



QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, 11 April 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
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)
Jeremy Gleaden, Ofsted (for item 1)
Caroline Millar, Millar Adamson Craig Partnership, (Observer)
- Apologies** Honor Rhodes, Cafcass Board Member

MINUTES

1. Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed Jeremy Gleaden and Caroline Millar to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies had been received from Honor Rhodes.

2. New Ofsted Inspection Framework

The Chair thanked Jeremy Gleaden for coming to the meeting of the Quality Committee, outlined its function for Cafcass and the Board, noted the improvement trajectory Cafcass has undergone over the past years and Ofsted's role in it, welcomed, on behalf of the Board, the new national inspection framework and the workshops that are planned to ensure that the methodology underlying Cafcass's work on quality improvement aligns well with the new framework, and invited the Chief Executive to introduce the discussion.

The Chief Executive thanked Jeremy Gleaden for attending the meeting and paid tribute to the significant contribution made by Ofsted to the Cafcass improvement agenda over the past 4 years. He stated that Cafcass wants to build on what has been achieved to date and welcomed the new annual national inspection arrangements. He underlined the importance of defining what "outstanding" work is and how the gap between "good" and "outstanding" can be bridged. He looked forward to Ofsted's future work taking account of the constraints under which Cafcass will continue to operate. The National Service Director emphasised the importance of ensuring that the right methodology and grade descriptors are in place and that our work continues to be measured in a way that takes full account of our statutory remit. She confirmed that these issues will be discussed at the forthcoming joint Cafcass/Ofsted Workshop.

Jeremy Gleaden congratulated Cafcass on the progress made over the last four, very challenging years. He stated that Cafcass is now in the safest, strongest position ever in its existence, with strong leadership at Head of Service level, strong performance management, improved practice and engagement with partners. He informed the Committee that the judgement structure for the new inspection methodology has not yet been finalised. Issues such as the continuing use of an 'outstanding' category, the

importance of looking at whole system inspection and local system change, the systems in place to challenge judgements, the ways of gathering service user perspectives and the need for more detailed feedback within reports were also raised, all of which will be considered at the joint workshop in May. The Chief Executive stated that he looked forward to Ofsted making a continued contribution to our service improvement.

3) **Minutes of Meeting on 24 January, 2013 & Matters Arising/Action Summary**

The minutes of 24 January 2013 were agreed as an accurate record.

4) **Matters Arising/Action Summary**

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

5) **Ofsted Reports (A14 & A17)**

The Chief Executive congratulated staff in A14 and A17 on the very positive outcome of both inspections. It was noted that the issue of ethnicity and diversity had been highlighted by Ofsted inspectors in the A14 report as “*not being sufficiently considered in assessments*”. The Assistant Director (A14) confirmed that this issue will be considered at the forthcoming joint workshop, with a view to producing relevant grade descriptors. In addition, the workshop will consider how interim judgements can, in the most constructive way, be queried while reports are still in draft form. It was agreed that, in future, all post Ofsted inspection action plans will be sent to the Quality Committee to provide information about the issues that are to be addressed. The Quality Committee was very pleased to note Ofsted’s assessment that “*a culture of learning and development is well-embedded across the area*”.

Action 1: It was agreed that all post Ofsted inspection plans will be sent to the Quality Committee to provide information and assurance about the issues that are to be addressed.

6. **Child Protection Reports**

a) **Quarterly Rolling Report on Serious Case Review (SCR) figures (April 2012 – March 2013)**

The Head of Service (Corporate Services) presented the headlines from the Rolling Report on Serious Case Reviews, April 2012 to March 2013. He advised the Committee of the new arrangements for SCRs (from 15 April 2013) as set out in Chapter 4 of *Working Together* and of the challenges this will pose for Cafcass, which are:

- how we will contribute to SCRs as the mechanism by which these are conducted is to be delegated to LSCBS, each one of which will develop a local learning framework, and
- extracting learning proportionately from each SCR, as it seems unlikely that Cafcass will in future be asked to prepare so many IMRs.

Committee members agreed that consideration needs to be given to how best to address these two matters in future. It was further agreed that the Head of Service (Corporate Services) will take this issue forward and report back to the Quality Committee in June.



Action 2: It was agreed that the Head of Service (Corporate Services) will take forward the issues relating to the challenges posed by the new arrangements for SCRs and report back to the Quality Committee in June.

b) Individual Management Reviews – Learning and Actions taken

The Head of Service (Corporate Services) presented a summary of the learning and actions taken locally and nationally arising from Cafcass submissions to Serious Case Reviews (SCRs). He informed the Committee that in the period December 2012 to March 2013 Cafcass has received substantially more notifications than in the previous quarter and has completed two Individual Management Reviews (IMRs) to SCRs; one relating to private law and one to public law. The Committee briefly discussed SCR300 A6 (private law case) and SCR 334 A15 (public law case).

Committee members raised the issue of how this Committee can identify the most important cases. They questioned whether the focus of the *Working Together* model of learning from Serious Case Reviews is really appropriate for Cafcass and suggested that consideration should be given to adopting a system which would run alongside the *Working Together* model which would help us identify more quickly when something has gone wrong in a case as well as the learning to immediately apply.

7. Small Scale Research Studies to feed into the Annual Quality Account

Following feedback from Committee members and further discussion at the Quality Committee meeting, it was agreed that the small scale research studies to be taken forward in 2013/14 are numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 as set out in the paper to the Committee:

1.Repeat of 'Three weeks in November': It is proposed that the study will be repeated, using a November 2013 cohort of care cases, replicating relevant aspects of the methodology applied in relation to the 2008 and 2011 cohorts. The report will be completed in April 2014.

