

## CEO Board report 25 October 2013

This update report is split into five sections. Outstanding references from previous Board meetings are covered and updated. This explains the large number of appendices.

### 1) Improvement-related work

- Quality Account: The Chair of the Quality Committee and the Chief Executive have met with the senior clinician responsible for the Quality Account at Great Ormond Street Hospital, and National Office graduates have researched different approaches to measuring quality in different organisations. As a result, a new-style Quality Account is being scoped. A draft will be considered at the first meeting of the Quality Committee in 2014. The aim is to publish this towards the end of the year, probably in March 2014, and for this to then be an annual publication.
- Management Effectiveness Review: Following a tendering process, a contract has been awarded to carry out a review along similar lines to that carried out in respect of the Cafcass Board. The successful proposal is attached. The implementation timeline is being discussed with the provider in the w/b 28 October.
- September practice audit: Following the April audit, the methodology was changed to reflect the raising of the bar by Ofsted. An audit of 638 files was undertaken, and the provisional results show an increase in the quality of work graded good and met over the last few months, maintaining the improvement trajectory. A report will be presented to the new Quality Account.
- Private law developments: A new template similar to the revised Public Law Outline template is being piloted in A8, starting from 1 October 2013 (Dorset, Cornwall, Devon and Somerset). The multi-agency Private Law Working Group has now had two meetings and has started the process of revising and updating the current Private Law Programme. Cafcass is represented on the group by the National Service Director and the Head of Legal Services.

### 2) Savings-related work

- Pay progression strategy: Changes to Treasury guidance required all Government Departments and agencies to end automatic pay progression from 2015. The attached paper shows how Cafcass is approaching this, so as not to avoid recruitment and retention problems. Our approach has been endorsed by DfE, the Cabinet Office and the Treasury.
- Estates strategy: Board members requested to see the Cafcass estates strategy, in the context of the London relocation project. This year's programme is attached together with documentation underpinning the original estates programme. The London project timeline will be despatched separately later in w/b 21/10/13. Board members will note that the bulk of office closures and relocations took place between 2010 and 2012, as the main requirement on us was set out within our 2010/11 remit letter from the Secretary of State, to reduce our estate by one third by 2013. This was achieved and the smaller number of

relocations this year, including the London project, have been determined recently through local business planning, aimed at delivering service and quality improvements through local office co-locations. These co-locations have all brought with them a welcome future saving to the Cafcass revenue budget and have helped us to meet our recurring annual target to reduce non front line expenditure by 10% annually. Our move into the Ministry of Justice is an opportunity to develop a new estates strategy, which will hold for the next 3-5 years and will take into account the MOJ estates strategy.

- Specification for the next Cafcass IT contract: Cafcass's current contract stretches from 2009-16 and is now delivering real benefits to staff. Some further service developments over the next 6-9 months will deliver further benefits. These include completion of the digitisation project in February 2014, after which all incoming post will be delivered to a central service in Warrington, where it will be scanned in and mailed to individual staff electronically. One great advantage will be that court orders will be transferred directly into files with the practitioner being sent an alert this has been done. Another development is the merging of ECF and CMS data inputting programmes so that basic case data only has to be inputted once. Other important technical programmes such as *MyWork*, the performance scorecard, will be considered in the light of our post 2016 needs. The specification will also be worked through with Ministry of Justice officials, to assess potential benefits from a joint specification. The Model Office Development remains significant and a presentation is attached for Board members.

### **3) Operational issues**

- Demand levels continue to be volatile, and the latest graph is attached to this report. At the time of writing, private law is running at a 13% increase YTD (year to date) and Public law is running at a 3% decrease YTD. I suspect that the lower public law demand is explained by the 'revised PLO effect', with local authorities taking time to prepare their cases in line with the new requirements. There is no local intelligence that more children's cases are being managed through child protection plans rather than care applications, but this trend, as well as the private law trend, are being kept under fortnightly review.
- Award ceremonies. Cafcass has been shortlisted for a number of awards at the Guardian Public Servant of the Year awards: the Personnel Today awards and the Social Worker of the Year awards. These ceremonies all take place during November and the Board will be advised of the outcome at the 6 December Board meeting.

### **4) Transfer of sponsorship to the Ministry of Justice**

- This now looks certain from April 2014. The issues are comprehensively addressed in a separate report on this Board agenda.

### **5) Governance issues**

- I am meeting the Family Justice Young People's Board with Fay Selvan after the Board meeting on 25 October, aiming to agree a positive way in which the Young Peoples Board can update the whole Cafcass Board on the work they've done in

between Board meetings. The outcome of this meeting will be discussed with the Chair and probably put into practice for the 6 December Board meeting.

- Given this is topical, the FJYPB submission to the President of the Family Division on transparency is attached.
- Ofsted update: It is likely the Ofsted evaluation schedule for their inspections of Cafcass from this year onwards will be launched in early December. All Board members will be invited to the launch which will take place at the National Office.

**Anthony Douglas**

21 October 2013