



CHILDREN AND FAMILY COURT ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN DASHBOARD 2017-18 QUARTER ONE (APRIL – JUNE 2017)

The dashboard identifies the progress of each of the five Strategic Priorities for the quarter and indicates how we are ‘trending’ from the previous quarter. The measurement key provides a guide to the RAG scoring which is used to show progress. The assessment of progress is made by the Corporate Management Team in conjunction with review of the organisations’ Corporate Work Programme and Strategic Risk Register.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY		RAG STATUS
QUALITY	Continue with further improvements to the quality of our work.	
FAMILY JUSTICE INNOVATION	Implement our part of the family justice reform programme and bring innovation to our services.	
DIVERSITY	Build further on our understanding of diversity in casework, always seeing the uniqueness of each child we have responsibilities towards.	
EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS	Continue to pursue efficiency and effectiveness in all services, looking to make further savings in our budget.	
INFLUENCE	Use our influence positively as the voice of the child and the eyes and ears of family courts.	

Key organisation issues during the quarter

- Demand in both law types rose dramatically again in June 2017. Over the rolling 12 month period, (July 2016-June 2017) both care applications and new private law cases have risen by 7.5%.
- Absorption of rising demand and maintaining improvements to quality continue to be areas of risk, but with mitigation being in place to recruit to additional posts created. This is assisting in reducing workloads for staff.
- Sickness absence levels continue to show a reduction for both social workers and non-social worker staff.
- The ability to recruit social workers with the required skills and experience on either a permanent or temporary basis is challenging in some areas however the workforce strategy is in place to help mitigate these issues.
- A change of Ministers following the general election in June has now been confirmed.
- Work towards enabling family justice reforms are progressing slowly. There are no confirmed dates as yet for the publication of any Green Paper. If this does go ahead it is likely to be in the Spring of 2018.
- Ofsted inspectors have been visiting local offices as part of their induction in preparation for the national inspection later this year or in the first quarter of 2018 (q4)
- The Children and Social Work Bill has now passed into law. Key changes affecting Cafcass include: a new system of regulation for social workers; replacement of LSCBs; a change to the factors courts should consider for permanence options in care cases.

- The next quarter is expected to be largely a continuation of the current with demand pressures continuing and with us needing to identify ways of managing this extra demand on top of current demand.

Key organisational achievements during the quarter

QUALITY

- Quality Assurance & Impact: In the latest three month period of April to June 2017 a total of 2,806 QAIs have been recorded for 1,029 current eligible staff – an average of 2.7 QAIs per staff. Grading continues to be positive with 66% of QAIs being graded as Good or Outstanding.
- National Thematic audits commissioned through the Operational Management Team (OMT) continue to demonstrate that quality is being maintained.
- The Area Quality Reviews and NIS audit programme combined with the QAI framework provides an overall auditing framework which compares well to best practice in the sector. The accuracy of QA grading has been checked through benchmarking and the learning derived informs the learning and development programme.
- Re-branding of the Self-Employed Contractor unit is complete. The unit has been rebranded 'Cafcass Associates'. The new name coincides with launch of the information and resources developed as part of the wider 'refresh' project which covers expansion of the service to support Cafcass better manage peaks in demand; a new intranet departmental section for Cafcass staff, primarily managers, to support local commissioning of Associates; a new section under the website Careers pages to support expansion and recruitment of high calibre practitioners and updating and improving content on the Associate FCA mySkills hub to better equip practitioners with the resources they need to support their practice and compliance.
- Recruitment processes are continuous in order to be able to appoint sufficient high quality additional social work staff in line with the 2017/18 budget allocation and forward recruitment planning across service areas.
- Every service area has worked with HR and Finance to predict future leavers, such as known and planned retirements, in 2017/18, and early recruitment to fill those posts has started. A different and innovative recruitment strategy has been put in place, using a range of different methods of advertising, such as the use of CVs and LinkedIn. This has shown significant success in applications and appointments particularly in some of the persistently hard to recruit to areas. The number of applicants continues to rise and the focus on speeding up the recruitment process is supporting applicants being confirmed in post more quickly.
- Internal consultation with staff on the revised Operating Framework has started. The revised document has been issued on the intranet and will be discussed in service area meetings. The consultation will close on 31 July with implementation due in August 2017.
- Child Impact Analysis pilots commenced on 1 July. These are being delivered across 3 areas (Chelmsford A14; North Yorkshire and York A2) and with Cafcass Cymru (in North Wales). The pilots are intended to focus section 7 reports on child impact, rather than the parental dispute. The project will end when all of the pilot cases have had hearings considering those new-style section 7 reports. A user survey will be undertaken a month after each case completes. The target is to evaluate from October 2017 and to close the pilot by the end of the calendar year with the learning being applied and considering whether a national rollout would sustainably improve service quality.
- A new Performance Learning and Review system has been built and is undergoing user acceptance testing before going live in early September.

FAMILY JUSTICE INNOVATION

- All Cafcass Service Areas are achieving the Cafcass KPIs.
- The Supporting Separating Parents in Dispute (SSPID) helpline, a pilot programme that has been in place since November 2014, will close on 14 August. During the pilot the helpline received over 7,000 calls with FCAs providing information and guidance on the most appropriate dispute resolution pathway for the caller. The pilot has provided information to help inform potential future developments. This information has been shared with the MOJ.
- Cafcass and MOJ are designing an evolved version of the private law pathway pilot called the "Gateway Pilot" which would seek to establish learning for a potential pre-proceedings model. A business case is with MOJ for additional funding to develop and run the pilot.
- Meetings have taken place with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and with Barnardos to discuss the potential for joint development of Board Quality Standards for use across the public sector.
- A 'High Conflict Cases' pilot has started. The aim of this pilot is to introduce a structured intervention that can be applied to 16.4 cases, to reduce conflict and reduce the time spent by Cafcass and the courts on these cases. The pilot team is currently developing materials and delivery of the pilot will begin in October.
- The new electronic case management system (ECMS) Case Plan tool was launched in March with further guidance issued in June. The new tool moves the case plan from a Word document into a digital format on ECMS. The benefits of the tool includes the reduction in duplication of case recording for FCAs by pre-populating information; ensuring greater consistency.

