



**Draft**

**Cafcass Performance Committee Minutes  
Monday 11 September 2017  
21 Bloomsbury Street, Bentham Room and Charles Dickens Room**

**Present**

John Lakin, Chair of Performance Committee  
Claire Tyler, Cafcass Board Member  
Nickie Aiken, Cafcass Board Member  
Paul Grant, Cafcass Board Member  
Stuart Smith, Cafcass Board Member (via Video Conference)

**In attendance**

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive  
Anji Owens, Cafcass Assistant Director (via Video Conference)  
Holly Jeapes, Policy Officer  
Grace Egbewole-Adereti, Board and Corporate Support Assistant (Minutes)  
Dr Elizabeth Gibby, Deputy Director, A2 Strategy and Specialist Policy, Ministry of Justice (until 12.30)  
Melanie Carew, Head of Legal Services (for item 5)  
James Hyde, Head of HR (for items 9 and 10)  
Paul Dockerty, Senior Health & Wellbeing Officer (for items 9 and 10)

**Apologies**

Christine Banim, Cafcass National Service Director  
Nicola Blakebrough, Corporate Strategist

**MINUTES**

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Christine Banim and Nicola Blakebrough.

**2. Draft Minutes of the Performance Committee 6 March 2017 and Joint Quality and Performance Committee meetings 2 May 2017**

The minutes of the Performance Committee 6 March 2017 and the Joint Quality and Performance Committee meetings 2 May 2017 were agreed as an accurate record, provided that Stuart Moore would be added to the list of attendees at the Joint Quality and Performance Committee meeting. It was also agreed that the action from the 6 March Performance Committee meeting '*to update the Board on the progress of the DfE contract to develop a national CPD programme for achieving performance*' would be changed to '*update the Board on the progress of the DfE contract to develop a national CPD programme for achieving permanence*'.

Action 1: Stuart Moore would be added to the list of attendees present at the Joint Quality and Performance Committee meeting on 2 May 2017.

Action 2: The action from the 6 March meeting '*to update the Board on the progress of the DfE contract to develop a national CPD programme for achieving performance*' would be changed to '*update the Board on the progress of the DfE contract to develop a national CPD programme for achieving permanence*'.

### **3. Action Log/ Forward Planner/ Matters Arising**

The Committee reviewed the action log and requested that actions from the previous Performance Committee meetings remain visible on the action log once completed for at least one further meeting for the Committee's information.

Action 3: Board Secretariat to amend the action log.

The Committee discussed the action from the 6 March meeting that '*MoJ Representatives to be encouraged to attend future meetings given the importance the Committee attaches to their attendance*'. A representative from the MoJ informed the Committee that they had recently been given the Committee meeting dates schedule and would be able to attend future meetings.

The Committee agreed that the action from the 6 March meeting that '*the programme of thematic audits would be circulated to the Committee for information*' had been completed.

The Committee discussed the action from the 6 March meeting that '*the National Family Justice Board Performance statistics would be circulated to the Committee for information*'. The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the National Family Justice Board last met in March 2017 prior to the General Election and that a sub-group had been formed. The Chief Executive agreed to circulate papers to the Committee in line with Performance Committee dispatch or separately as appropriate.

Action 4: The Chief Executive would circulate the National Family Justice Board papers to the Performance Committee.

The Committee discussed the action from the Joint Performance and Quality Committee meeting on 2 May that '*the National Service Director to consider including a thematic audit on siblings in the 2017/18 programme*' and agreed that this would be scheduled later in the year or early in the next financial year following the Ofsted inspection. The Committee were informed that the National Improvement Service had started considering the scope and methodology.

The Committee discussed the action that '*the Joint Committee to receive an electronic version of the Service Area Map*' and noted that this had been completed.

The Committee discussed the action from the 6 March meeting that '*The Head of Legal Services would update the documents currently on the website which support the Framework document with the MoJ.*' The Head of Legal Services informed the Committee that constitutional documents have been amended and are being reviewed by the Director of Resources prior to being shared with the Board at the October Board meeting.

Action 5: The Board would review amendments to documents currently on the website which support the Framework document with MoJ at the October Board meeting.

There were no further matters arising.

#### **4. Performance Report**

The Assistant Director presented the Performance Report and outlined the key themes of the paper, which include the rise in care and private law applications. The year to date demand shows an overall increase of 16.5% in Public Law compared to the same period in 2015/16 although a decrease of 3.6% when compared to the same period last year.

Private Law care application demand continues to rise at record levels, with Cafcass having a 6.5% increase in the amount of applications received between April and January 2017/18 compared to the same period last year. Private Law applications are at their highest level since August 2013 and are now higher than pre-LASPO levels.

Forecasts predict a decrease of 0.1% in Public Law and an increase of +5% in Private Law at the end of quarter 1. Case duration has decreased from 18 to 16 weeks. The Committee were informed that the 3.6% decrease in public law was higher than usual due to the number of working days in April and would be a 1% decrease if non-working days were to be removed.

The Committee discussed the difficulties in forecasting demand because of the range of drivers. The increase in Public Law is still at record levels despite a slight drop in the rate of increase. The Committee were informed that recruitment of staff is continuing to make good progress resulting in a reduced caseload for staff to an average of 20 cases, though caseloads for staff vary depending on location.

