



**Cafcass Board Meeting Minutes
7 February 2014**

Present

Claire Tyler.....Cafcass Board Chair
 Mary MacLeod..... Cafcass Board Deputy Chair
 Kamaljit Singh.....Cafcass Board Member
 Honor RhodesCafcass Board Member
 Terence Connor..... Cafcass Board Member
 Francis Plowden..... Cafcass Board Member
 John LakinCafcass Board Member
 Ian Butler.....Cafcass 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
 Christine BanimCafcass National Service Director
 Jabbar SardarCafcass Director of HR and OD
 Benjamin Hitch..... Family Justice Young People’s Board
 Luke BerryFamily Justice Young People’s Board
 Anita Addae..... Corporate Support Assistant (Minutes)

Apologies

None

BUSINESS SESSION	
1	<p>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>There were no apologies</p>
2	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no new declarations of interest.</p>
3	<p>MINUTES FROM THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2013 The minutes of the last Board Meeting on 6th December 2013 were agreed by the Board as an accurate record.</p>
4	<p>ACTION LOG/MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>The Chair sought and received confirmation, from the Director of Finance, that a standardised form of feedback would be used by Board Members following their office visits.</p>

	<p>It was agreed the action log would report to each Board meeting only those actions from the previous six months.</p> <p>There were no further matters arising.</p> <p>Action 1: The action log would report to each Board meeting only those actions from the previous six months.</p>
5	<p>REPORT FROM THE CHAIR</p> <p>The Chair reported to the Board as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair informed the Board that there were a series of meetings scheduled with the Minister and senior officials at the MOJ in advance of the transfer of sponsorship. • The Chair provided an update on her extensive and continuing involvement on the Children and Families Bill as part of her parliamentary role, noting there had been a great deal of positive change and progression in comparison to the earlier drafts. • The Chair had met with a further group of Family Court Advisors (FCA's) in the House of Lords which provided her with valuable feedback on front line practice issues. • The Chair had participated in a useful consultation event on family breakdown. • The Chair informed the Board of the work now completed on developing a fast track recruitment programme for Social Workers working in adult social care, with a particular focus for those working with adults with mental health issues. The Chair noted this concluded her work on the Steering Group. <p>Board Members were invited by the Chair to provide an update on any activity undertaken since the previous board meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Executive provided an update on the transfer to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and future work to contribute to the MOJ's business plan. • The Deputy Chair reported on the attendance at the recent Quality Committee by an MOJ colleague and their interest in the policy work of the Committee and the strength of Cafcass' positive relationship with the Judiciary, enhanced through the Deputy Chair's membership of the Family Justice Council triennial review group. • The Chief Executive reported to the Board on the continuing work on private law, highlighting the proposal for a possible commissioning pilot for strand testing and DNA testing to improve progress of cases through court. This is subject to Ministerial approval. <p>JL later provided feedback on his meeting with Cafcass staff on the future estates strategy and the proposals for further work already in hand.</p>
6	<p>REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE</p> <p>The Chief Executive presented his report to the Board, to which were attached the Cafcass Commissioning strategy and Intentions for 2014-16 and the Millar Adamson Craig Management Effectiveness at Cafcass review paper. He gave the following additional updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Executive reported that the paper on Front line by Sir Martin Narey will be published on Thursday 13 February 2014. • The Chief Executive reported that March will be a shadow month working with the MOJ for sponsorship purposes. • The Bloomsbury Street office opens on Monday 10 February 2014 to a small number of staff to ensure to make sure the environment is working well for the final transfer of staff by the end of March 2014. • The Chief Executive reported that positive joint scoping work is underway with HMCTS,

identifying the potential for linked data inputting and a joint data base as part of our Electronic Case Management System (ECMS) development. He informed the Board that the ECMS start-date been put back to 27 May 2014.

- The Chief Executive summarised the Cafcass response to the consultation on the Child Arrangements Programme which will replace the current Private Law Programme from late April 2014. He informed the Board that we are on track as no particular problems were identified for Cafcass at this stage.
- The Chief Executive reported that a programme to deepen service user engagement, staff engagement and public engagement was outlined and taken forward at the Board seminar on 6 February 2014.
- The Chief Executive reported that as an extension to our contract with the Guardian newspaper, we are part sponsoring the Guardian International Forum for Social Workers. This will support our own practice improvement programme and our sector-wide improvement work. It will also make a positive contribution to standard-setting and standard-raising in the wider social work profession.
- The Chief Executive reported that the College of Social Work (TCSW) have agreed to work with us with a view to them endorsing our front-line training programmes through their Continuous Professional Development (CPD) endorsement scheme. This falls within the Cafcass University development.

