CHILDREN AND FAMILY COURT ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE

Paper for the Board Meeting on 26th January 2018

WORKFORCE DEVEOPMENT STRATEGY 2017-2020: FIRST SIX MONTHLY UP-DATE

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KEY POINTS

- *Significant progress has been made in the early stages of delivering the 2017-2020 Workforce Development Strategy. Milestones include the recruitment of high quality staff in significant numbers to ensure more manageable workloads; reducing sickness absence; low staff turnover and continuing high performance against organisational KPI's.*

- *Priorities for the future are identified.*

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1. AIM AND PURPOSE

The Workforce Development Strategy (WDS) 2017-20 and accompanying Action Plan were endorsed at the Board meeting on 15 June 2017. Six monthly updates were agreed. This report sets out progress within each of the four key strands of the Strategy along with the priorities for action over the next six-months.

2. ACTION FOR THE BOARD/COMMITTEE

The Board is asked to note and review the progress made against the Action Plan, as outlined below, and as contained in the full overview / RAG log attached at Appendix 1.

The Board is asked to review and endorse the proposed priorities for the next six months.

3. BACKGROUND

The WDS comprises four overarching strands, namely: Talent Attraction, Supporting our People, People Development and Rewarding Performance.

The WDS consolidated a number of strategic areas that were previously contained within separate strategy documents, such as Talent Management and Health and Wellbeing.

PROGRESS REPORT

3.1. TALENT ATTRACTION

During the past 6-months, we have designed and implemented a number of systems and process updates in order to increase the number of applicants per vacancy, the posts appointed to first time and the time taken from post approval to the conditional offer of employment.

3.1.1. Impact (since April 2017):

Factor	Impact
Applications	32% increase in average applications. Increased by 67% since introducing the new application system.
Time to recruit (offer to start date)	Reduced from 13.1 to 10 weeks, with the most recent new starters averaging 8-9 weeks.
Recruitment of FCAs	85% more FCAs from April to Dec 17, compared to the same period in 2016.
Increase in FCA numbers	10% increase in employed social workers between April and December 2017.
Caseloads	Reduction (so far) of average caseloads from 21 to 19.

3.1.2. Key Actions/Achievements

o Greater advertising reach, advertising across a wider range of websites. Using 'matched' placements to target suitable applicants. Greater use of social media advertising.

o Created a micro-site for Social Work jobs, featuring branded, custom-made video content that illustrates what working for Cafcass involves, our range of practice, the benefits of working for us and a "Day in the life of an FCA" video.

o Collaboration with local offices, producing targeted posters and flyers to place in local courts, highlighting our careers pages, specific vacancies and open events.

o Implementation of a revised job application platform, making applying for jobs simpler for candidates (including more mobile friendly) and making management of applications (from shortlisting to interview arrangement) quicker for the Resourcing team and recruiting managers.

o This system also allows for an electronic offer process, speeding up the offer to appointment process.

o Implementation of a new single platform for preferred supplier agencies to submit CV's and process agency staff bookings, simplifying and speeding up this process.

3.1.3. Next Steps

o We will undertake a review of our advertising practice for 2018/19 to optimise spend.

o We will review our FCA interview process to ensure this is optimised to identify the best applicants for appointment, learning from our experience so far this year

o We will do further research on 'Employer Branding' to ensure that we continue to be an employer of choice for high quality, experienced Social Workers.

o We are continuing to enhance our recruitment data set to provide real time data on key metrics.

3.2. SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

To ensure that our workforce is able to maximise its full potential and has the capacity and flexibility to respond to challenges, whilst delivering an outstanding service to children and families, we have taken forward a number of initiatives.

3.2.1. Key Actions/Achievements

- o Collaborative partnerships with key external organisations to support the delivery of wellbeing initiatives for staff and managers. This includes:

  - *Macmillan* at Work – co-creation of a bespoke workshop to equip managers to support staff affected by cancer and developing a pool of trainers for this purpose across the organisation.

  - *Mental Health First Aid* – 18 accredited mental health first aiders and delivery of 3 workshops to managers to increase awareness of and reduce stigma around mental health. Many of our first aiders are undertaking further local initiatives.

  - *British Dyslexia Association* – delivery of workshops on the impact of dyslexia at work.

