

QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, 6 June 2013
Sanctuary Buildings

Present Mary MacLeod, Chair of Quality Committee & Cafcass Board Member
Terence Connor, Vice Chair of Quality Committee & Cafcass Board Member
Ian Butler, Cafcass Board Member
Honor Rhodes, Cafcass Board Member
Fay Selvan, Cafcass Board Member
June Thoburn, Adviser to the Quality Committee

In attendance Anthony Douglas, Chief Executive
Christine Banim, National Service Director
Bruce Clark, Director of Policy
Richard Green, Head of Service (Corporate Services)
Sarah Parsons, Assistant Director
Mary Berwick-Sayers, Executive Assistant (Minutes)

Apologies

MINUTES

1. Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies to note.

2) Minutes of Meeting on 11 April, 2013 & Matters Arising/Action Summary

The minutes of 11 April 2013 were agreed as an accurate record.

3) Matters Arising/Action Summary

It was noted that all Actions are either on the agenda for discussion today or have been completed.

Matters Arising

2. New Ofsted Framework

The National Services Director informed the Committee that the first Ofsted Workshop to agree the methodology and the grade descriptors for the National Inspection had been very positive with Ofsted agreeing to incorporate our amendments into a revised version of the Framework for final sign off at the second Workshop on 7 June. It was agreed that further work needs to be done by the Board to strengthen the Leadership section of the Framework in order to demonstrate leadership from the Board through the Chief Executive and down to the front line.

7. Small Scale Research Projects

The Head of Service (Corporate Services) confirmed that the last of the 2012/13 research projects, the Expert Witness research study, was published today. He updated the Committee on work undertaken to date on the agreed 2013/14 research studies.

Action 1: It was agreed that further work needs to be done by the Board to strengthen the Leadership section of the Framework in order to demonstrate leadership from the Board through the Chief Executive and down to the front line.

4) **Quality Account Proposal**

The Head of Service (Corporate Services) ran through the background to the development of the proposed annual Quality Account, setting out the key elements of the proposal and the mechanisms already in place to measure the quality of our work which could potentially be included within a Quality Account.

After discussion it was agreed that the Quality Account will be a public document which will eventually form part of the Annual Report and, as such, Key Performance Indicators will be an integral part. It was also agreed that the Quality Account will be based on existing methods of measuring quality and that work on the outcomes framework “before and after” will provide a useful contribution in terms of identifying priorities for future quality improvement work, and that the starting point should be Cafcass’s remit. It was further agreed that a first (benchmark) report will be produced for the October meeting of the Quality Committee.

Action 2: The Committee agreed that the Quality Account will be a public document based on existing methods of measuring quality.

Action 3: It was agreed that a first (benchmark) report will be produced for the October meeting of the Quality Committee.

5) **Review of Terms of Reference for the Quality Committee**

The Committee reviewed the existing terms of reference and agreed the following amendments:

- To include reference to the Munro principles as a new point 6, reflecting the fact that these principles remain key to our work programme
- To include a reference to resilience, equality and diversity, linking in with the quality elements of the Strategic Plan
- To reword point 2 to reflect the Committee’s wish to “request” reports as appropriate
- To reword point 5 to reflect the fact that Individual Management Reviews will no longer be a mechanism used in the preparation of Serious Case Reviews
- To include the Quality Committee’s link with the Research Governance Committee
- To make amendment to point NB1 so that it reads “*This Committee will meet quarterly*”

The Quality Committee confirmed its view that the current Cafcass Committee structure should be retained as both the Quality and the Performance Committees add value and reflect the priorities of the organisation. Committee members suggested that the Quality Committee should also focus on issues such as adoption (including international adoption), surrogacy and the separation of siblings and it was agreed that the Committee will consider these thematically once every 6 months/year. Committee members also agreed that front line practitioners will be invited to present at future meetings of the Quality Committee.

Action 4: The Committee agreed the amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Quality Committee as set out above.

Action 5: It was agreed that the Committee will consider the issues of adoption (including international adoption), surrogacy and the separation of siblings thematically once every six months/year.

Action 6: The Committee agreed that front line practitioners will be invited to present at future meetings of the Quality Committee.