DIVERSITY

- The next Diversity and Inclusion Strategy covering 2017-20 has been developed and approved by the Board and by CMT and is due to be officially published in early August 2017, with a 6-monthly reporting schedule to the Board, CMT and all internal stakeholders. The first six month update will be delivered to the Board in January 2018. Elements of the Strategy and accompanying action plan are already being implemented.
- Diversity data continues to be collated within ECMS and data reviewed by the OMT to consider compliance together with an analysis of the diversity of users within their areas to identify any gaps in commissioning or training.
- Our interpreter and translation services moved to the new MoJ Framework in June. The spoken interpreter and translation service remains with Thebigword. We expect to receive a better quality service under the new arrangements.
- Monthly Health and Wellbeing newsletters continue to be cascaded. Each newsletter includes a monthly focus on mental health, a learning recommendation and a healthy recipe.
- Seventeen mental health first aiders from have been trained across the organisation to support mental health.
- Eighteen Cafcass employees attended a Train the Trainer event run by Macmillan on 30 June. The session equipped Cafcass to be able to deliver a 2 hour bespoke Cafcass session aimed at helping managers to support staff affected by cancer. Workshops for managers are currently being organised to run from September to November 2017.

EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

- The new contract provider has been identified for digitisation services. The new provider will replace Fujitsu and process all court orders; local authority checks and Level 2 police checks (PNC2). The new solution will go live in Q2. Once implemented, work will commence to

include all remaining post and then separately scope requirements to establish a centralised distribution service for all outgoing post.

- New laptops (built with Windows 10) are in the final stages of being built and the new kit will be rolled out from August.
- Discussions are ongoing with HMCTS about the future digitisation of private law court applications (C100s).
- The Workforce Development Strategy has been reviewed and approved by the Cafcass Board and by CMT and is due to be officially published in early August 2017, with a 6-monthly reporting schedule to Board, CMT and all internal stakeholders built in.
- Planning is underway to develop a predictive data analytics model for sickness absence and associated workforce capacity levels.
- The business case relating to procurement of replacement IT services has been developed and shared with the MOJ for comments. The current timeline is for the tender to be published in late August.
- A new Allocation Tool for managers has been rolled out to Service Managers and Practice Supervisors. The Allocation Tool enables Service Managers and Practice Supervisors to see a range of information in one place to better inform the allocation decision making process.
- Collaborative Planning was launched to finance staff in June and will be used for finance forecasting and month end purposes.
- We have invited proposals from our four agency suppliers for social work roles to provide a technology solution to improve the efficiency of fulfilling temporary vacancies. The solution will also reduce management time in shortlisting and candidate selection, and other administration in timesheet approval and invoicing/payment. We plan to commence implementation during September with a view to having the system in place by November.
- Babington Group have been appointed as our new apprenticeship provider.
- The tender for the re-commissioning of SPIP, CCI and DAPP went live on 10 July. Contracts will be awarded for a period of 3 years and 4 months. Providers will now need to meet satisfactory data protection standards – as set out in the government procurement standards and by the National Cyber Security centre.

INFLUENCE

- Guidance has been developed with the approval and support of the President of the Family Division, regarding the use of our professional time. The guidance was issued on 1 July and sets out the best way in which children can be helped by Cafcass and Cafcass Cymru in the family courts throughout England and Wales, during a time of record levels of demand for our services. The final version incorporated comments from senior judges and magistrates and is beginning to lead to more flexibility in some courts, but not all yet.
- We are currently a statutory board partner of all 146 Local Safeguarding Children Boards and the regional boards in London and Manchester; members of the 46 Local Family Justice Boards, chairing 14 of them; are represented on the 9 Regional Adoption Boards as well as the national board have strong working links with a range voluntary and community sector organisations including Women's Aid, Families Need Fathers and Men's Aid.
- The joint Cafcass and ADCS 2017/18 work programme has been agreed and contact has been established with Research in Practice and the Business Case to create standardised evidence packs for neglect and emotional abuse cases has been developed.
- The joint research into domestic abuses, carried out with Women's Aid, was published in July.
- The 2017/18 research programme has been identified. The Programme includes:

- Recurrence of private law cases
- Small-scale study of Special Guardianship Orders outcomes
- Review of Cafcass and Adoption Agency practice in relinquished baby cases.
- Trends in legal outputs from care applications.
- Cases involving alienating behaviours by parents.
- Congruence between court orders and Cafcass recommendations.
- Cases featuring 'honour-based' violence
- A working group has been established to review practice in the use of social media and to develop appropriate policy. The draft policy will be presented to OMT in July. The next stage of work will be to identify a range of tools and options for end users and practitioners. The Family Justice Young Peoples Board (FJYPB) are involved in this development.
- The Cafcass legal team is represented on the Family Procedure Rule Committee and the Law Society's Children Law Sub Committee, with influence over procedure changes.
- Major reform is expected through the MOJ's Green Paper on family justice and the Cafcass AD (Policy) is embedded within MOJ policy one day a week.

Measurement Key

	Inadequate Progress (not being met; remedial action required)
	Satisfactory Progress (Issues occurring but action in place)
	Good Progress (on target)