

## CHILDREN AND FAMILY COURT ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE

Discussion Paper for the Board Meeting on 13 September 2013

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

#### KEY POINTS

- Cafcass has performed well in the early stages of implementation of the revised PLO
- A Ministerial decision on our potential transfer of sponsorship from DfE to the MOJ is anticipated at the end of September, along with a decision about our level of grant for 2014/15 – and possibly for 2015/16
- All London services and the National Office are being relocated over a period of time into a property in Bloomsbury, Central London

1. Care duration now stands at an average of 39 weeks. It is continuing to fall. This is evidence of continued success in the implementation of the revised Public Law Outline.
2. Weekly demand in private law continues to increase at between 15% and 20% compared to a year ago, when it was also beginning to rise in anticipation of legal aid changes from April 2013. Care demand is no longer rising. We will continue to scrutinise demand for both law types on a weekly basis until the end of September, or until trends become more stable.
3. The current phase of due diligence in relation to the potential transfer of sponsorship from DfE to MOJ is now complete, without major issues arising. Ministers are expected to decide on the date of sponsorship transfer by the end of September, which is the latest a decision can be taken to then carry out the technical and administrative work required before any such transfer can take place. A decision on our 2014/15 budget is likely as part of this process, in the same timescale (end of September). A workshop between ourselves, DfE and MOJ will be held later in the year to review the ten years of sponsorship of Cafcass by DfE so that any lessons can be learnt and applied by MOJ if and when they assume our sponsorship.
4. Starting with Wells Street, then PRFD, all of our London services (whose leases are expiring) are being re-located into a single property on the civil estate in Bloomsbury in Central London. This includes the Ilford service and the National Office later in 2014, and the Croydon service in 2015. This has major service advantages. The business case is available for Board members to scrutinise upon request.



- 5 Following on from the Board Effectiveness Review, a Management Effectiveness Review is being carried out later in 2013, surveying all Cafcass managers.
- 6 A revised pay strategy is under consideration and will be discussed along with the initial findings of the Terms and Conditions Review at the Corporate Management Board on 8 October. This takes into account the requirements of Government policy on public sector pay, particularly in relation to pay progression.
- 7 Ofsted continue to develop our inspection framework for the current year (2013/14) and expect to be able to notify us of the final version in October. A launch of the framework will then be arranged and all Board members will be invited. No major changes to the draft framework discussed at the Board Quality Committee are envisaged.
- 8 The first meeting of the Private Law Working Group (PLWG) was held on 2 September. Cafcass is represented by the National Service Director and the Head of Legal Services. The work of the group will be wide ranging, reviewing all aspects of the current Private Law Programme. The issues for Cafcass will be the subject of the next Board seminar on 12 September 2013.

Anthony Douglas  
6 September 2013