



## Discussion Paper for the Board Meeting on 6 December 2013

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

In the period since the last Board meeting on 25 October, the following developments are noteworthy:

1. Management has made a pay offer to staff in relation to 2013/14 through the recognised Cafcass trade unions. The offer is a 1% consolidated increase to staff earning under £24,750. This represents 19% of the workforce. All other staff are being offered a 1% non-consolidated increase. This offer is in line with Government pay guidance. The cost of the offer is £784,000, which has been factored into this year's budget. The recurring cost is £84,000 which has been included in next year's draft base budget. The trade unions are yet to respond.
2. At the time of writing, we have yet to receive the revised Ofsted methodology for the national inspection due before 31 March 2014. The date for the launch of the revised methodology remains set for 9 December. Ofsted sent out their survey of Cafcass staff on 11 November and this closes on 20 December. They have also begun surveying a sample of Cafcass service users who have been parties in recently closed private law cases.
3. We are intending to extend our corporate contract with the College of Social Work for a further year from February 2014, and to carry out a value for money review of membership in the third quarter of 2014/15.
4. The Model Office has been extended to include some innovative projects from around the country which could become part of the national framework in future. An example is a project aiming to deliver private law s7 reports in a shorter timescale throughout A8 (Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset).
5. A revised contract for self-employed contractors is now in place. Accompanying this is a move to a single national hourly rate of £33 an hour, tighter contract management arrangements and fixed fees for private law work.
6. The management effectiveness review has now started and will report in January 2014. This follows on from the Board effectiveness review, the action plan from which is now being implemented.
7. I have met delegations of senior judges and social workers from Japan and Singapore, and agreed a knowledge exchange with the team from Singapore.
8. We continue to make excellent progress with system reform, with significant programmes underway with HMCTS, the judiciary and ADCS. An example is

developments in pre-court services in private law, to support Government policy and the proposed new Child Arrangements Programme.

9. This Board agenda (6 December) contains a lot of business referred by the Board's committees. This shows the scale of work these committees are now undertaking on behalf of the full Board. Board support arrangements are working well but the urgent need for a Board administrator who can minute committees consistently is apparent. Recruitment for this role is under way.
10. I am interviewing for a potential interim manager in mid-December, to add to corporate capacity in the last three months of the financial year. The interim market is less strong than it was due to those available being recruited to work in local authorities requiring improvement, and who as a result are able to ask for and be paid an extremely high day rate which I cannot justify in relation to other demands on the Cafcass budget. I have committed to recruiting to a permanent role of Assistant Director (Policy) early in 2014, which is the main gap.

**Anthony Douglas**  
29 November 2013