



Draft

**Cafcass Quality Committee Minutes
Thursday 22 March 2018, 15.30 - 17.00
21 Bloomsbury Street, Bentham Room and Charles Dickens Room**

Present

Fay Selvan, Chair of the Quality Committee
Joanna Nicolas, Cafcass Board Member
Paul Grant, Cafcass Board Member
Caroline Corby, Cafcass Board Member
Stuart Smith, Cafcass Board Member
Professor Simon Hackett, Academic Adviser to the Quality Committee (via video conference)

In Attendance

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive
Christine Banim, National Service Director (via video conference)
Stuart Moore, Private Law Policy Lead (Legislation) & Cafcass Policy Sponsor, Ministry of Justice
Joanna Furlong, Senior Policy Adviser, Private Family Law: Children and Vulnerable Witnesses, Litigants in Person Support Strategy
Grace Egbewole-Adereti, Cafcass Board and Corporate Support Assistant (Minutes)

Apologies

Alex Kemp, Head of Practice, National improvement Service
Richard Green, National Child Care Policy Manager
Nicola Blakebrough, Corporate Strategist
Deep Sagar, Cafcass Board Member

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Alex Kemp, Richard Green, Deep Sagar and Nicola Blakebrough.

2. Draft Minutes from the Quality Committee meeting on 1 December 2017

The minutes of the Quality Committee Meeting on 1 December 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Action Log / Matters Arising

The Committee reviewed the Action log. All actions were noted as having been completed or on track.

The Committee noted that the action that 'an anonymised sample of direct work with children would be brought to a future Quality Committee for information and discussion' would be closed off as it had been completed.

The Committee discussed the action that 'the National Service Director would discuss what more could be done to disrupt the current care cases characterised by 'repeat removals' with the Operational Management team'. The Committee were informed that the change programme bid was likely to be unsuccessful. The Chief Executive noted that the draft business plan for the next financial year would be presented at the Board seminar later that day.

The Committee discussed the action that 'the Chief Executive would consider the possibility of a Practice Expert in gang membership and its interface with our work'. The Chief Executive updated that an expert had been appointed and would take the action forward after she spends 3 months researching the issue further.

There were no further matters arising.

4. **Headline Feedback from the Ofsted Inspection (Oral Update)**

The Chief Executive presented the provisional judgement for the National Ofsted Inspection for 2018. The Committee were informed that the judgement is provisional and would be published on 29 March.

The Committee were informed that the Performance and Audit and Risk Assurance Committees had been briefed on the result and that a press statement would be published in due course. The Chief Executive noted that inspectors carried out extensive fieldwork, including a thorough analysis of over 850 cases. Agreement had been reached that the organisation had achieved best fit with outstanding and is only the fourth in England to achieve such a rating. The National Service Director noted that vast improvements had been made to frontline practice and minor recommendations received were being followed up. The Committee agreed that the Ofsted report would be sent to the Academic Adviser for information. The Ministry of Justice representative and the Committee commended the huge achievement.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for the report on behalf of the Committee.

Action 1: The Ofsted report would be sent to the Academic Adviser for information with the meeting minutes.

5. **Learning and Development Update**

The National Service Director presented the Learning and Development update. The update highlights a review of the training programme for 2017/18 and reviews the impact of training content on practice. Good progress is being made, with 100% of new starters on course to complete their mandatory training. It was noted that whilst the induction programme had been difficult to manage due to the complex transition of many agency staff to becoming permanent staff, Ofsted Inspectors were impressed with the level of induction training provided to staff and could see good quality work being produced amongst new starters. Progress is being made to improve levels of mandatory eLearning Child Sexual Exploitation and Protecting

Information in Cafcass. Staff would be asked to provide feedback which would feed into future staff training plans.

The Committee discussed Partners in Practice; a programme working in partnership with the Department for Education to improve the model of children's services to promote Social Work. A member of the Committee noted that they had recently been appointed as the Non-Executive director of Doncaster Childrens Trust, which had recently been appointed as a Partner in Practice. There was a concern regarding management of the level of support required by appointed Local Authorities with the business functions of affiliated staff and organisations. It was noted that senior staff with varying levels of experience had been appointed to work in the Partners in Practice programme, due in some cases to difficulties in recruitment. The Committee were informed that Cafcass would consider being a Partner in Practice however there was a risk of such action being perceived as a conflict of interest.

The Committee noted that while the organisation had made good progress in case recording, not enough work had been carried out on case planning and queried whether this should be explored further. It was noted that Ofsted had expressed an interest in meeting with the Chief Executive, National Service Director and Assistant Directors regarding sector wide accessibility of Cafcass' learning and development framework. It was agreed that the framework would be sent to Graham Archer, Director for Children's Services at the Department for Education. The Committee discussed the approach that would be taken to case planning and young people.

The Committee queried whether there is a way to obtain information about how staff review their own performance. The National Service Director confirmed that this information is available in performance learning reviews. It was noted that the levels of productivity amongst some staff members was lacking due to an inability to use the technology, though the organisation can accommodate some staff in this position. The Committee were informed that there would be a focus on members of staff whose productivity has not improved over the past 6 months.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive and National Service Director for the update.

