Julie Brown, Cafcass Director of Resources
Christine Banim, Cafcass National Service Director
Jabbar Sardar, Cafcass Director of HR and OD
Melanie Carew, Cafcass Head of Legal Services
Colette Jacobs, Cafcass Head of Communications and Corporate Services
Jacob Willcox, Family Justice Young People's Board Representative
John Hall, Ministry of Justice, Deputy Director, Civil & Family Justice
Nicola Blakebrough, Corporate Strategist (Minutes)
Elizabeth Morrison, Board and Corporate Support Assistant (Minutes)

Apologies

Fay Selvan, Cafcass Board Member

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Fay Selvan, Cafcass Board Member.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no new Declarations of Interest.

3. Draft Minutes from the Board Meeting on 6 February 2015

The minutes of the last Board Meeting on 6 February 2015 were agreed as an accurate record.

The Chair noted that the previous minutes recorded that the 2015/16 remit letter would be finalised by the end of March. The Ministry of Justice Deputy Director stated that the remit

letter is still being prepared in light of the change of Government and will be finalised as soon as possible.

4. Draft report from the Open Board meeting on 27 March 2015

The Board reviewed the draft report from the Open Board meeting on 27 March 2015. It was noted that there was a minor error in a sentence on page 4 of the report, but that subject to this amendment, the Board approved the report.

5. Action Log/Matters Arising

The Board reviewed the Action Log. It was noted that all actions had been completed. There were no further matters arising.

6. Approval of the 2014-15 Annual Report and Accounts

The Head of Communications and Corporate Services presented the Annual Report and Accounts (AR&A) for approval by the Board, following review and sign off by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Board discussed the Governance Framework diagram included in the AR&A and the need for the framework to be simplified. It was agreed that the diagram would be included in the AR&A, but that it would then be re-worked for next year's Annual Report.

The Board approved the AR&A and thanked those involved in producing the report for their work.

7. Report from the Chair

The Chair reported to the Board as follows:

- The Chair now occupies a lead spokesperson role in the House of Lords in relation to mental health issues.
- The Chair now sits on a new House of Lords Select Committee in relation to Social Mobility.
- The Chair had attended regular meetings with Ministry of Justice officials.
- The Chair had met with our new minister, Caroline Dinenage, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice and Minister for Equalities at the Department for Education.
- The Chair had visited the Nottingham and Liverpool Cafcass offices and would be visiting the Exeter and Bournemouth offices in due course.
- The Chair was in the process of conducting appraisals with board members; exit interviews with outgoing members; and had conducted induction interviews with the new Board members.

It was agreed that a discussion and review of Board members' feedback from service visits should be an item at a future Board seminar/meeting.

Action 1: A discussion and review of Board members' feedback from service visits to be an item at a future Board seminar/meeting.

8. Report from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive presented his report to the Board and outlined some of the key developments in the first quarter of 2015-16.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Corporate Management Team have carried out a review of areas where spending in the current year can be delayed or cancelled in response to a request by the Ministry of Justice to identify in-year savings in the current financial year. An amount of £2m has been identified and has now been ring fenced. The Chief Executive provided assurance that the £2 million underspend would not bring with it any service detriment.

Cafcass have settled on a grant of £5.8 million for commissioned services in consultation with the Ministry of Justice. This represents a 10.8% reduction based on current assumptions of full year spending during the year. The Board considered the impact of the reduction on service delivery and agreed to keep the risk, along with the risk of any change in demand or further budget reduction, under review.

The Chief Executive confirmed that both the Ministry of Justice and the Cabinet Office have approved the business case to extend the current contract for the core services with Fujitsu until mid-2018, in order to continue delivering the level of improvement in IT functionality seen in recent years.

Plans to roll out DNA testing nationally are progressing and the tender process is expected to take place in July and the national service to start in September. Cafcass are working on the methodology to reduce the cost of delivering tests. The Chief Executive confirmed that Wales will be part of the national rollout.

The Chief Executive informed the Board of two senior management appointments. Helen Watson, the current Corporate Director responsible for all children and families services and services to adults at South Tyneside Council, has been appointed as the Director of Strategy. Helen Johnston, former head of Children and Young Peoples Programmes at the Local Government Association (LGA), has been appointed as the Assistant Director for Policy. They take up their posts on the 1 September and the 1 July respectively.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his report and requested that he circulate an update to the Board during the period before the Board next meets in October, as circumstances dictate.

Action 2: The Chief Executive to provide an update report – as circumstances dictate - during the period before the Board next meets in October.

9. Report from the Family Justice Young People's Board

The Chair welcomed Jacob Willcox, representative of the Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB) who presented highlights from their regular updating report.

- The FJYPB are in the final planning stage for their third annual 'Voice of the Child' conference on 23 July 2015 in London.
- FJYPB members have been involved in developing the two pilot schemes for judges meeting with children and young people in West Yorkshire and York & North Yorkshire. The final reports for both pilots were included with the FJYPB report. It had been agreed that the pilots will continue for a further six months to include a third area (Brighton) and to be evaluated through the model office scheme to focus on outcomes and the additional cost to stakeholders of children meeting judges.