- o Optimising Wellbeing for Performance

  - Wellbeing Model and Quiz (see Appendix 2) – informed by the latest research in physiology, psychology and neuroscience this model brings together our Health & Wellbeing (H&W) approach to link wellbeing and performance. Since delivering an up-date on health and wellbeing to the Performance Committee in September 2017 we have developed a short quiz which is being used to help staff identify priority actions to support their wellbeing and performance. The quiz identifies which of the 8 strands of wellbeing they need to target to make improvements.

  - Mindfulness pilots - August – October 2017 an evidence-based mindfulness intervention tailored to the specific needs of our Family Court Advisors was developed by the Health & Wellbeing Officers. The focus is on increasing awareness of the benefits of mindfulness practice, developing the knowledge and skills of a range of mindfulness-based techniques and suggesting healthier behaviours. Process outcomes were measured in both groups, using a brief questionnaire. Feedback is overwhelmingly positive.

- o Delivery of H&W support – July – December 2017:

  - 28 H&W sessions delivered to approximately 580 staff members. These sessions covered several topics including Mental Health Awareness, Resilience; Mindfulness; Productivity; and Workplace Health.

  - 66 colleagues receiving individual, expert support via referrals to the in house 1:1 support service.

  In addition to the above we continue to support managers in individual absence cases via our HR Business Partners and HR Officers. This joined up approach between Managers, HR and Health and Wellbeing ensures tailored advice for each circumstance and a more rapid resolution of absence cases.

- o Recognising the importance of retaining and supporting new starters, we undertook a survey of recent starters. From this we identified an opportunity to enhance the induction process. Working with operational colleagues we now have a revised induction process, a revised confirmation process with new guidelines for managers and we are trialling a completely new and innovative Onboarding process / platform, to support new staff during the period from offer to start date.

- o Caflon - an established annual workforce activity that contributes to health and wellbeing and building social support in teams. Caflon 2017 saw a 55% increase in participants from the previous year (954 from 614) and there were 11 more events (49 from 38) taking place throughout service areas and corporate teams. Raising money

for *Children in Need* was optional, as the emphasis was bringing people together yet we still saw our fundraising total exceeded. To date, we have raised £4,342 against a target of £2,500 for 2017. The Caflon events, which ranged from rounders matches to salsa lessons, are a great opportunity for staff to connect with colleagues, which can further help build resilience and engagement. Some areas even included local external stakeholders, with one team holding a quiz night that raised over £1000. This is a great example of building our external relationships and Cafcass brand.

3.2.2. Impact

o From January to June 2017 the Average Working Days Lost for Social Work staff reduced from 12.2 days to 7.5 days. From July to November 2017 the AWDL remained consistently between 7.2 and 8.0 days.

o For Non-Social Work staff over the same period absence reduced from a high of 13.3 days in January 2017 to 7.8 days in June 2017. This remained around 8 days until November when there was an increase to 10.8 days, which is consistent with the same period in the previous year. We expect this to reduce from January to March, similarly to 2017.

o Our Performance and Learning Review (PLR) data now allows us to assess staff wellbeing from their own Self-Assessment ratings. Currently staff nationally rate themselves at 3.85 out of 5 for Wellbeing, 3.63 for workload and 3.59 for Work-Life Balance.

| Wellbeing | Workload | Work-Life Balance | Overall Response |

o There has been external recognition for Cafcass' Health and Wellbeing offer, with us having been shortlisted for two national awards:

    o HR Distinction Awards 2018 – Category 'Holistic Approach to Wellbeing.'

    o Reward & Employee Benefits Association REBA Awards 2018 – Category 'Mental Health Strategy.'

o We are sharing our good practice, expertise and resources with Cafcass Cymru. Cafcass H&W Officers will be delivering four workshops to staff there between March and April 2018.

3.2.3. Next Steps

o The focus over the next six-months will be on continuing to raise awareness and to remove stigma around mental health, to create a working environment that enables staff to raise any concern about their wellbeing and for all who would benefit to receive appropriate support or sign-posting.

o The new module, '*Optimising Wellbeing for Performance*,' will be rolled out to all staff via a range of methods including on-line resources, webinars and workshops.

o CMT will be asked to endorse the roll out of the Mindfulness intervention nationally, on a targeted and commissioned basis from February 2018.

o An increased focus on the self-assessment data emanating from the PLR process to identify differences between teams that are positive about wellbeing and their Cafcass working life, and those who rate these aspects less positively. This will be carried out via a series of focus groups and will provide intelligence upon which to base Service Area and Team level wellbeing plans, to make best use of available resources.