6) Child Protection Reports

a) Quarterly Rolling Report on Serious Case Review (SCR) figures (July 2012 – May 2013)

The Head of Service (Corporate Services) presented the headlines from the Rolling Report on Serious Case Reviews, July 2012 to May 2013 and highlighted the nature and extent of Cafcass involvement in current quarter IMRs. The Committee raised the issue of suicide amongst parents whose children have been taken into care and the lack of support for this group of parents, borne out by research done in Norway. The need for Cafcass to exercise its duty of care when providing a service to this group of parents was emphasised. It was agreed that future reports to this Committee will highlight issues such as spite killings, suicide of children and suicide of parents of children taken into care to see if there is potential to get specific messages out to LSCBs and other influencing organisations. At the request of the Committee, the Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed to detail, in care cases, whether a child was adopted or returned to his/her parents and, as part of the IMR research, to look at notification data to check if it adds value.

Action 7: It was agreed that future reports to this Committee will highlight issues such as spite killings, suicide of children and suicide of parents of children taken into care to see if there is potential to get specific messages out to LSCBs and other influencing organisations

Action 8: The Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed to detail, in care cases, whether a child was adopted or returned to his/her parents and, as part of the IMR research, to look at notification data to check if it adds value.

b) Individual Management Reviews – Learning and Actions taken

The Head of Service (Corporate Services) presented a brief summary of the learning and actions taken locally and nationally arising from the one Individual Management Review to a Serious Case Review (SCR) – SCR 304A11 (private law) in the period April 2013 to May 2013 . He highlighted the work of the practitioner involved in this case as an example of outstanding work. The Committee agreed and asked that this case is anonymised and used as a vignette.

Action 9: The Committee agreed that SCR 304A11 should be anonymised and used as a vignette.

7. Annual Safeguarding Report

The Head of Service (Corporate Services) presented the Annual Safeguarding Report to the Committee which provides an overview of safeguarding activities undertaken in the period April 2012 to March 2013. He informed the Committee that a detailed account is only provided against those matters not otherwise reported to the Board and that in future, subject to this Committee's agreement, this report will form part of the Annual Report and Accounts to avoid any duplication of effort. After discussion the following points were agreed:

- The Munro principles should be incorporated within the Report
- Reference to "*The other two reports are silent on this matter*" (page 2 bullet point 7) should be removed

The Committee raised the issue of whether any information is included within Ofsted reports which sets out the reasons why a service area is scored as adequate. The Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed to look into this and, if so, make this more explicit in the final version of the Annual Safeguarding Report.

The Committee agreed that in future this report will form part of the Annual Report and Accounts. The Chair of the Committee agreed to give oral feedback on this report to the Board meeting in June.

Action 10: The Committee agreed that Munro principles should be incorporated within the Report and that reference to “*The other two reports are silent on this matter*” (page 2 bullet point 7) should be removed.

Action 11: The Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed to look into whether Ofsted reports set out the reasons why a service area is scored as adequate and, if so, make this more explicit in the final version of the Annual Safeguarding Report.

Action 12: The Committee agreed that in future this report will form part of the Annual Report and Accounts.

Action 13: The Chair of the Committee agreed to give oral feedback on this report to the Board meeting in June

8. The Learning & Development Programme 2013/14

The Assistant Director gave an overview of changes that are being introduced to the Learning & Development (L&D) Programme this year, based largely on feedback from the national NIS survey undertaken in November 2012. She informed the Committee about positive feedback received from Ofsted on the range of commissioned learning activities provided to staff and outlined plans and objectives for the year.

The Committee reviewed the 2013/2014 Development Plan and the following amendments were agreed:

- Replace “*Doing rather than knowing*” with “*Doing and knowing*” (page 1, bullet point 1)
- Replace “*Safeguarding Research*” with “*Child Protection Research*” under *Initial Knowledge Sets* (page 6)
- Add a training course which reinforces Munro principles to the *Library of available training* (page 8)

A Committee member queried the reasoning behind including Learning from SCRs within the core training programme content. The Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed that careful consideration needs to be given to its applicability to the programme and whether it could/should be included in some form. The Committee also pointed out the lack of “involvement of the child” in the core training plan. The Assistant Director agreed to consider how this can be incorporated.

The Committee briefly referred to the social networking and social work e-learning now available as part of the programme. It was noted that whilst social networking provides great benefits for children and service users, issues around vulnerability and cyber bullying need to be addressed and work on this is just beginning. The Chair of the Committee agreed to share the report, once published, of the work she is currently involved in as an adviser, in this area.

Action 14: The Committee agreed the amendments to the 2013/14 Development Plan set out above.

Action 15: The Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed that careful consideration needs to be given to the applicability of including Learning from SCRs to the programme and whether it could/should be included in some form.

Action 16: The Assistant Director agreed to consider how “involvement of the child” can be incorporated into the core training plan.

