



MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Monday 27 January 2014
Sanctuary Buildings, Westminster

Present

John Lakin, Deputy Chair
Stuart Smith, Cafcass Board Member
Kam Singh, Cafcass Board Member

Observers

Alison Wedge, Ministry of Justice

Apologies

Claire Tyler, Cafcass Board Chair

In Attendance

Anthony Douglas, Chief Executive
Christine Banim, National Operational Director
Anji Owens, Assistant Director
Jigna Patel, MIS Operational Manager
Holly Jeapes (minutes)

MINUTES

1. Welcome & Apologies

Welcome and introductions were made and apologies noted.

2. Draft Minutes of 25th November 2013 Meeting & Action Log

The minutes of the meeting of 25th November 2013 were agreed as an accurate record. It was noted that all of the actions are on track or completed. The Committee were informed that the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development aims to bring a paper on the Reward Strategy 2014-17 to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and to the Board meeting in April 2014 (Action 1). The Chair informed the meeting that as agreed at the Board meeting, he will meet staff about options for a 2014-16 Estates Strategy (action 3). It was agreed that the forward planner will be populated after the Ofsted inspection outcome, taking account of the recommendations made. Cafcass' transfer to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) was discussed as a potential item for the next meeting agenda.

3. Quarter 3 December 2013 Performance Report

The Assistant Director presented the main highlights from the December 2013 Performance Report which demonstrates a positive picture of Cafcass performance in the quarter. The Committee acknowledged that the key issues box on the front of the report is helpful and it was agreed that this should be included in all future Performance Reports.

The outlook for 2014 was highlighted as uncertain because of the scale of change and the- as yet- unpredictable impact on Cafcass of these changes. The changes discussed were:

- The implementation of the revised PLO and the new proposed statutory 26 week time limit in April 2014.



- The likely rise in litigants without lawyers (LIP's) in private law cases which has had an impact on our practitioners, who find themselves spending more time on these types of cases.
- The impact on private law of the falling use of mediation pre-court and the uncertainty about this trend. The main reason for this was felt to be the recent changes to Legal Aid entitlement as it was often the solicitor who signposted applicants to mediation.
- With regard to the impact of the new Child Arrangements Programme, the National Service Director explained that this is essentially an update of the private law programme with a small number of significant changes for Cafcass which are being actively discussed at the Private Law Working Group (PLWG).

Key Points:

- Cafcass is exceeding targets on a national basis across all four KPIs.
- Care application demand has decreased by 4% between April and December 2013.
- The stock of open care cases has reduced by 26%.
- Private law demand remains up on last year, but the rate of increase is slowing.

The Chief Executive informed the committee that the Ipsos Mori evaluation of the revised PLO pilot period report should be available next month and agreed to circulate it to the committee as soon as a final draft has been cleared.

Cheshire and Merseyside (A9) was discussed because it saw the biggest rise in both public and private law demand simultaneously. The National Service Director confirmed that she put more resources into this area and as a result the high (red) workload weighting figure remains low. A Board member suggested this demonstrated an organisation that has the capacity and resilience to respond to fluctuations in demand at the local level quickly. The CEO informed the committee that at the two A9 development days he had attended earlier in January, staff in A9 were managing the high workload well and focussed on what needed to be done for children.

A paper was presented on the percentage of FCA's in each workload weighting band within each service area. The latest statistics (December 2013) show that the percentage of staff in the high red category is 3.8% compared with 14.3% in June 2012. The National Service Director explained that at any one time we should not have more than 25% of staff in the high red category, and that workloads at present are within the acceptable range.

A Board member asked whether this information has been shared with the trade unions and what their feedback was of it. It was confirmed that a member of the MIS team is meeting with the trade unions tomorrow and JP will feedback to the committee the outcome of this meeting.

It was agreed that the methodology behind the workload weighting snapshot will be circulated to all Board members as well as to Alison Wedge from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).



Action 1: The CEO informed the committee that the Ipsos Mori evaluation of the revised Public Law Outline (PLO) should be available next month and agreed to circulate it to the committee as soon as a final draft has been cleared.

Action 2: It was agreed that the methodology behind the workload weighting snapshot will be circulated to all Board members as well as Alison Wedge from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

4. Quarter 3 Strategic Plan Dashboard

The Performance Committee discussed the Quarter Three Strategic dashboard. The following points were made:

- The section on diversity has been expanded which captures more accurately work that is being undertaken about diversity across the organisation.
- It was agreed that the EIA assessment will be circulated to Board Members, for information.
- P4- public law has gone from green to amber this is to reflect the uncertainty around both public and private law demand.
- The framework agreement with MoJ is almost ready for sign off and will come to the Board to review, probably on an inter-sessional basis.

