



CHILDREN AND FAMILY COURT ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE
STRATEGIC PLAN DASHBOARD
2017-18 QUARTER THREE/FOUR (OCTOBER 2017 TO MARCH 2018)

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 against plans. 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.	Improving
FAMILY JUSTICE INNOVATION	Implement our part of the family justice reform programme and bring innovation to our services.	Improving
DIVERSITY	Build further on our understanding of diversity in casework, always seeing the uniqueness of each child we have responsibilities towards.	No Change
EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS	Continue to pursue efficiency and effectiveness in all services, looking to make further savings in our budget.	Decreasing
INFLUENCE	Use our influence positively as the voice of the child and the eyes and ears of family courts.	No Change

KEY ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES DURING THE QUARTER

- Demand in private law continues to increase at the same high level as in recent months. Despite this, case and system performance continues to be strong and audits of the quality of work show improvements and all Cafcass Service Areas are achieving the Cafcass KPIs.
- There is variation in demand across areas however there is no clear reason behind the variation and can only really be understood in each local area through a local process of enquiry.
- The rate of increase in demand in public law continues to show some decline month on month however there is an increase in cases within the court process, known as ‘outstanding’ (ongoing) cases.
- The proportion of short-notice and emergency hearings in S31 cases has increased. Nationally 60% of hearings are short notice, of which more than half are emergency. This figure does vary significantly across areas with some places being significantly higher. This adds to the pressure on our work alongside an overall increase in case demand. We are working to better develop our data regarding these measures and we will be encouraging local managers to take it to their local Family Justice Boards to highlight and influence the pressure points in the system which are outside of our control.

- Year to date demand for S7 reports in 2017-18 (April to February) has been higher than the previous financial years. In 2017-18 there has been a 12% (1,786 cases) increase for S7 report demand compared to 2016-17. Whereas, comparing the same period in 2015-16 and 2014-15, there was 2,294 (16%) increase and 609 (4%) increase respectively. The increasing trend for reports being requests has been more notable since July 2017.
- Average staff caseloads have reduced nationally in the last 12 months as an impact of recruiting additional resources, however there are still some areas with higher caseloads. The average is 20.3 cases per practitioner (as of March 2018).
- An overspend is being projected on our budget for the first time in nearly a decade. The cause of this arises from the transitional costs of releasing agency staff while new permanent staff begin with protected caseloads, together with the continuing need to bring in resources for allocation of the continually rising demand. The overspend has been reflected in the RAG performance of Efficiency and Effectiveness priority.
- The ongoing legacy costs of the growth in the workforce remain broadly consistent with previous work on the spending requirement for next year. This position has been laid out to the Department as part of the ongoing budget discussions for 2018/19. There is an emerging risk in relation to potential sector pay award decisions, the outcome of which may not be known for some months. It will be imperative to maintain a competitive offer to social workers to prevent higher turnover in the new year, given the substantial investment in recruitment over the last nine months.
- Following the January reshuffle we have a new Secretary of State, David Gauke, and a new Family Justice Minister with responsibility for Cafcass, Lucy Frazer.
- 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.
- Ofsted national inspection – 5 February to 28 February. The provisional judgement of overall effectiveness is outstanding. The final report will be published at the end of March 2018.

KEY ORGANISATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE QUARTER

QUALITY

- Intensive recruitment has taken place in line with the 2017/18 budget allocation and the number of employed social work staff numbers has increased by 108.4 FTE since 31 March 2017.
- Every service area has worked with HR and Finance to predict future leavers in 2017/18, and early recruitment to fill those posts has been successful.
- Re-branding of the Self-Employed Contractor Unit has completed and the unit has been re-launched as 'Cafcass Associates'.
- A different and innovative recruitment strategy has been put in place, using a range of different methods of advertising and promoting the use of CVs and LinkedIn. This has shown significant success in applications and appointments particularly in some of the hard to recruit to areas. The number of applicants has increased and the enhancements to the recruitment process is supporting applicants being confirmed into post more quickly.
- The Area Quality Reviews (AQR) and National Improvement Service (NIS) audit programme combined with the Quality Assurance and Improvement (QAI) Framework provides an overall auditing framework which compares well to best practice in the sector. The accuracy of QAI grading has been checked through benchmarking and the learning derived informs the learning and development programme.
- The percentage of QAIs undertaken in quarter 3 assessed as good or outstanding was 66%. AQRs are carried out on a three-year rolling programme as well as several thematic reviews.

