



DRAFT

Minutes of the Quality Committee
Tuesday 28 April 2015, 11.00 - 13.00
21 Bloomsbury Street, Boardroom C

Present

Mary MacLeod, Chair of Quality Committee
Fay Selvan, Cafcass Board Member
Caroline Corby, Cafcass Board Member
June Thoburn, Adviser to the Board

In Attendance

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive
Christine Banim, Cafcass National Service Director
Richard Green, Cafcass National Child Care Policy Manager
Stuart Moore, Ministry of Justice Representative
Paul Grant, New Board Member (observing)
Holly Jeapes, Corporate Support Officer (Minute-taking)
Nicola Blakebrough, Corporate Strategist (Board Secretariat)

Apologies

Honor Rhodes, Cafcass Board Member

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Honor Rhodes.

2. Draft Minutes of the Quality Committee meeting 30 January 2015

The minutes of the Quality Committee Meeting on 30 January 2015 were agreed by the Committee as an accurate record.

3. Action Log, Forward Planner and Matters Arising

All actions were noted as being complete or on track. There were no matters arising.

4. Quality Account 2014-15

The National Child Care Policy Manager presented the 2014-15 draft Quality Account, setting out some amendments to the structure of the 2013-14 Quality Account to provide more evidence and to highlight the impact on children more. The Quality Account will be available to the general public through the Cafcass website, and provided to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Ofsted.

The Committee approved the structure and content subject to a few amendments. The amended report will be signed-off by the Chair of the Committee and the Chief Executive outside of a Committee meeting.

It was agreed that complaints reports should be scrutinised on an annual basis by the Quality Committee, as well as by the Performance Committee.

Action 1: The annual review of complaints data will be added to the Quality Committee forward Plan.

5. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Strategy

The National Child Care Policy Manager presented an update on the progress made in respect of the Cafcass CSE Strategy. This includes: a revision of the Child Protection Policy; a revised e-learning module; dedicated management to develop and implement the strategy; ambassadors within each service area; and a requirement on staff to indicate on ECMS when a case features CSE. This requirement will enable further research to be conducted and enhance our understanding of the prevalence, and the profile, of cases known to Cafcass where CSE features.

6. Developing a Child Outcomes Framework

The National Service Director presented a paper setting out the proposals for developing a Child Outcomes Framework. The Director of Strategy will take the lead on development work as part of the 2015/16 corporate work programme. A pilot will run in July across four service areas, gathering data from some or all of the following: FCAs; children and young people; adult service users; judges; and the local authority. Further, the Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework is to be revised to promote a strengths-based model. This will incorporate learning derived from the July pilot. The Committee agreed that a Board Member should be involved with the framework review and that the framework should be worked on inclusively with the Cafcass Board and the National Family Justice Board.

The Chair of the Committee provided an account of the workshop in which Essex County Council presented their use of ethnography to obtain a greater understanding of the aspirations of local citizens and how services could be better developed by this enriched understanding.

The Committee gave its support to the proposals for developing an outcomes framework.

7. Staff Training Hours

The National Service Director presented an update on learning and development activities provided to staff over the last year, detailing the numbers of staff trained and the time invested in training. Training is delivered in various forms: face-to-face; e-learning; knowledge bites; discussions in teams etc. Further, operational teams make provision of LSCB multi-agency training and have a devolved budget to commission training. The report does not currently include data on locally commissioned training: however a mechanism for capturing this data has been put in place and will be included in the next report.

In respect of e-learning, modules are available online for staff to refer back to, a process that is supported by guidance available on the intranet. Evaluation of e-learning is regularly undertaken by the NIS. OMT reviews the take-up of training every quarter.

8. Child Mental Health Issues

The Committee discussed the contents and learning derived from the recent Open Board Meeting that focused on child mental health. This subject now forms one element of the Research Programme for 2015-16, which will enhance understanding of the mental health of children in proceedings.

The Committee discussed the pilot that is currently underway whereby FCAs can access specialist advice from a psychologist. This will be discussed further by the Committee upon receipt of the evaluation report.

Action 2: Evaluation of the psychology pilot to be added to the forward plan.

9. Research Governance Committee Update

The National Child Care Policy Manager presented an update on the research programme for 2015-16, setting out three projects that have been identified. Two further 'repeat' projects will be undertaken: a service user survey (probably evaluating the service users from years 1 and 2 in terms of how they are getting on now); and learning from serious case reviews.

The Research Governance Sub-Committee will meet and further review the research programme along with suggestions for collective research with Local Authorities/Independent Reviewing Officers to research outcomes for children with mental health issues; and the re-surveying of a small group of people from the 2014-15 service user survey, to undertake further in-depth analysis.

10. Child Protection Policy and Reports

The National Child Care Policy Manager presented reports in relation to notifications of serious incidents and Cafcass contributions to serious case reviews. A further analysis of the data relating to 2014-15 will be provided in the Annual Safeguarding Report. The number of notifications of serious incidents has risen slightly but this may relate to the requirement on staff to report cases where child sexual exploitation is a feature.

The National Service Director described the mechanisms by which learning from SCRs is cascaded throughout the organisation.

The Committee acknowledged the unpredictability of homicide and suicide cases, but agreed that it would be helpful for some research to be carried out to identify some of the risk factors in these cases.

11. Review of the Strategic Risk Register

The Committee reviewed the strategic risk register. The Chief Executive stated that the strategic risk register has been commended in the past by the National Audit Office (NAO) for its structure and content.

The Committee noted the Quality of Casework risk. The National Service Director agreed to undertake a thematic review to evidence how training is improving the analysis of diversity in casework. An update will be provided in the six monthly training update.

All other risks were noted with no further changes.

Action 3: The National Service Director to complete a thematic review to evidence how training is improving the analysis of diversity in casework and will present findings in the six monthly training update.

Action Summary

- Action 1: The annual review of complaints data will be added to the Quality Committee forward Plan.
- Action 2: Evaluation of the psychology pilot to be added to the forward plan.
- Action 3: The National Service Director to complete a thematic review to evidence how training is improving the analysis of diversity in casework and will present findings in the six monthly training update.