The Board reviewed the final reports for the pilots and agreed that whilst the pilots had been successful, there were still important complexities which need to be worked out. It was agreed that a summary of the findings of all the pilot areas would be brought to the Board once completed.

The Board thanked the FJYPB representative for the useful report.

Action 3: A summary of the findings of all the pilot schemes of judges meeting with children and young people to be brought to the Board once completed.

10. Report from ARAC, Performance and Quality Committee Chairs

The Chair of the ARAC informed the Board of the items reviewed at the 11 May and 19 June meetings. The ARAC had approved and signed off the AR&A at the 19 June meeting. The internal audit service is now being delivered by the Ministry of Justice internal audit team and the 2015-16 Internal Audit plan has been agreed. It had been agreed that an item on IT security systems would become a reoccurring item on the Committee's agenda. ARAC had requested an update to the Strategic Risk Register to record a separate risk relating to information management.

The Chair of the Performance Committee noted that the Committee had an interesting conversation about the critical importance of case duration at the 11 May meeting. The format of the Performance Report is to be revised and the new format will be brought back to the Committee once available. Private law heat maps are also being developed. The Management Information Service team had attended the 11 May meeting and gave a presentation on their work, which demonstrated how high quality data underpins our strategic development.

The Chair of the Quality Committee informed the Board that the Committee had reviewed the Quality Account for this year at the 28 April meeting. The Quality Account had been greatly improved and following some further amendments would be ready for sign off and for wider dissemination. It had been agreed that the annual report on complaints statistics would be scrutinised by the Quality Committee as well as the Performance Committee. The Quality Committee will review the evaluation of the psychology pilot at the September Committee meeting.

11. Finance Report

The Director of Resource presented the Finance Report to the Board. The report summarises our outturn position for 2014-15 and also details our work on the current accounts for this year.

It was suggested that a column titled 'Previous Year Actual', and a column for 'Expenditure on front line salaries' be added to the report. The Director of Resources agreed to add these to the report going forward.

The Chief Executive provided assurance that the reduction in corporate contingency funding for this year compared to 2014-15 was manageable.

The Chair thanked the Director of Resources for the report and thanked the Board for the important discussion.

Action 4: A column for 'Previous Year Actual' and a column for 'Expenditure on front line salaries' are to be added to the Finance report.

12. Corporate Management Team Review of the Cafcass Budget in the light of the Government's Deficit Reduction Strategy

The Chief Executive presented a paper which outlined the Corporate Management Team's review of the Cafcass budget in the light of the Government's Deficit Reduction Strategy. The paper included an Overview report; the results of the FCA Time Study, a pictograph of Corporate Services Reductions; and a Forward Grant and Budget Forecast.

The Chief Executive stated that we are aiming to identify a further 1% of in-year efficiency savings this year, so as to be in a position to support the target set by our sponsor Department, and are working with our partners in the family justice system to identify the potential for further efficiency savings across the whole system. The Board discussed the possibility of potential savings from an agreement between Cafcass and the judiciary about using scarce Cafcass resources as economically and as effectively as possible.

The results of the FCA time study demonstrated that the pressure on our budget and resources remains high. The study shows that there is increased pressure on FCAs and the Board noted that the goodwill of practitioners, who work over and above their contracted hours, is a contribution to Cafcass continuing to meet all of its targets and demonstrating continuous improvement.

The Board were asked to agree to points 16- 20 within the Overview report. The Board agreed with points 16-19, but noted that a proactive approach is required in respect of the final point: 'regarding the situation we are in as fluid and as being under continuous review.' It was further agreed that the Board should be involved in all significant discussions concerning the Cafcass budget over the summer period and beyond. The Chief Executive noted that strategic alternatives are possible and that work will continue to drive out efficiencies in the months ahead.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for the detailed and helpful paper.

Action 5: The Board to be involved, through the Chair as appropriate, in all significant discussions about the Cafcass budget over the summer period and beyond.

13. Items for Information

The Committee noted the following reports which had been circulated for information: the Strategic Risk Register Q4 2014-15 and Q1 2015-16; the Strategic Plan Dashboard, the Quarterly Performance Report; and the Nuffield Foundation Report: Sharing of Contact between Parents by the County Court.

17. Any Other Business

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and thanked those who had organised and prepared reports for the meeting.

There was no further business.

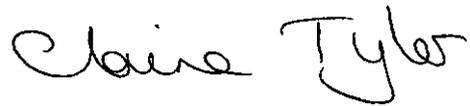
Action Summary

Action 1: A discussion and review of Board members' feedback from service visits to be an item at a future Board seminar/meeting.

Action 2: The Chief Executive to provide an update report during the period before the Board next meets in October, as circumstances dictate.

- Action 3: A summary of the findings of all the pilot schemes of judges meeting with children and young people to be brought to the Board once completed.
- Action 4: A column for 'Previous Year Actual' and a column for 'Expenditure on front line salaries' to be added to the Finance report.
- Action 5: The Board to be involved, through the Chair as appropriate, in all significant discussions about the CAF/CASS Budget over the summer period and beyond.

Minutes Approved by the Board Chair, Claire Tyler, 23.10.15

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claire Tyler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.