- National thematic audits commissioned through the Operational Management Team (OMT) continue to demonstrate that quality is being maintained.
- National training on improving productivity has been delivered and extremely well received. This training was directed towards the 103 least productive Family Court Advisors (FCAs), and was aimed at giving them tools and skills to relieve pressure on completion of work.
- Training in the effective use of analytics continues with more than 120 frontline managers attending learning during the financial year to date.
- The revised Operating Framework was published in August 2017. The next shorter update will be carried out in quarter 4.
- Child Impact Analysis pilots commenced on 1 July 2017 and have been extended for an additional 3 months to May 2018 to allow time for all cases in the pilot to complete. Pilots are being delivered across 3 areas (Chelmsford A14; North Yorkshire and York A2) and with Cafcass Cymru. The pilot aims to ensure the private law section 7 process remains child-centred, rather than 'adult dispute centred' at all times, by requiring FCAs to apply the skills they have in a different manner. A user survey will be undertaken a month after each case completes.
- The new Performance Learning and Review system was launched in September 2017 which includes a requirement for staff to undertake a quarterly self-assessment. To date over 98% of our eligible social work staff have completed at least one PLR self-assessment.
- New contracts for the Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP) commenced in December 2017. To coincide with the new contract, a new digital solution was implemented to improve both the efficiency and compliance of our transactions with suppliers.
- The use of automated SMS to service users commenced in February 2018 (to date at zero cost), initially sending out appointment details to parents for aspects of our commissioned services. We are currently investigating further opportunities to use SMS communication across other aspects of our work.
- 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 has led to more flexibility in a significant number of court areas.
- A Service User Engagement project has commenced which will bring together and analyse feedback from service users, from a range of resources, to inform the development and improvement of the organisation.
- Practice Experts have been introduced. These are Cafcass practitioners and managers who each hold expertise across specialist practice areas that do not routinely feature in our casework. The Practice Experts are available to provide guidance in respect of casework featuring their specialist topic and signpost to relevant resources or services to help practitioners save time researching the topic.

DIVERSITY (INCLUDING HEALTH & WELLBEING)

- The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy covering 2017-20 has been published and the first 6-month update reported to the Cafcass Board in January 2018.
- 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.
- Virtual Diversity Networks have been launched aimed to help staff to support each other and help to shape and inform best practice.

- 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.
- 18 Mental Health First Aiders have been trained and there have been three Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training sessions for managers and staff, designed to build mental health awareness and confidence in recognising symptoms.
- *Macmillan* training for managers has been rolled out to help support staff affected by cancer. Bespoke training packages were developed with the help of *Macmillan* and Cafcass volunteers and train-the-trainer events were held with 17 members of staff trained to deliver the sessions. 74 managers have been trained and the feedback has been very positive:
- Cafcass has had its *Disability Confident Employer* status extended for two-years. The next step is to be assessed for the highest level of Disability Confident status, which is *Disability Confident Leader*, which we are committed to achieving.
- The first Diversity and Inclusion quarterly page in Channel C was published in December 2017 and aims to share good practice, information and achievements.
- The Diversity Champion job profile has been finalised, giving more structure and importance to this role and ensuring expectations are realised.
- A staff diversity report has been produced in PowerBI using pie charts, graphs and tables to show up-to-date information in a visual format on our four reporting areas: Gender, BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), Disability and Age. The report allows for specific lines of enquiry such as the proportion of our managers who are male and the number of BAME employees on the Emerging Talent Programme.
- The gender pay gap report has been completed and published on the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Cafcass websites. The current gender pay gap for Cafcass (as at 31 March 2017) is 4.8%. Reporting will become an annual requirement so we will be able to report for 2018 in April 2018.
- Following on from the data we now have for staff diversity and the gender pay gap, we are in the process of producing a work plan with tangible targets to work towards addressing some of the diversity imbalances within Cafcass. General work has already been completed, for example using a diverse group of employees in our recruitment campaign videos, but the workplan will include action points linked to specific diversity aims.

EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

- New laptops built with Windows 10 have been launched and rolled out to all staff.
- Cafcass Early Receipt of C100: a joint Cafcass and HMCTS pilot to trial a process for Cafcass to receive C100s within 2 days, in order to commence safeguarding checks, which may therefore take place before gatekeeping and 'issue'. This process is in line with CAP timeframes and, if successful, will enable Cafcass to progress safeguarding checks around a week earlier than in current processes, ensuring sufficient time to report to the FHDRA.
- The new solution for digitisation services is in place. The new provider has replaced Fujitsu to process all court orders; local authority checks and level 2 police checks. This solution is also used for the C100 Scanning Pilot, a joint Cafcass and HMCTS project to trial the centralised processing of C100s. Business cases have been approved in both organisations for pilots in Bournemouth, Brighton and Coventry Courts with an anticipated start date of April 2018. Applications for these Courts will be sent to a central location, where payment will be processed, the C100 (and attachments) scanned and distributed electronically to Cafcass and HMCTS at the same time.
- Work has been carried out with HMCTS regarding filing formats, including electronic correspondence formats. This is leading to set standards which are facilitating court standardisation.
- New analytics have been developed that provide more detail on available resources, case-loads, attendance and causes of absences. This data is available to CMT and shared with managers for inclusion in local workforce planning.

- To support managers in managing workloads within the current climate, the Allocation Tool and EIT Allocation Tool have been fully rolled out. The purpose of the tool is to provide a projected set of comparative data to support managers in informed workload allocation. The outcome is to benefit both the effective management of the case, and to ensure that workloads are allocated fairly and comparatively. Social work managers have had input into the effective use of the tool.
- The Workforce Development Strategy has been published and the first 6-month update against the Strategy action plan reported to the Cafcass Board in January 2018.
- 10 graduates have been employed through the graduate recruitment programme and commenced employment on 5 March 2018.
- The business case relating to procurement of replacement IT services has been agreed. The tender has completed and the contract awarded to Littlefish. Transition activities have commenced for transition to complete by June 2018.
- The tender for the commissioning of SPIP, CCI and DAPP has successfully completed. Contracts are in place for 3 years and extendable to 4 years. The tender was based on Cafcass child focussed outcomes and has resulted in a more robust provider group.
- The referral and monitoring processes for the Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP), a private law court ordered activity, have been re-designed and centralised within Cafcass' NBC. This creates national efficiencies for Cafcass, the courts and SPIP providers and aims to provide a safer and more consistent way of dealing with high volumes of referrals.
- Work is in progress through IT trainers to deliver training and webinars on new tools, including the use of Skype for Business. Further guidance is being launched to undertake skype calling, video calls and screen sharing with service users. This technology and way of communication will be promoted and evaluated within the Support with making child arrangement pilot to carry out 3-way parenting plan meetings with parties.

FAMILY JUSTICE INNOVATION

- Support with Making Child Arrangements Pilot commenced in January 2018. The pilot will offer a package of out-of-court dispute resolution services to parents who are assessed as suitable, to try and resolve their dispute without the need for either a Safeguarding Letter or a court hearing (FHDRA). The aim will be to reduce the caseload of the court in the context of rising numbers of applications, and to improve outcomes for children and their families by ensuring sustainable agreements.
- The 'Positive Parenting Programme' pilot: The aim of this pilot is to introduce a structured intervention that can be applied to rule 16.4 cases, to reduce conflict and reduce the time spent by Cafcass and the courts on these cases. It is being piloted from November 2017 in the first 50 Rule 16.4 appointment cases made across the country, which meet the suitability criteria. The Model Office will evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot before a national rollout is considered.
- The Voice of the Child App Project is utilising the expertise of Dubit (a children's entertainment research and analytics company) to consider how existing paper-based tools used with children can be digitised and enhanced. Assessments will be based on how Cafcass shares information with children and the volume / frequency throughout a case. The current App under development aims to convert the 'How It Looks To Me' booklet into a digital resource, with a prototype being piloted.
- Cafcass has a member of staff seconded to MoJ once a week to support collaborative working around private and public law, this includes further cross-departmental working, for example with DWP and HMCTS
- The MyCourtroom simulation was launched in 2017 to internal staff and plans are in place to provide this to litigants in person. The simulation game was jointly developed with Kent University.

- The workstream for joint development of Board Quality Standards for use across the public sector has been discontinued after meetings with potential partners concluded unanimously this was not a viable project and that existing guidance about governance is sufficient.
- The action plan arising from the recommendations of the Board Effectiveness Review to provide continuous improvement in the governance of Cafcass has been fully delivered.
- The CEO is leading work on a Success Register for the national Family Justice Board, so that best practice can be more systematically captured and rolled out.
- Cafcass is continuing to make many local improvements to how the family justice system works, via our chairing or sponsorship of Local Family Justice Boards.