The Board expressed their concerns at the financial contribution of £50,000 to part sponsor the Guardian International Forum for Social Workers, the intention being to support practice improvements in Cafcass as well as in the wider social work sector in the UK.. The Chief Executive agreed to circulate to Board members the detailed business case for this expenditure

[Action 2: The Chief Executive agreed to circulate the business case for Cafcass becoming a partner in the Guardian International Forum for social workers.](#)

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REPORT FROM THE FAMILY JUSTICE YOUNG PEOPLE’S BOARD

The Board welcomed the representatives of the Family Justice Young People’s Board and the inclusion of the report from them in the Board Meeting Papers. The Family Justice Young People’s Board representatives presented the following highlights from their report:

- The Family Justice Young People’s Board reported to the Board positive feedback from two of their member’s attendance at the Annual Northern Circuit Family Conference on 21 November 2013, describing the visit as challenging but positive.
- They also highlighted that they were frequently being invited to attend events such as the High Court Family Division Seminar on the 3 February 2014.
- The FJYPB have had their initial meeting with officials from the Ministry of Justice to consider future liaison and commissions, who in turn will be joining the next FJYPB meeting.
- The Family Justice Young People’s Board reported that on 12 January 2014 a second recruitment day was held in York where 6 new members were appointed to the board. There are now a total of 44 FJYPB members.

The Board thanked the Family Justice Young People’s Board for the helpful and informative report and noted the excellent work they have been doing,

It was agreed by the Board to extend an invitation to the Family Justice Young People’s Board to give a presentation on their work at a future Board seminar.

[Action 3: It was agreed by the Board to extend an invitation to the Family Justice Young People’s Board to give a presentation on their work at a future Board seminar.](#)

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 27 January 2014 which were circulated with the Board papers. He informed the Board that the Strategic Risk Register continues to evolve and will be aligned with the outcomes of the work with PwC to define risk tolerances. The Chair of ARAC also suggested that it would be useful for all Board members to receive a list of all Cafcass contracts on an annual basis so that members can check for any potential conflicts of interest. ARAC would also review declarations within the Gifts and Hospitality Register on a periodical basis. The Chair of ARAC also referred to the self-assessment exercise at the start of the last committee meeting, facilitated by the National Audit Office (NAO).</p> <p>The Chair of the Quality Committee referred the Board to the draft minutes of the Quality Committee Meeting held on 29 January 2014 which were circulated with the Board Papers. The Quality Committee Chair informed the Board of items presented to the committee particularly the draft Quality Account and the Child Protection Policy. She informed the Board that the Quality Account should summarise evidence and activities for the year 2013-14 and that it had been agreed that the Chief Executive would present the next draft in the proposed joint meeting of the Performance and Quality Committees in May. The Chair of the Quality Committee informed the Board that the National Child Care Policy Manager presented two papers dealing with Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and Individual Management Reviews (IMRs).</p> <p>The Performance Committee had been chaired by John Lakin on behalf of the Committee Chair. He referred the Board to the draft minutes of the Performance Committee Meeting held on 27 January 2014 which were circulated with the Board Papers. He reported the key points raised from the discussion of the Quarter Three performance report; highlighting that Cafcass is exceeding targets on a national basis across all four KPIs, that care application demand has decreased by 4% between April and December 2013, the stock of open care cases has reduced by 26% and Private law demand remains up on last year, but the rate of increase is slowing. The Committee has also reviewed progress across a number of Performance Initiatives and received a presentation from the Cafcass Procurement Team. The Committee had also considered arrangements for the next Board Effectiveness Review which would be discussed at the meeting of the Board in April 2014.</p> <p>FS queried whether there were appropriate performance indicators in place to cover the work of Commissioning and Partnerships. HR offered to meet with the National Commissioning and Partnerships Manager to look at this.</p> <p>Action 4: HR to meet with the National Commissioning and Partnerships Manager to look at potential suitable performance indicators.</p>
9.1	<p>THE 2014-16 WORKFORCE STRATEGY</p> <p>The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented the Board with highlights from the Workforce Strategy 2014-16 and additional HR Strategy Notes and invited comments or questions from Board members. In addition he gave the following updates:</p> <p>The Workforce Strategy builds upon the firm foundations laid down during 2010-12 and a range of workforce development initiatives throughout 2013 such as the launch of the Talent Management Strategy. Available capacity has been increased through improved attendance at work, and within the 2014-16 Strategy emphasis has been placed on further improving the health and wellbeing of</p>