2.Repeat of 'The work of children's guardians in care cases': To be completed in September 2014, using a subset of the same November 2013 cohort of care cases. A shorter turnaround time has been set, in anticipation of a continuing reduction in the duration of care cases.

3.Repeat of 2012 Independent Management Review research: Using the existing methodology, we will add to the database created for the 2012 research that looked at 23 Cafcass IMRs. It is expected the updated research will look at between 10 and 12 further, more recent, Cafcass IMRs. Data analysis will begin in May 2013, with the report expected to be completed in September 2013.

4.Outcome of Care Plans: a joint ADCS/Cafcass piece of research using a sample of 250 local authority care cases. This would replicate Harwin and Owen's study *Making care orders work* (2003), using the November 2011 cohort of cases

6.A Study of the quality of case analyses provided to the courts

Action 3: The Committee agreed to take forward items 1, 2 3, 4 and 6 set out above as small scale research studies to be taken forward in 2013/14.

8. Update re Service Users Survey



The Chief Executive explained the background to and the purpose of the *Essex Pilot Service User Feedback Survey*. Once learning from the use of the methodology and the survey results have been considered, the approach will be replicated elsewhere. The need to exercise caution when interpreting results from small sample surveys, with limited response rates, was emphasised by the Committee. The Chief Executive invited Committee members to send suggestions by email to the Assistant Director (A14) as to how the methodology for this survey can be improved.

Action 4: The Chief Executive invited Committee members to send suggestions by email to the Assistant Director (A14) as to how the methodology for the Service Users Survey can be improved.

9. Findings from audit/research on work with children

The National Service Director confirmed that the findings from the National Improvement Service Audit – *Children being seen* (summary report) and the findings of the Cafcass research project on the work of children’s guardians in s31 care cases revealed current approaches to the issue of direct work with children. She informed the Committee that the methodology within our health checks will be changed to state whether a child has been seen and a professional judgement recorded about the basis for the decision not to see a child in a case in those rare occasions where this is the decision in the case plan.

10. Self Employed Contractors (SEC Report)

The Committee agreed to defer discussion of this report to the June Quality Committee meeting.

Action 5: The Committee agreed to defer discussion of this report to the June Quality Committee meeting.

11 Endorsement of Social Care Quality Standard on health and wellbeing of looked after children

The Committee formally noted the endorsement of the NICE social care quality standard. Committee members were invited to send their thoughts to the Chief Executive on whether there are any other standards that Cafcass should be developing.

Action 6: Committee members were invited to send their thoughts to the Chief Executive on whether there are any other standards that Cafcass should be developing on the health and wellbeing of looked after children in addition to those produced by NICE.

12. Quality Account

The Committee agreed to defer this item to the June Quality Committee meeting when it will be discussed in detail. The Chief Executive invited members’ comments or advice to him by email in the meantime.

Action 7: The Committee agreed to defer discussion about the Quality Account to the June meeting. Committee members were invited to email the Chief Executive with comments or advice in the meantime.

13. Any Other Business

The Chair, Chief Executive and Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed to meet to plan the agenda for the June Quality Committee meeting.



Action 8: The Chair, Chief Executive and the Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed to meet to plan the agenda for the June meeting.

14 **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 6 June 2013, 2.00pm – 4.00pm, Sanctuary Buildings

Action Summary

Action 1: It was agreed that all post Ofsted inspection action plans will be sent to the Quality Committee to evidence the issues that will be addressed.

Action 2: It was agreed that the Head of Service (Corporate Services) will take the issues relating to the challenges posed by the new arrangements for SCRs forward and report back to the Quality Committee in June.

Action 3: The Committee agreed to take forward items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 as small scale research studies to be taken forward in 2013/14:

1.Repeat of 'Three weeks in November': It is proposed that the study will be repeated, using a November 2013 cohort of care cases, replicating relevant aspects of the methodology applied in relation to the 2008 and 2011 cohorts. The report will be completed in April 2014.

2.Repeat of 'The work of children's guardians in care cases': To be completed in September 2014, using a subset of the same November 2013 cohort of care cases. A shorter turnaround time has been set, in anticipation of a continuing reduction in the duration of care cases.

3.Repeat of 2012 Independent Management Review research: Using the existing methodology, we will add to the database created for the 2012 research that looked at 23 Cafcass IMRs. It is expected the updated research will look at between 10 and 12 further, more recent, Cafcass IMRs. Data analysis will begin in May 2013, with the report expected to be completed in September 2013.

4.Outcome of care plans: A joint ADACS/Cafcass piece of research using a sample of 250 local authority care cases. This would replicate Harwin and Owen's study *Making care orders work* (2003), using the November 2011 cohort of cases.

6.A Study of the quality of case analyses provided to the courts.

Action 4: The Chief Executive invited Committee members to send suggestions by email to the Assistant Director (A14) on how the methodology for the Service Users Survey can be improved.

Action 5: The Committee agreed to defer discussion of the Self Employed Contractors (SECs) report to the June Quality Committee meeting.

Action 6: Committee members were invited to send their thoughts to the Chief Executive on whether there are any other standards on the health and wellbeing of looked after children that Cafcass should be developing in addition to those produced by NICE.

Action 7: The Committee agreed to defer discussion about the Quality Account to the June meeting. Committee members were invited to email the Chief Executive with comments or advice in the meantime.

Action 8: The Chair, Chief Executive and the Head of Service (Corporate Services) agreed to meet to plan the agenda for the June meeting.

