



CHILDREN AND FAMILY COURT ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE

Paper for the Board Meeting on 22 March 2013

Revised Governance Arrangements in the National Office and the establishment of the new Corporate Support Service

1. AIM AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 To summarise revised governance arrangements for the consideration of the Board.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTION FOR THE BOARD

- 2.1 None.

3. SHORT SUMMARY

- 3.1 The paper sets out recent developments to strengthen corporate governance and support to the Board, specifically: the Cafcass Management Board; the corporate portfolios of senior managers, which are attached; and arrangements for the new Corporate Support Service to the Board, and the Executive.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Cafcass Management Board

The Cafcass Management Board (CMB) has been established, chaired by the Chief Executive, and having the following membership: Corporate Management Team (CMT); Assistant Directors, the Head of Legal Services and the two Corporate Heads of Service. The principal purpose of CMB is to provide detailed senior management consideration of the most important issues referred or escalated from operational and service management and from the various Cafcass programme boards (Development; Information Assurance; and Business Continuity). In turn, CMB refers major strategic or governance issues to the Cafcass Board or its committees. Its terms of reference are to be found in Appendix A. CMB met for the first time in February and will meet six times a year. A governance map is attached in Appendix B to show how the various groups, which have been kept to a necessary minimum, inter-relate.

- 4.2 The smaller CMT continues to meet weekly, consisting of the Chief Executive, the National Service Director, the Director of HR and Organisational Development, the Director of Finance and the Director of Policy (the latter until May 2013). They take weekly decisions (or immediate decisions as required), which are recorded on a CMT action sheet and decision log.
- 4.3 CMT members meet with DfE officials as and when the need arises, and the Deputy Director with sponsorship responsibility has a right of attendance at CMT meetings if she wishes to raise an issue with us. These arrangements have worked well for some years now.

4.4 Senior Management changes and portfolios

Extra senior management capacity has been created through the 5 Heads of Service who have progressed through the Cafcass talent management programme to become Assistant Directors and who have taken on a strategic portfolio as part of their workload.

The portfolios of CMB members and Heads of Service have been re-defined in line with business need and priorities. These include internal accountabilities and external stakeholder liaison responsibilities. They also include the re-distribution of responsibilities currently held by the Director of Policy, to ensure that his work is re-allocated prior to his departure from Cafcass in May 2013. Some of his responsibilities now sit with the Chief Executive, such as liaison with the senior judiciary; some with other CMT members; and some with Assistant Directors and Heads of Service. The Chief Executive has established the briefs and expected outcomes of each portfolio. Each will be periodically reviewed at CMB. The portfolios are listed in Appendix C.

4.5 Governance Resources

The following staffing arrangements to support the Board and Executive have been put in place.

Two Head of Service (Corporate Services) posts have been created as follows:

Richard Green: acts as Board Secretary and has the following responsibilities: attending all meetings of the Cafcass Board (and committees) and CMB; developing agendas with the relevant Board chairs and lead officers; supporting the effective operation of the Cafcass Board and CMB through the upkeep of the corporate calendar, forward planners and action logs; and supporting the flow of information between the Cafcass Board and CMB.

This is in addition to other responsibilities, including management of all submissions to serious case reviews and the research programme.

Colette Beech: will co-manage the Corporate Support Service (CSS, set out below) that will service the Cafcass Board and committees. This is in addition to her responsibilities as Head of Communications.

Corporate Support Service: arrangements are being finalised but the current plan is to appoint three corporate support officers, to recruit two graduates, and to align existing posts (some of which are being re-designated under a minor corporate restructure) that currently support governance arrangements. Their duties will include preparation for and the minuting of the Cafcass Board and CMB; maintaining stakeholder liaison logs; and servicing requests from the Board or Management Board (e.g. for policy updates/briefings, or for research).

Some additional capacity in the policy team will also be needed as a result of likely secondments on a part time basis of an assistant policy officer and a graduate intern to the office of the President of the Family Division, for experience and as part of our commitment to partnership working with the senior judiciary.

The potential need for additional corporate capacity to support the Board and Executive discharge their functions will be kept under review, as capacity has become stretched with serial reductions in management capacity over the last few years. Whilst this is in line with Government policy and the requirement to reduce the admin element of our budget, it would be counter-productive to reduce capacity to an unsustainable low level.

4.6 Systems in place

The Governance Team maintains:

- The forward planners and action logs which have been created for the Cafcass Board and Committees, and CMB/CMT, and forwarded to chairs and lead officers for their agreement. The purpose of these is to ensure that matters are addressed in the 'right' forum at the 'right' time, so as to avoid duplications or omissions.
- Electronic and paper records of all Boards and Committees in preparation for internal or external audit.
- The corporate calendar which records all internal or external meetings or events of national or corporate significance. This is currently hosted in Outlook and is available in electronic form to staff only. It will, however, be made available to each meeting of the Cafcass Board.
- A new strategy for stakeholder management is being developed which will record all visits and meetings attended by Board members (an action from a previous Board meeting)

5. Key Strategic Issues for the Board to Consider

- 5.1 In respect of the revised governance arrangements the focus thus far has been on the 'tangibles', such as establishing the posts and recruiting to them (still underway), and setting up the systems to support the effective operation of the Cafcass senior-level Boards and teams. The Board is invited to comment on whether its own maintenance and support needs are covered by these arrangements and whether the arrangements enable Board members as a whole and as individuals to exercise governance to a high standard.
- 5.2 The Board may also wish to consider what aspects of its functioning could be better supported by the Governance Team in future, given the additional resources becoming available through the Corporate Support Service.

6. BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN

- 6.1 There are no direct benefits to children but more robust governance is intended to support senior management and the Board to carry out their duties and thus indirectly to provide benefits to the children we work with.

7. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The posts of Executive Assistants have been deleted, with support in future being provided by graduate interns and modern apprentices who will be given support and training according to their individual requirements. This builds on the success over the last two years of the Cafcass graduate internship scheme. A paper on how we will be developing our own Apprenticeship Scheme is also on this Board agenda. The net saving from this change and the wider set of changes in the National Office is expected to be in the region of £345k, with a £270K minimum contribution if additional measures to enhance corporate capacity prove necessary. This £250-345K will go towards our 2014/15 savings programme.

8. RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 There are no evident risks associated with the revised arrangements.

9. DIVERSITY ANALYSIS

9.1 There are no evident diversity impacts.

Name **Richard Green**
Date **14 March 2013**