Action 2: The National Service Director would send the learning and development framework to Graham Archer, Director for Children's Services, Department for Education.

6. Research Governance Committee Update

The Director of Strategy presented the Research Governance Committee Update to the Committee. The update details the work of the Research Governance Committee in 2017-18 to date. Three internal research projects would be completed in the year 2018-19 which cover recurrent Private Law cases, serious case reviews and practice cases where children have been relinquished for adoption. The research was conducted to promote better internal practice and influence better practice externally and was supported by the Family Justice Observatory. The Committee were informed that the extent to which the research data had been used for external research purposes by reputed researchers had increased which would further raise Cafcass' external profile.

The Committee were informed that a data platform and analytics service to combine available data on family justice would be key in helping the operational workings of data and that the internal research programmes for the next academic year would be reviewed by the Operational Management team in early April. The Director of Strategy agreed to provide information on the internal research programmes to the Committee for information. Datasets produced within research conducted by the Research Governance Committee had gained increased external recognition by numerous practice experts and professionals, including Professors Ruth Gilbert and Karen Broadhurst and others referenced in the report conducted by the National Family Justice Observatory.

The Academic Advisor discussed the relationship between research Committee's proactive and reactive work which is requested from external sources and noted that effort would be made to engage external researchers in future research projects to broaden its team of researchers.

The Chief Executive noted that Cafcass had placed a bid for a Manchester conference to showcase new apps developed by the organisation and a seminar on co-parenting to promote the Manchester Gateway out of court pilot though the value of these bids could be explored further.

The Committee discussed outcomes based funding and agreed that they would carry out research in this area during 2018/19. It was noted that research into outcomes based funding was better in Public Law and that the Nuffield foundation had put £500k into researching this area. The Committee noted that a cost value analysis should be included in the research programme. It was agreed that the Director of Strategy would undertake exploratory work with the Nuffield Foundation and the Ministry of Justice regarding a cost and value analysis of outcomes based research.

The Committee discussed the data available on mothers facing repeat removals and noted that the cost to Local Authorities could be reduced through outcomes based research. The Committee noted that it would consider whether a pilot focusing on outcomes could be conducted with Local Authorities. The Ministry of Justice representative noted that data relevant to Ministers was important to capture so that they are aware of the value for money. The Committee queried whether longitudinal studies could be conducted but were informed that data was more accessible in England and Wales. The Committee also queried why the Department for Work and Pensions had not been included in research and were informed that this was due to a high demand for data and a lack of resources. The Chair of the Board noted that during her Board visit to the Manchester office, staff most frequently queried the funding for resources available.

The Chair thanked the Director of Strategy for the report.

Action 3: The Director of Strategy would inform the Committee on the internal research programmes for the next academic year.

Action 4: The Director of Strategy would undertake exploratory work with the Nuffield Foundation and the Ministry of Justice regarding a cost and value analysis of outcomes based research.

Action 5: The Research Governance Committee would consider whether a pilot focusing on outcomes could be conducted with Local Authorities.

7. Serious Incident Notifications and Submissions to Serious Case Reviews

The National Service Director presented the report into Serious Incident Notifications and Submissions to Serious Case reviews. Of the 5 child deaths reviewed by the National Improvement Service following the notification of a serious incident, Cafcass were notified of 3 child deaths of children known to Cafcass and made a submission to 1 Serious Case Review.

The Committee were informed that more historical cases could be provided as there were none over the last year. It was noted that the Committee had no queries regarding the report.

The Chair thanked the National Service Director for the report.

8. Strategic Risk Register

The Committee reviewed the strategic risk register and discussed the risks where the Quality Committee has lead assurance.

The residual risk across all areas are assessed as Amber. The risk for Grant Funding (in year funding) has increased to amber to reflect the current outturn forecast of a small overspend. Two risks are considered to be decreasing: P4 Workforce Capacity (reflecting the successful recruitment of additional practice staff to meet continuing demand increases) and S3 Replacement of Current ICT Services (following receipt of Ministerial approval to the outcome of the re-procurement process).

9. Exceptions Report

There were no exceptions to report.

9. Any Other Business and Forward Planner

The Quality Committee Chair thanked the Chair of the Board on behalf of the Committee for her work in improving and guiding the Committee as it was her last meeting.

There was no further business.

DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: Friday 7 September 2018, 14.00 – 16.00

Actions Summary

Action 1: The Ofsted report would be sent to the Academic Adviser for information with the meeting minutes.

- Action 2: The National Service Director would send the learning and development framework to Graham Archer, Director for Children's Services, Department for Education.
- Action 3: The Director of Strategy would inform the Committee on the internal research programmes for the next academic year.
- Action 4: The Director of Strategy would undertake exploratory work with the Nuffield Foundation and the Ministry of Justice regarding a cost and value analysis of outcomes based research.
- Action 5: The Research Governance Committee would consider whether a pilot focusing on outcomes could be conducted with Local Authorities.