	<p>the workforce, providing a range of support for practitioners to become more resilient, and promoting self-efficacy whilst simultaneously maintaining a strong focus on improving performance and developing individual skills. These improvements will be achieved in tandem with proportionate and analytical models of social work practice, enabling Cafcass to meet the rising demand for services at a time when budgets will continue either to be tight or to reduce in real terms. The Director of HR and OD reported that the Workforce Strategy is intended to support the Cafcass Strategic Plan across its 5 main objectives: Quality, Family Justice Reform, Influence, Economy and Efficiency and Diversity. It also sets out new roles and career structures which align with the Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Work, thus providing greater clarity around the opportunities for staff to achieve career progression, linked to their continued professional development within the organisation. He informed the Board that the Strategy has been shared with CMT, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service and updated to reflect feedback and comments prior to being shared with staff for consultation during January 2014. Feedback from staff focussed on pay, terms and conditions, career structures, plus health and wellbeing. This has helped further refine the content in these areas. It was also noted that a number of managers and staff took the opportunity to provide positive comments regarding the information presented in the document and the direction it sets for the future.</p> <p>The Board thanked the Director of HR and OD for sharing the proposed workforce strategy for 2014-16. The quality and detail of the report was endorsed by Board Members. It was noted by Board Members that the comparison of age, demography and ethnicity should not be combined within the same category and should rather be separated. Concerns were raised by a Board Member to ensure that the recruitment and selection strategy 2.4 would include how we intend to target BME candidates, as we struggle with the recruitment of outstanding candidates from diverse background. This should be taken further. The Director of HR and OD thanked the Board for their comments and agreed he would make revisions to the strategy accordingly.</p> <p>Action 5: The Workforce Strategy 2014-16 to be reviewed where appropriate in light of Board comments and suggestions.</p>
10.1	<p>RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED CHILD ARRANGEMENTS PROGRAMME</p> <p>The Head of Legal Services and the National Service Director attended the Board Meeting to present the discussion paper in response to the proposed Child Arrangements Programme and the response from Cafcass to the draft Child Arrangements Programme. The Head of Legal Services informed the Board this was an opportunity to make further amendments to the Child Arrangements Programme to clarify what Cafcass is responsible for, how people are diverted away from court and the consultation process.</p> <p>Board members were concerned the programme did not give sufficient prominence to the Voice of the Child and agreed the National Service Director would raise their concerns separately. The Head of Legal Services confirmed the status of the programme to be a Practice Direction. The Chief Executive confirmed the impact of litigants in person was being kept under review, and with the MOJ.</p> <p>Action 6: The National Service Director to raise the concerns of the Board that the draft programme does not give sufficient prominence to the Voice of the Child.</p>
10.2	<p>FINANCIAL REPORT QUARTER 3 FORECAST 2013-14</p> <p>The Director of Finance presented the Board the Quarter Three Financial Results and highlighted the key points. The Director of Finance informed the Board of the budget for 2013-14 which has continued to align with and support operational and strategic priorities. She reported that the level of spending after the first nine months of the year remains lower than budgeted for, but the rate of</p>

	<p>spending continues to increase compared to budget and the forecast position will be to spend in line with the budget.</p> <p>The Director of Finance confirmed the small level of contingency was appropriate to ensure any unforeseen spending could be managed and any residual underspend minimised.</p>
11.1	<p>QUARTER THREE STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER</p> <p>The Director of Finance presented the Quarter Three Strategic Risk Register for information following scrutiny by the Quality Committee and the ARAC.</p> <p>The Board noted that the ICT reprocurement programme would be a substantial and complex piece of work and likely reflected in the register in the following year.</p> <p>The Director of Finance would review the analysis of risks in relation to private law demand and present to the next ARAC a rebased register for 2014-15.</p> <p><i>Action 7: The Director of Finance to review the analysis of risks in relation to private law demand and present to the next ARAC a rebased register for 2014-15.</i></p>
11.2	<p>PERFORMANCE REPORT</p> <p>The National Service Director provided the Board with a copy of the December 2013 Performance Report following scrutiny by the Performance Committee on 27 January 2014.</p> <p>The National Service Director informed the Board that the December 2013 performance report is the ninth report for the 2013-14 year, and details Cafcass' performance against Key Performance Indicators, alongside significant supporting information such as the demand placed on the organisation's services. The National Service Director discussed the performance report highlighting the key issues and key trends.</p>
11.3	<p>QUARTER THREE STRATEGIC PLAN DASHBOARD</p> <p>The Director of Finance provided the Board with a copy of the cover paper for the Quarter Three Strategic Plan Dashboard following its scrutiny by the Performance Committee on 27 January 2014.</p> <p>The Chair requested circulation of Quarter Three Strategic Plan Dashboard paper (agenda item 12.08) electronically by Director of Finance.</p> <p><i>Action 8: The Director of Finance to circulate Dashboard to Board Members electronically.</i></p>
13	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>The chair informed the Board Members that the next meeting has been scheduled for 28th March 2014.</p> <p>There was no further business.</p>
	<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT BOARD MEETING</p> <p>Board Dinner Thursday 27th March 2014 –19.00 onwards.</p> <p>Open Board Meeting Friday 28th March 2014 – 10.00-12.00 (option for extension if any urgent budget issues)</p>

Summary of Board Actions and Decisions

Action 1: The action log would report to each Board meeting only those actions from the previous six months.

Action 2: The Chief Executive agreed to circulate the business case for Cafcass becoming a partner in the Guardian International Forum for social workers.

Action 3: It was agreed by the Board to extend an invitation to the Family Justice Young People's Board to give a presentation on their work at a future Board seminar.

Action 4: HR to meet with the National Commissioning and Partnerships Manager to look at potential suitable performance indicators.

Action 5: The Workforce Strategy 2014-16 to be reviewed where appropriate in light of Board comments and suggestions.

Action 6: The National Service Director to raise the concerns of the Board that the draft programme does not give sufficient prominence to the Voice of the Child.

Action 7: The Director of Finance to review the analysis of risks in relation to private law demand and present to the next ARAC a rebased register for 2014-15.

Action 8: The Director of Finance to circulate Dashboard to Board Members electronically.