INFLUENCE

- Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme: A project team has been set up within Cafcass and in partnership with Respect to research the need for a commissioned service in private law proceedings which could address abusive behaviours by women within intimate partner relationships. The project team will use case studies and consider the wider research base and emerging literature in order to capture an extensive evidence base with the outcome being reported on early in 2018.
- Work on the Private Law Assessment Pathways (previously referred to as High Conflict Pathway) is progressing well. The Pathways have undergone a testing phase between November and January with some practitioners using it in their work. The final version is planned to be launched in Summer 2018, following consultation with staff and stakeholders, it will also be published on the website for public comment (in June 2018). A full training programme for staff on the pathways will be rolled out, with completion likely to be May 2019.
- The Cafcass Plus model is local authority-led and initiates the involvement of an FCA in public law pre-proceedings. The aim of the model is to divert cases from court or narrow issues if the case does progress to proceedings. The model is currently being piloted in five teams in A10, A11, A13 and A14.
- We have been involved in numerous external policy developments e.g., the work led by Ofsted on a multi-agency response to domestic violence following their programme of joint targeted area inspections (JTAI's).
- We continue to be core participants in the sector-led Care Crisis Review, facilitated by the Family Rights group (FRG). At its last meeting on 17 January, a decision was taken to launch two further surveys to garner a wider range of opinion about firstly, the reasons for the record number of care applications and the high number of children in care at present and secondly, to identify what specific changes can safely reduce the number of care applications and to avert the need for children to come into or remain in care.
- 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 business case regarding reappointment of Board Member's whose contracts will end in November 2017 and March 2018 has been agreed. Six Board Members have now been reappointed for terms of 2 to 3 years. Recruitment has commenced for the replacement Chair and 2 Board Members. A further recruitment campaign for 2 Board Members will take place in early 2018.
- The new Director of Strategy, Teresa Williams, joined Cafcass on 1 March.
- Cafcass Overseas project has been established to deliver our contribution to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) programme. A consultant Project Manager has been appointed to oversee Cafcass input into all 14 territories and work with partner agencies such as CEOP, the NCA, the CPS and Barnardo's, to ensure the Cafcass input is co-ordinated coherently with that of our partners in the project.

- The 2017/18 research programme was commented on by OMT to ensure that the programme is closely tied to operational needs and requirements. Progress of the programme will be reported to the Quality Committee in March 2018.
- 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.
- The Director of Resources, Julie Brown, is widening her remit to include development of the finance functional leadership model across a small number of other Arm's Length Bodies (ALB's) sponsored by MoJ.
- The Chief Executive represents Cafcass on the advisory group for the judicial-led Settlement Conferences pilot. MoJ is leading the evaluation of the pilot, due to complete in April 2018. Cafcass is assisting to help obtain service user feedback from eligible cases by requesting their permission to pass their contact details to MoJ researchers for telephone interviews.
- The revamped website went live in mid-January 2018. This was a technical refresh only. Content remains the same.

Measurement Key

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

2017/18 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER – MARCH 2018

Ref	Description	Risk Owner	Lead Assurance Committee	Residual Risk last update	Current Residual Risk & Trend
P1	Grant Funding - current year 2017-18	CEO/DOR	ARAC	No Change	Increased
	Grant Funding 2018 – 2020			No Change	No Change
P2	Quality of casework (Operational Element).	NSD/ADs/HOP	Quality	No Change	No Change
P3a	Fluctuations in Public Law demand.	CEO/NSD	Performance	No Change	No Change
P3b	Fluctuations in Private Law demand.	CEO/NSD	Performance	No Change	No Change
P4	Workforce – Capacity	NSD/DOR/HoHR	Performance	No Change	Decreasing
S1	Service user and staff engagement.	CE/HoHR/NSD	Quality	No Change	No Change
S2	Effective Partnership Working	NSD/CEO/DOR	Quality	No Change	No Change
S3	Replacement of current ICT services and effectively navigating Government spending control processes.	DOR	ARAC	No Change	Decreasing
S4	Workforce – Engagement	NSD/DOR/HoHR	Performance	No Change	No Change
S5	Failure to protect the personal/sensitive data of service users.	NSD	Performance	No change	No Change