



Cafcass Board Meeting Minutes
Friday 24 October, 09.30am
21 Bloomsbury Street

Present

Claire Tyler.....Cafcass Board Chair
 Mary MacLeod..... Cafcass Board Deputy Chair
 Kamaljit Singh.....Cafcass Board Member
 Honor RhodesCafcass Board Member
 Francis Plowden..... Cafcass Board Member
 John LakinCafcass Board Member
 Stuart Smith.....Cafcass Board Member
 Geoffrey Bush.....Cafcass Board Member
 Fay SelvanCafcass Board Member

In attendance

Anthony Douglas..... Cafcass Chief Executive
 Julie Brown..... Cafcass Director of Finance
 Jabbar SardarCafcass Director of HR and OD
 Colette JacobsCafcass Head of Communications
 Melanie CarewCafcass Head of Legal Services
 Sasha Thompson.....Family Justice Young People’s Board representative
 John Hall..... Ministry of Justice representative
 Nicola Blakebrough.....Corporate Strategist (Minutes)

Apologies

Christine BanimCafcass National Service Director

BUSINESS SESSION	
1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting; in particular the Chair welcomed Sasha Thompson, attending for the first time as a representative of the Family Justice Young People’s Board.
2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.
3	MINUTES FROM THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20 JUNE 2014 The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 20 June 2014 were agreed by the Board as an accurate record.
4	ACTION LOG/MATTERS ARISING All actions are ongoing or completed.
5	REPORT FROM THE CHAIR The Chair reported that she spoke at the Family Justice Council annual debate relating to transparency in family proceedings. Also that she has attended children and family policy events both inside and outside of Parliament and would be continuing to attend and speak at events in the coming months. Board Members were invited by the Chair to provide an update on any activity undertaken since the previous board meeting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MM informed the meeting that she has been involved in interviewing, as a Cafcass independent representative, for the Family Justice Council. • MM has undertaken service visits to Birmingham and Croydon. She said the quality of work observed was very impressive and morale very high. Both visits included private law court visits and it was clear that FCAs were working with families to bring about a quick resolution. MM also spent some time with a judge in Croydon who was very complementary about local FCAs. • JL informed the meeting that he attended an Estates Strategy meeting in Coventry. He noted that options for creating regional hubs with MoJ/HMCTS will be kept in mind as and when firm future plans are developed. • FP informed the meeting that he visited the Worcester office. • GB informed the meeting that he attended the Plymouth team meeting. • CT, MM, GB, FP, JL have attended two Strategic Planning meetings with the Director of Finance and various Assistant Directors.
6	<p>REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE</p> <p>The Chief Executive presented his report to the Board and gave the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand levels this year are more volatile in both public and private law. In two of the last recorded months – July and September – care applications were the highest ever recorded for that individual month. Private law applications remain well down compared to a year ago, however the intensity of work is if anything increasing. • Simon Hughes has announced a pre-court pilot programme aimed at strengthening out of court pathways for separating parents to access and use. • The substance misuse and DNA testing pilot undertaken in Avon and Somerset will be evaluated in the New Year. • Terms of reference for the new Cafcass Innovation Board have been drafted. The Chair and Vice Chair would be core members. • The meeting discussed the IT re procurement project. MM and GB informed the meeting that they have recently met with the project SROs and raised concern over the level of resourcing for the project, particularly in light of the focus needed on the approval process within Government and understanding what Cafcass needs for the future. The Director of Finance stated that the resourcing question is valid and although there are no plans to recruit an external project manager, resourcing is being addressed through CMT. The potential complexity of the approval process is understood. The Chair requested that a simple timeline of the key milestones including information on responsibilities be submitted to the Board. Further, that detail of the project is amplified within the Strategic Risk Log. The Chair and the Chief Executive agreed to revisit the resource risk at their next one to one meeting. • The Chief Executive brought attention to the likely key targets for the 2014/15 remit letter. The Chair invited Board members to comment. • The Chair requested that the two evaluation reports relating to pre-proceedings work in public law in Liverpool and Lincolnshire, submitted to the Board, be reviewed by the Quality Committee. <p>Action 1: A simple timeline of the key milestones of the IT re procurement project, including information on responsibilities, be submitted to the Board.</p> <p>Action 2: Detail of the IT re procurement project to be amplified within the Corporate Risk Log.</p> <p>Action 3: The evaluation reports relating to pre-proceedings work in public law in Liverpool and one in Lincolnshire to be reviewed by the Quality Committee.</p>

