



Draft

**Cafcass Performance Committee Minutes
Monday 4 December 2017**

21 Bloomsbury Street, Bentham Room and Charles Dickens Room

Present

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

In attendance

Anthony Douglas, Cafcass Chief Executive
Christine Banim, Cafcass National Service Director (via Video Conference)
Anji Owens, Cafcass Assistant Director (via Video Conference)
Rebecca Barrett, Interim Head of Communications (for item 8)
Ian Brunton, Senior Policy Manager, Ministry of Justice
Nicola Blakebrough, Corporate Strategist
Grace Egbewole-Adereti, Board and Corporate Support Assistant (Minutes)

Apologies

Dr Elizabeth Gibby, Deputy Director, A2 Strategy and Specialist Policy, Ministry of Justice

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Ian Brunton, Senior Policy Manager at the Ministry of Justice, who was attending on behalf of Elizabeth Gibby, from whom apologies were received.

2. Draft Minutes of the Performance Committee meeting on 11 September 2017

The minutes of the Performance Committee meeting on 11 September 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Action Log/ Forward Planner/ Matters Arising

The Committee reviewed the action log and noted that all actions had been completed or were in progress.

The Chief Executive noted that the National Family Justice Board had not met since March 2017 and the date of the next meeting was pending due to a decision on chairing responsibilities. The Chair of the Board highlighted that the gap between meetings at the national level was concerning and requested that the MoJ Senior Policy Manager clarify this and provide the Committee with an update at the next meeting.

There were no further matters arising.

Action 1: The MoJ Senior Policy Manager would clarify the timing of the next Family Justice Board meeting and provide an update to the Committee.

4. Performance Report

The National Service Director and Assistant Director presented the Performance Report and outlined the key themes of the paper.

The year to date demand shows an overall increase of 16.9% in Public Law compared to the same period in 2015/16 although a decrease of 3.3% when compared to the same period last year. The committee noted that the decrease was mostly due to the reduction of working days in the month due to bank holidays.

Private Law care application demand continues to rise, with Cafcass having a 6.8% increase in the number of applications received between April and October 2017/18 compared to the same period last year.

Overall performance is strong and all KPI's are being met. At the end of quarter 2, MoJ forecasted for +2.8% in Public Law and +7.6% in Private Law for 2017/18. Duration of Public Law (S31) care applications has reduced from 31 to 30 weeks, while in Private Law cases the average time to conclude a case has reduced from 17 to 16 weeks.

The Committee noted that the 12.6% increase in workforce was significant. A range of initiatives to target recruitment in difficult to recruit areas have yielded positive results. The decrease in the average sick days lost per year from 12.3 to 7.3, despite increased demand, was commended and it was suggested that sickness levels should be recorded at future meetings. The National Service Director noted that the health and wellbeing programme is having a positive impact on staff.

The Committee discussed the relationship between case duration and throughput and noted that overall performance has improved despite an increase in the duration and throughput of cases. It was noted that the Swindon office in Wiltshire had seen a substantial increase in case duration times from 24 to 44 weeks. The Committee agreed to review data on the Wiltshire service area at the next Performance Committee meeting.

The Committee discussed whether the reduction in demand in Public Law would start impacting on duration and throughput. It was acknowledged that on average 55-60 cases are received per day and there are other impacting factors which are increasing, such as the use of experts and the average number of hearings.

The Chair thanked the National Service Director and Assistant Director for the report and said the Committee was grateful to receive the Family Justice Board evidence pack which provided information on performance of courts across the country.

Action 2: The Committee would review data relating to case duration for Wiltshire at the next Performance Committee meeting.

5. Strategic Plan Dashboard

The Chief Executive presented the Strategic Plan Dashboard updated for Quarter 2. Good progress is being made against the strategic priorities, though the 'Quality' and 'Family Justice Innovation' priorities have remained as amber ratings.

The Committee were updated on the judicial review relating to the guidance on Family Court Adviser's (FCAs) use of professional time which had been implemented in July 2017. The judicial review had been stayed until March 2018 and agreement reached with NAGALRO to produce a modified version of the guidance at the time of the first review of the guidance's impact.