3.3. PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

The national training plan is delivered jointly through our National Improvement Service (NIS) and HR. This covers both social work professional learning and wider development for the whole organisation, ensuring all learning and development contributes to the continuous improvement of front line services.

3.3.1. Key Actions/Achievements

- o Emerging Talent Programme: this continues to identify, develop and retain our highest performers, ensuring that we help them to realise their potential and progress within Cafcass. Since the Programme started in 2013, 302 people have participated, with 1 in 4 colleagues who enter the programme achieving a role change or promotion either during their time on the programme or once they have completed it. 253 of these participants remain with Cafcass.

- o Practice Expert Project: This project delivered in conjunction with NIS, involving participants from our Emerging Talent programme, creates a framework for the immense specialist knowledge that exists in Cafcass to be shared and applied to specific cases. Cafcass Practice Experts are Cafcass practitioners and managers who have built up considerable learning and insight in specialist practice areas that feature less often in our cases.   In the pilot phase five Practice Experts were identified. The pilot will be evaluated in Spring 2018 and further topics included as identified.

- o Productivity Training: Recognising that the H&W of our staff can have a positive or negative impact on their work, our H&W team collaborated with colleagues from the NIS and IT trainers to deliver bespoke training for those staff who have found the speed of work and recent demand at Cafcass particularly challenging. This training identifies how staff can use technology, health strategies, and a growth mindset to positively impact their productivity and quality of work.

- o Developing our existing and future managers: recognising that managers (line managers especially) can have the most significant influence on how an individual performs and views their work, we offer an in-house management development programme. During the last six-months this programme has included workshops and resources to support managers with remote working, high pressure and specific topics such as supporting staff affected by cancer, dyslexia and mental health problems.

- o Apprenticeships: with the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017, Cafcass has been identifying ways in which we can maximise our mandatory contribution (approximately £400,000 per annum), bring new talent in and offer additional learning opportunities to all staff. We also have a public-sector target of 2.3% of employees undertaking an apprenticeship per annum by 2020. Our apprenticeship programme was launched in July 2017. We currently have 17 members of staff studying for an apprenticeship. 3 are appointed into specific apprentice roles, 14 are existing staff members across including a Service Manager, colleagues from Business Services and the NBC.
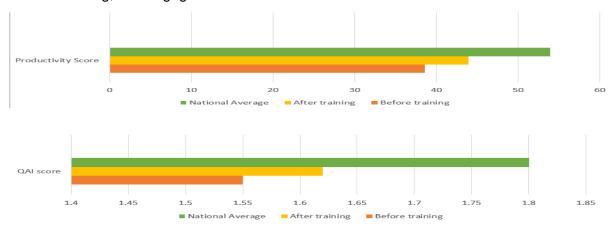
3.3.2. Impact

o Emerging Talent: When looking at performance data, staff on Emerging Talent (active and completed) outperform national averages on a range of measures such as:

		Active Participants: 143 staff (116 SW, 27 Non-SW)		Completed Participants: 110 staff 84 SW, 26 Non-SW		National
Financial efficiency	Total throughput (finished cases/new cases)	103.4%	Higher	104.3%	Higher	**95.9%**
	Cost of output (salary/finished cases)	£454	Lower	£564	In line	**£554**
	Total cases finished	89.6	Higher	72.2	In line	**73.5**
Wellbeing and Learning	Learning hours	15.9	Higher	15.2	Higher	**9.7**
	Working days lost to sickness	5.2	Lower	4.2	Lower	**9.7**
Case management	Care applications completed	13.9	In line	12.7	In line	**13.6**
	Care application duration (wks)	27.7	In line	28.9	In line	**27.2**
	Current workload weighting pts	43.6	In line	41.9	Lower	**47.1**
	Current caseload	22.8	In line	25.4	In line	**24.1**
	Section 7 report filing time (wks)	10.5	In line	10.7	In line	**10.3**
PLR & QAI Tools	PLR average score	2.31	Higher	2.16	Higher	**1.96**
	QAI Tools average score	2.11	Higher	1.95	Higher	**1.78**

Participant feedback is overwhelmingly positive: "The ET programme has been a hugely positive experience for me and has allowed me to develop my specialist expertise and to further my career within Cafcass".

o Productivity Training: Over 90% of FCAs who attended found it useful and we have seen an improvement in their quality and productivity following the training. For those who attended the training, continued support is in place to monitor productivity, wellbeing, and engagement.