9. Getting to Good Audits

The National Services Director stated that whilst she is pleased that the national target of 30% of work audited as “good” by the end of March 2013 had been achieved, it was disappointing that seven areas did not meet this target. She confirmed that managers are now in agreement that the benchmark being used to identify “good” is the right one, although probably slightly harsher than the benchmark used by Ofsted. She outlined the ways in which OMT plan to improve upon the 30% of “good” work and make it “outstanding” and the steps being taken to improve the work of the under achievers. She confirmed setting that a target for 50% of work audited as “good” will be set for September 2013 and that an update on progress will be presented to the October meeting of the Quality Committee.

The Committee briefly referred to the *draft evaluation schedule for the future inspection of Cafcass*. The National Services Director informed the Committee that further work needs to be done to define exactly what “outstanding” looks like. A Committee member emphasised the importance of it being based firmly on the statute with judicial support being key. The National Services Director confirmed that further changes had been made to the schedule at the Workshop on 29th May. She agreed to circulate the revised version of the schedule to Committee members to allow them to make comments and suggest further revisions. It was noted that a reference to the Board “holding the organisation to account” had now been added to the *Leadership and Governance* section of the schedule.

Action 17: The National Services Director confirmed that an update on progress towards achieving a target of 50% of work audited as “good” will be presented to the October meeting of the Quality Committee.

Action 18: The National Services Director agreed to circulate the revised version of the *draft evaluation schedule for the future inspection of Cafcass* to the Committee for their comment.

10. Self Employed Contractors (SEC Report)

It was noted that this report had been referred to the Quality Committee by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARAC) following concerns raised about Appendix B of the document – an audit of SEC casework carried out in September 2012. The Committee noted this audit but asked for a follow up audit to be carried out some time during the year using a more representative sample and with a clearer scope.

Action 19: The Committee requested that a follow up audit be carried out during the year using a more representative sample and with a clearer scope.

11. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

12 **Date of Next Meeting**

3rd October 2013, 2.00pm – 4.00pm, Sanctuary Buildings

Action Summary

Action 1: It was agreed that further work needs to be done by the Board to strengthen the Leadership section of the Framework in order to demonstrate leadership from the Board through the Chief Executive and down to the front line.

Action 2: The Committee agreed that the Quality Account will be a public document based on existing methods of measuring quality

Action 3: It was agreed that a first (benchmark) report will be produced for the October meeting of the Quality Committee

Action 4: Action 4: The Committee agreed the amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Quality Committee as set out in item 5 above

Action 5: Action 5: It was agreed that the Committee will consider the issues of adoption (including international adoption), surrogacy and the separation of siblings thematically once ever six months/year.

Action 6: The Committee agreed that front line practitioners will be invited to present at future meetings of the Quality Committee.

Action 7: It was agreed that future Quarterly Rolling reports on Serious Case Review (SCR) figures will highlight issues such as spite killings, suicide of children and suicide of parents of children taken into care to see if there is potential to get specific messages out to LSCBs and other influencing organizations.

Action 8: The Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed to detail, in care cases, whether a child was adopted or returned to his/her parents and, as part of the IMR research, to look at notification data to check if it adds value.

Action 9: The Committee agreed that SCR 304A11 should be anonymised and used as a vignette.

Action 10: The Committee agreed that Munro principles should be incorporated within the Annual Safeguarding Report and that reference to "*The other two reports are silent on this matter*" (page 2 bullet point 7) should be removed.

Action 11: The Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed to look into whether Ofsted reports set out the reasons why a service area is scored as adequate and, if so, make this more explicit in the final version of the Annual Safeguarding Report.

Action 12: The Committee agreed that in future the Annual Safeguarding report will form part of the Annual Report and Accounts.

Action 13: The Chair of the Committee agreed to give oral feedback on the Annual Safeguarding report to the Board meeting in June.

Action 14: The Committee agreed the amendments to the 2013/14 Development Plan as set out in item 8 above.

Action 15: The Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed that careful consideration needs to be given to the applicability of including Learning from SCRs to the learning programme and whether it could/should be included in some form.

Action 16: The Assistant Director agreed to consider how “involvement of the child” can be incorporated into the core training plan.

Action 17: The National Services Director confirmed that an update on progress towards achieving a target of 50% of work audited as “good” will be presented to the October meeting of the Quality Committee.

Action 18: The National Services Director agreed to circulate the revised version of the *draft evaluation schedule for the future inspection of Cafcass* to the Committee for their comment.

Action 19: The Committee requested that a follow up SEC audit be carried out during the year using a more representative sample and with a clearer scope.