The Committee noted that KPI's 1, 2, 3 and 4 are all exceeding targets. The Chief Executive noted that the proportion of section 31 care or supervision cases completed within 26 weeks would also be considered by the FJB.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for the report.

#### **5. Annual Freedom of Information Update**

The Head of Legal presented the Annual Freedom of Information (FOI) report which provides an overview of the nature and volume of FOI requests received by Cafcass during 2016/17. Cafcass received 143 requests for organisational information under the Freedom of Information Act during 2016/17; this represents a decrease of 30% from the previous year. This decrease could be due to updates in the Disclosure Log, which publishes all previous responses to FOI requests on the Cafcass website. The Committee were informed that there had been an increase in requests for information about Cafcass' IT contractors. The Head of Legal Services noted that there were no FOI requests about the Board.

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that statistical information about the number of cases where a father or mother has been granted an order for their child/ren to live with them are not formally collected due to the complexity of outcomes in each case. The Head of Legal Services informed the Committee that the response time to FOI's had improved and was currently meeting its targets at 100%. The highest number of FOI requests in the measured period were for policy and statistical information.

A member of the Committee queried whether there are any FOI requests relating to children being placed with Muslim families. The Head of Legal Services said that Cafcass has not received any cases relating to this.

The Chair thanked the Head of Legal for the update.

#### **6. Strategic Plan Dashboard**

The Chief Executive presented the Strategic Plan Dashboard updated for Quarter 1. Good progress is being made against the strategic priorities but the 'Quality' and 'Family Justice Innovation' priorities have amber ratings.

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the Manchester private law gateway pilot was approved by the Minister with extra funding of £150,000 and is scheduled to launch in January 2018.

Cafcass is focussing on the upcoming Ofsted inspection and inspectors have been visiting local offices as part of their induction in preparation for the 2017/18 national visit. Currently, grades from auditing are 'good' with no areas of major concern. National targets are being met with 7% not met and 66% good. It was noted that Ofsted will have their own grading system. The Chief Executive noted that the reduction of poor work is exceeding the current targets at 7% and action plans have been put in place for staff not reaching this target.

#### **7. Strategic Risk Register – 12 September 2016**

The Chief Executive updated the Committee on the nature and level of risks within the Strategic Risk Register where the Performance Committee has lead assurance.

The Committee were informed that there is an increased risk for longer term grant funding as we cannot be sure the same funds will be allocated next year. The increase in the risk relating to the IT programme was noted, as reflecting the uncertainty about performance of new contractors and the complexity of the programme. The Committee discussed the workforce capacity, which was graded amber and the risks involved in not recruiting high calibre staff. It was suggested that this might become green in future because new staff are shown to be performing well.

#### **8. Exceptions Report**

There were no new exceptions to report.

#### **9. Annual HR Sickness Absence Update – 12 September 2016**

The Head of Human Resources presented the annual Human Resources (HR) Sickness Absence report. Quarter 1 has seen a slight decrease with the average days lost per person being 10 in the 12 months to 31 March 2017. Sickness levels have also reduced since then, with the Year to Date figure for 2017 reducing from 8.8 to 7.1 average working days which is our lowest figure for sickness since 2014/15. The figures compare favourably with our benchmarking figure of 8 days.

The Committee were informed that long term staff absence was mostly due to injuries, recovery from surgery and mental health conditions. Improving work related mental health conditions is a priority focus through the introduction of mindfulness sessions and health and wellbeing newsletters for staff. Staff are also widely benefiting from Medicash across the organisation, with up to 98% of eligible Cafcass staff opting to access the scheme.

The Committee praised the presentation and case studies provided and thanked the Head of HR for the report.

#### **10. Corporate Services Presentation – Health and Wellbeing**

The Head of HR and Senior Health and Wellbeing Officer provided a presentation to the Committee which outlined the measures Cafcass are adopting to improve the health and wellbeing of all staff. Cafcass are taking a holistic approach to health and wellbeing by promoting one to one sessions to staff who can either be referred or self-refer. Currently, figures for staff referrals are at 3-4 per week.

Cafcass are working to embed health and wellbeing into frontline practice and have seen positive changes over the last 12 months. Champions are promoting the different health and wellbeing services available and are gathering feedback as well as assisting in development and training days. To date, Cafcass has 18 mental health first aiders and training on this has been implemented into staff learning and development. Cafcass is also working with Macmillan to deliver bespoke training sessions to Managers to support staff members affected by cancer. The Chair thanked the Head of HR and the Senior Health and Wellbeing Officer for the informative presentation.

The Committee noted that the next corporate presentation to come to the Performance Committee will be the Communications update in December.

## **11. Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: Performance Committee, Monday 4 December 2017, 11.00 – 13.00.

### Actions Summary

- Action 1: Stuart Moore would be added to the list of attendees present at the Joint Quality and Performance Committee meeting on 2 May 2017.
- Action 2: The action from the 6 March meeting '*to update the Board on the progress of the DfE contract to develop a national CPD programme for achieving performance*' would be changed to '*to update the Board on the progress of the DfE contract to develop a national CPD programme for achieving permanence*'.
- Action 3: Board Secretariat to amend the action log.
- Action 4: The Chief Executive would circulate the National Family Justice Board papers to the Performance Committee.
- Action 5: The Board would review amended documents currently on the website which support the Framework document with MoJ at the October Board meeting.