7	<p>REPORT FROM THE FAMILY JUSTICE YOUNG PEOPLE’S BOARD</p> <p>The Board welcomed the representative of the Family Justice Young People’s Board (FJYPB) who presented highlights from their regular updating report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Voice of the Child conference was held in July and was considered to be a great success. Planning for next year’s conference has started. • The FJYPB would be meeting with Simon Hughes for a question and answer session. • The final version of the FJYPB Annual Review would be available week commencing 27 October. • The FJYPB is working with the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC) and are committed to completing 33 inspections over the next 3 years. • The FJYPB have commenced their court review schedule which will include meetings with judges to consider how they engage with children and young people. • Recruitment for the FJYPB has commenced and membership has been extended to Wales. <p>The Chair stated that she was pleased that the FJYPB have direct access to judges and ministers. One Board member said it would be valuable to commission the FJYPB to evaluate the success and effectiveness of the commitment of judges to speak to more children over the age of 10 years.</p> <p>The Board thanked the FJYPB representative for the helpful and informative report.</p>
8	<p>REPORT FROM ARAC, PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY COMMITTEE CHAIRS</p> <p>The Chair of ARAC referred the Board to the draft minutes of the ARAC meeting held on 29 September. The Board noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PriceWaterhouse Cooper Head of Internal Audit is leaving his job. His replacement will be in place for the next ARAC. • The current CMT action and decision log will be reviewed to ensure all decisions taken are transparent with a rationale. • The Quality of Casework risk has been expanded to capture a specific risk on harm or serious injury following a data breach. <p>The Chair of the Quality Committee referred the Board to the draft minutes of the Quality Committee Meeting held on 26 September. The Chair of the Quality Committee informed the Board that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals to amend the timeframe for achieving the target of 60% Good and 14% Not Met to May 2015 were fully supported. • There is a considerable rise in Serious Case Reviews which is making significant demands on staff (IROs). The Board agreed learning and development from SCRs is critical. The Assistant Director confirmed that there are good links into each Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the mechanisms for national learning via the national learning log, remain robust. • HR and the National Child Care Policy manager are arranging to meet with the Nuffield Foundation, to explore whether and how Cafcass might contribute to shaping a ‘What Works’ programme for family justice. <p>The Chair of the Quality Committee requested that the Annual Safeguarding Report be circulated to the Board. The Board agreed that Committees should review all risks held in the Strategic Risk Register where they have lead assurance.</p> <p>The Chair of the Performance Committee referred the Board to the draft minutes of the Performance Committee Meeting held on 29 September 2014. The Chair of the Performance Committee informed the Board that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A heat map analysis showing the impact of the increase in case and court times in private