 "The overwhelming message of the training for me was to look after yourself and I felt that Cafcass were giving me permission to do this... The initial information about opening up your mind to change struck a real chord with me…. I found the information about being open/resistant to change fascinating…. I am implementing other tips from NIS and using colour coded half hour slots in outlook from IT…. Overall, I feel much more positive about my work… I think I am in control of it more and I am thinking about how my old working practices had a negative impact on me."

o Cafcass also achieved the short-list for the *Children and Young People Now* category for Recruitment and Development for the creation and development of the Practice Supervisor role in November 2017.

3.3.3. Next Steps

A key focus for the next six-months will be extending the range of development activity so that all staff have access to the learning they need for their current role and for their future career in Cafcass. This will include:

- o A new contract for a Learning Management System, which will allow for a more agile approach to learning at the point of need and self-directed learning for which a procurement process is currently underway.

  Through a wellbeing lens, carrying out more work to provide learning for staff and managers on a range of topics including Diversity and Inclusion, Domestic Abuse and team building.

- o Additional learning for managers on feedback skills, supporting the wellbeing of their teams and a new induction workshop for managers.

3.4. REWARDING PERFORMANCE

It is our aim to recognise and reward the contribution of colleagues in a way which encourages all to perform to their best and achieve their potential, and thus to retain the best talent in the organisation. Our approach to reward recognises the need to be flexible and sustainable in line with current and future budgets and government policy guidelines.

3.4.1. Key Actions/Achievements

- o We have maximised what we are able to pay to staff via our annual pay award and have implemented a pay award for 2017-18 which provides a consolidated 1% increase for all staff; the best outcome we have been able to achieve in any of the last 5 years, although still some way behind inflation.

- o We have rebalanced the pay bands which apply to Practice Supervisors and Service Managers, to ensure that career progression is better aligned with appropriate increases in pay, thereby supporting this essential route for developing talent.

3.4.2. Impact

- o It may be early to judge the impact of these measures; however, staff turnover remains low at 12.7% and our ability to recruit sufficient high quality social workers has improved as evidenced in 4.1. We believe these actions will help continue those trends.

3.4.3. Next Steps

- o Introduce an outer London weighting, which recognises the generally higher living costs of living in the area around the capital. This to be applied to staff based in a limited number of offices within a reasonable commuting distance of inner London. The effect of this will be to smooth out the current significant pay differential between those staff receiving London weighting and those who do not, better supporting local recruitment and reducing the draw of roles in the capital, as well as better reflecting salaries available in some Local Authorities on the periphery of Greater London, improving our ability to attract talent in competitive job markets.

- o Introduce the ability for market supplements or attraction payments to be paid in addition to salary for specific roles and locations where there is a business case for doing so and where this is supported by evidence from local market testing.

- o Introduce the ability to offer retention payments to existing staff to address acute turnover issues, or to retain high value/talented staff, again subject to business cases and market testing.

4. CONCLUSION

Continued progress against the key objectives of the Workforce Development Strategy and the associated Action Plan will help us to support organisational priorities. Cafcass remains an attractive employer for high quality social workers, with comparably low levels of sickness absence and turnover. Cafcass remains a sector leader in respect of workforce strategy and high-quality frontline social work, underpinned by innovative and dedicated corporate support services.

Significant and ongoing innovations in attraction, recruitment and induction (onboarding) and retention, combined with a continued focus on health and well-being have enabled the organisation to better support its workforce to cope with continued increases in demand.

Our priorities for the future will continue to enhance our offer and ensure we support Cafcass and provide the best possible service for our service users.

James Hyde
Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

10 January 2018

Acronym	Definition
WDS	Workforce Development Strategy
RAG Log	Red Amber Green Log
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
FCA	Family Court Adviser
H&W	Health & Wellbeing
AWDL	Average Working Days Lost
PLR	Performance and Learning Review
NIS	National improvement Service
NBC	National Business Centre
ET	Emerging Talent