Action 3: It was agreed that the EIA assessment will be circulated to Board Members, for information.

5. Annual Review of Performance Initiatives

The CEO presented his paper on the Annual Review of Performance Initiatives which was well received by the committee.

- It was agreed that diversity should be included within the detail of the HR initiatives.
- The Innovation Board was discussed along with the potential for a small number of invest-to-save innovation projects, which will be discussed with MoJ before the programme is confirmed.
- The learning from SCR's was discussed, including the dissemination process.

The CEO and National Service Director agreed that their three top initiatives were:

1. The Quality of our work– improving the skill set of staff still further.
2. The Model office which should produce savings, particularly through a joint work programme with HMCTS, which is being discussed actively at present.
3. Further refinement of our operating models.

Action 4: It was agreed that diversity should be included within the detail of the HR initiatives.

6. Performance review of the Procurement function in Cafcass

The National Procurement Manager (Melissa Smith) and Procurement Advisor (Jane Bate) made a presentation on the performance of the procurement function in Cafcass. The highlights of the presentation and discussion were as follows:



- The Cafcass Procurement team consists of 2 people.
- Their strategy is to gain value for money, compliance and ease of accessing the contracts in place at any one time.
- In line with the rest of Cafcass' work their approach is a proportionate one.
- Cost reduction through contract management. For example, stationery used to be purchased through local arrangements with 150 plus stationery organisations supplying to Cafcass. From 2009 this moved to a single supplier on the Government wide framework, the yearly spend in first year of the framework was £428,000; yearly spend this year to date (9 months) has been £81,000. These savings were attained by a transfer to a standard product list, with controlled ordering of any contract items giving greater control, supported by the policy of moving to paperless offices.
- The performance of the procurement function is measured through papers to the Cafcass Budget Approval Panel and the Corporate Management Team (CMT), the publication of spending and contracts data and through reporting to the Department for Education (DfE) and Cabinet Office.
- Performance is measured through both internal and external audits - because of cross functional working, most aspects of procurement work are covered in routine audits.
- The Procurement team became finalists in the 2013 Government Opportunities Awards (GO) in the Procurement Leadership category.
- The next step for the team is the review and update of the Procurement Strategy.
- It will be important to explore opportunities for joint working with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) observer agreed that she will explore the opportunities for joint training.

7. Measuring Board Effectiveness

The Performance Committee agreed that their recommendation to the Board would be for a 'light touch' approach that does not distract from other pressing priorities. It was recommended that this could be done through measuring the progress in implementing the action plan from the 2013 external review. The fact that the last external review is still relatively recent also supports this 'light touch' approach. It was agreed that the Board Chair and the chairs of other Committees should be consulted before the Board meeting so that they can input any recommendation to be made to the full Board on 7 February.

Action 5: It was agreed that the Board Chair and the chairs of other Committees should be consulted before the Board meeting so that they can input any recommendation to be made to the full Board on 7 February.

8. Performance Learning Reviews: reference from the Board meeting held on 6 December 2013.

The findings of the Dec-Jan audit of PLR's demonstrated an overall positive picture but also identified areas for further improvement which feed directly into the content of forthcoming (February-March 2014) workshops for managers. It was noted that this is one of the most important quality measures across the organisation alongside the quality of casework. The National Service Director informed the Committee that 17 workshops are scheduled focussing on emphasising the importance of the value of PLR's for the performance and continuous development of all staff. It was agreed that the National Service Director will bring this item back to the next meeting once we have



the year to date figure which will be more useful. It was agreed that this will include statistics by service area.

Action 6: It was agreed that the National Service Director will bring this item back to the next meeting once we have the year to date figure.

Action Summary

Action 1: The CEO informed the committee that the Ipsos Mori evaluation of the revised Public Law Outline (PLO) should be available next month and agreed to circulate it to the committee as soon as a final draft has been cleared.

Action 2: It was agreed that the methodology behind the workload weighting snapshot will be circulated to all Board members as well as Alison Wedge from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

Action 3: It was agreed that the EIA assessment will be circulated to Board Members, for information.

Action 4: It was agreed that diversity should be included within the detail of the HR initiatives.

Action 5: the Board Chair and the chairs of other Committees to be consulted before the Board meeting so that they can input any recommendation to be made to the full Board on 7 February 2014.

Action 6: It was agreed that the National Service Director will bring this item back to the next meeting once we have the year to date figure.