The Committee discussed the changes to LSCB's because of changes introduced through the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and how Cafcass wants to influence those changes and be represented on future safeguarding boards/panels. The National Service Director would discuss future arrangements with the Operational Management Team and report back to the Committee once these are known.

The Committee discussed the tender for the commissioning of SPIP, CCI and DAPP which has now been successfully completed. Contracts are in place for 3 years, extendable to 4 years. It was agreed that the schedule of Corporate Services Presentations would be amended to allow the

National Commissioning Team to provide a presentation on the strategic impact of partnership work at the Joint Performance and Quality Committee meeting in May 2018.

The Committee asked that finalists of recent awards ceremonies be commended formally by the Board.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for the report.

Action 3: The schedule of Corporate Services Presentations would be amended to allow the National Commissioning Team to provide a presentation on the strategic impact of partnership work at the Joint Performance and Quality Committee meeting in May 2018.

Action 4: The National Service Director would discuss future arrangements for engagement with safeguarding boards/panels with the Operational Management Team and report back to the Committee once these are known.

Action 5: The finalists of recent awards ceremonies would be commended formally by the Board.

6. Strategic Risk Register

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

It was noted that there had been little change in the risk profile since the last review. The residual risk across all but one risk area is assessed as Amber and there is strong mitigation in place across all risks.

Recruitment initiatives have been successful in recruiting in hard to recruit areas, expanding workforce capacity and reducing caseloads nationally. Consequently, the residual risk score for (Workforce P4) is expected to reduce, although that is also dependent on allocation of the 2018/19 budget.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive and Corporate Strategist for the report.

7. Exceptions Report

The Chief Executive informed the Committee of an investigation by Greater Manchester Police into the suspected criminal manipulation of scientific data in relation to criminal coroners and family court proceedings. Cafcass could be involved in a small proportion of cases that may have to be re-heard.

8. Corporate Services – Communications

The Interim Head of Communications presented the report on the performance of our communications function to the Committee. The presentation drew on key themes, outlining the internal and external facing communication channels being used by the team to target key audiences.

It was noted that Cafcass external newsletters are circulated to 70 stakeholders and that the organisation's YouTube channel is doing exceptionally well. The Communications team uses the Government Communications Service model (GCS) to align communications objectives with the overarching aims of the organisation. Collaborative work with the MoJ has started to determine how communications information can be benchmarked. The Committee asked for Board members to be sent a copy of the external newsletter as a matter of routine.

The Committee queried why only one third of staff access Channel C and were reassured that this was due in part to the nature of FCA work not permitting time for regular access to the newsletter. The Communications team are working with the Family Justice Young People's Board to determine what children and young people want to know most about Cafcass.

The Committee requested that all outcomes are linked to Cafcass strategic objectives.

The Committee said they looked forward to seeing the Communications Strategy which would be presented to the Board in January 2018 and thanked the Interim Head of Communications for the presentation.

Action 6: Committee members to be sent copies of the external newsletter as a matter of routine.

9. Any Other Business and Forward Planner

The Committee thanked Nickie Aiken for her work with the Committee as this was her last meeting. There was no further business.

DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: Monday 5 March 2018, 11.00 – 13.00

Actions Summary

- Action 1: The MoJ Senior Policy Manager would clarify the timing of the next Family Justice Board meeting and provide an update to the Committee.
- Action 2: The Committee would review data relating to case duration for Wiltshire at the next Performance Committee meeting.
- Action 3: The schedule of Corporate Services Presentations would be amended to allow the National Commissioning Team to provide a presentation on the strategic impact of partnership work at the Joint Performance and Quality Committee meeting in May 2018.
- Action 4: The National Service Director would discuss future arrangements for engagement with safeguarding boards/panels with the Operational Management Team and report back to the Committee once these are known.
- Action 5: The finalists of recent awards ceremonies would be commended formally by the Board.
- Action 6: Committee members to be sent copies of the external newsletter as a matter of routine.