	<p>law cases on Cafcass' resource will be developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cafcass is working with its partner agencies to refine its forecasting and demand management tools for internal and system-wide use. Forecast and demand will feature as a topic at the next Board Seminar. • A presentation was given on the work of Commissioning and Partnerships which is now being more integrated into mainstream local service delivery. <p>Action 4 The Annual Safeguarding Report to be circulated to the Board. Action 5: Committee forward plans to be updated to show that Committees will review all risks for which they have the lead assurance.</p>
9	<p>FINANCE REPORT</p> <p>The Director of Finance presented the September 2014 Financial Report informing the Board that overall there is a strong financial position with the forecast projecting that the budget will balance for 2014-15.</p>
10	<p>DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN</p> <p>The Director of Finance presented the draft Strategic Plan. Two development meetings have been held with Board and Assistant Director representatives. The structure and objectives of the current plan have been retained however more contextual information has been added. The FJYPB have been asked to restate the objectives in a language suitable for children and young people.</p> <p>The Board provided comments on the plan and agreed these will be incorporated into the draft which will then be reviewed by the Chair and Chief Executive.</p> <p>Action 6: The Director of Finance to make amendments to the draft plan.</p>
11	<p>EQUALITY & DIVERSITY STRATEGY</p> <p>The Director of HR and OD presented an update on the Equality & Diversity Strategy 2013-2015. The Strategy has been in place for 18 months and significant progress has been made in terms of improving front line practice and embedding the key principles of equality and diversity across the organisation.</p> <p>The Board were informed that PLRs now include analysis of equality and diversity factors. To date just under 70% of eligible employees have completed the equality and diversity self-assessment and the aim is to ensure that this figure is 90% by 31 March 2015. Work is also ongoing with the MoJ to collate diversity data with ECMS being the vehicle for collection of data from February 2015.</p> <p>KS informed the Board that she attended the Diversity Ambassador day in September and was incredibly impressed with the Ambassadors. She agreed with the Director of HR and OD that there has been a great journey over the last four years which demonstrates how serious Cafcass is about diversity.</p> <p>The Chair agreed that considerable progress has been made and thanked all who have been involved.</p>
12	<p>WORKPLACE CULTURE AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME</p> <p>The Director of HR and OD presented an update on the recent Workplace Culture and Engagement Programme pilot which took place across 6 service areas and launched the use of tools and services procured from Robertson Cooper (who are market leaders in workplace wellbeing and engagement). The Director of HR and OD highlighted the success of A14 who scored most positively in both resilience and wellbeing. The Assistant Director said that a self-</p>

	<p>assessment based case study has been carried out by A14 managers to understand the management behaviours which have contributed to these results. Plans are in place to roll out the tools nationally over 3 phases by April 2015.</p> <p>Action 7: The Director of HR and OD would provide a composite report following national rollout (to be added to the forward plan for August 2015).</p>
13	<p>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION</p> <p>The Head of Legal Services presented the Annual Freedom of Information (FOI) Report and stated that Cafcass is anticipating a rise in FOI requests for this financial year based on 101 requests received since April 2014 compared to 130 requests for April to March 2013-14.</p>
14	<p>QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT</p> <p>The Assistant Director provided the Board with a copy of the September 2014 Performance Report. The Board noted in the executive summary that current trends show a continuing reduction in demand for private law cases, however duration is showing an increase. The Board raised concern about the difficulty to forecast demand but noted the work being undertaken with the MoJ to develop a more sophisticated process for modelling. The Board also acknowledged the current unpredictability of public law demand.</p>
15	<p>STRATEGIC PLAN DASHBOARD</p> <p>The Chief Executive and the Director of Finance provided the Board with a copy of the Quarter One Strategic Plan Dashboard following scrutiny by the Performance Committee on 29 September 2014.</p>
16	<p>STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER</p> <p>The Director of Finance provided the Board with a copy of the Strategic Risk Register following scrutiny by ARAC on 29 September 2014.</p>
	<p>AOB</p> <p>There was no further business.</p> <p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT BOARD MEETING</p> <p>Board Seminar and Dinner Thursday 4 December 2014, 17.00 – 19.00</p> <p>Open Board Meeting Friday 5 December 2014, 9.30 – 13.00</p>
	<p>Summary of Board Actions and Decisions</p> <p>Action 1: A simple timeline of the key milestones of the IT re procurement project, including information on responsibilities, be submitted to the Board.</p> <p>Action 2: Detail of the IT re procurement project to be amplified within the Corporate Risk Log.</p> <p>Action 3: The evaluation reports relating to pre-proceedings work in public law in Liverpool and one in Lincolnshire to be reviewed by the Quality Committee.</p> <p>Action 4: The Annual Safeguarding Report to be circulated to the Board.</p> <p>Action 5: Committee forward plans to be updated to show that Committees will review all risks for which they have the lead assurance.</p> <p>Action 6: The Director of Finance to make amendments to the draft plan.</p> <p>Action 7: The Director of HR and OD would provide a composite report following national rollout (to be added to the forward plan for August 2015).</p>