

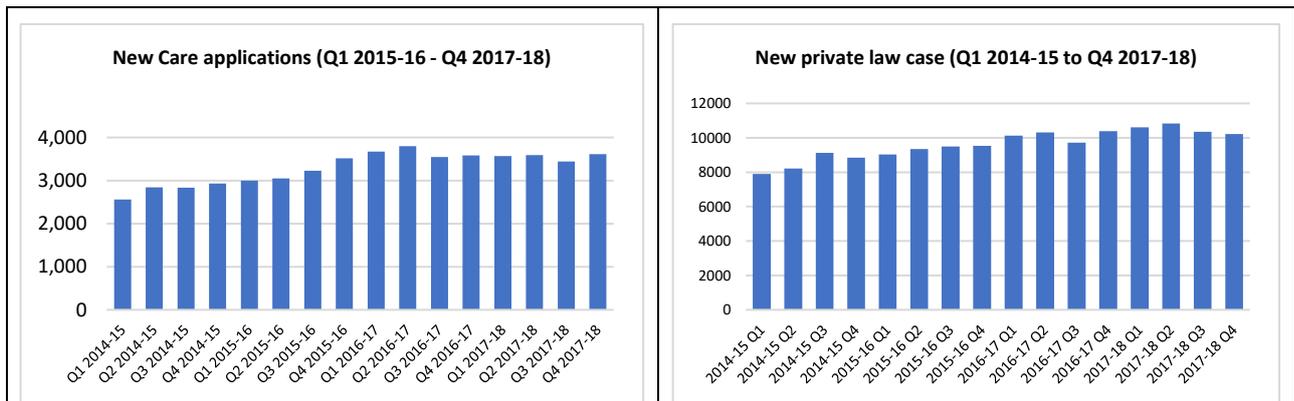


CHILDREN AND FAMILY COURT ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE
Paper for the Cafcass Board meeting on 15 June 2018
Demand Levels and Resourcing

KEY POINTS

Latest demand year to date (**April - May 2018**)

- **2,408** new care applications during April to May 2018. This is **7.4%** (166 applications) higher than the same period in 2017 and 1% (23 applications) higher than the same period in 2016.
- **7,217** new private law cases during April and May 2018. This is **6.5%** (440 cases) higher than the same period in 2017 and 8.8% (584 cases) higher than the same period in 2016.



In the last 12 months our average monthly levels for new demand has been: -

- **1,199** new Public Law (S31 Care) applications per month during last 12 months (June 2017 - May 2018). This is compared to an average of 1,205 during the same period previous year (2016-17) and 1,108 per month two years ago (2015-16).
- In Private Law, we have averaged **3,533** new cases per month during the last 12 months (June 2017 - May 2018). This is compared to an average of 3,390 during the same period previous year (2016-17), and 3,200 per month two years ago (2015-16).

Current trend and forecast: -

- Care application quarterly levels have been at a fairly level trend since Q4 2015/16.
- Average care duration increased to **32 weeks** in Q4 2017/18, the previous 4 quarters which were consistent at 31 weeks.
- **46.5%** of Care Applications were completed within 26 weeks in Q4 17/18 down from 50.9% in the previous quarter; this is a downward trend and the first time it has dipped below 50%.
- Private Law demand has seen a decreasing trend over the last two quarters, current demand levels indicate a return to the increasing trend experienced since Q1 2014.

- Average duration for private cases increased to **18 weeks** in Q4 2017/18 following the three consecutive quarters at 17 weeks.
- In their last quarterly forecast (end of Q3 2017-18) the MoJ have forecast **+1.7%** in new public cases and **+6.8%** for new private law cases for the **2018/19** financial year.
- We also forecast care durations to increase steadily throughout the financial year.

Local Family Justice Board (LFJB) areas are measured primarily on the duration of public law cases and also the number of ongoing cases ('outstanding') in the local area. In the latest snapshot there has been a significant year on year increase nationally for these measures. A majority of LFJB areas experienced a deterioration against Key Performance Measure (KPM) aspirations during Q3. Sustained rises in demand along with other system pressures (including a lack of judicial resources to hear family cases) have contributed to increases in overall family justice system pressure.

1 **AIM AND PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To share with the Board for information and assurance the steps being taken both corporately and operationally to manage demand and support the workforce.

2 **ACTION FOR THE BOARD**

- 2.1 To consider if the actions taken by Cafcass officers provide assurance in the Board's governance role.

3 **KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR THE BOARD TO CONSIDER**

- 3.1 The Chief Executive and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) continue to discuss the rising demand with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The extra financial resources in 2017/18 supported increased recruitment and closed some of the gaps in the workforce. A manageable budget has been secured for 2018/19.
- 3.2 The Chief Executive has agreed with the President of the Family Court Division guidance that limits Family Court Advisor (FCA) time at court and numbers of reports produced, without compromising the quality of the work and outcomes for children.
- 3.3 The Chief Executive, CMT, and the senior Operational Management Team (OMT) are all fully engaged and contributing significantly with the MoJ to achieve reforms in the Family Justice System.
- 3.4 Every Assistant Director continues to work with District Family Judges (DFJs) and Local Family Justice Boards (LFJBs) to ensure local systems respond collaboratively and constructively to the increased demand. For example, local protocols about court attendance by guardians, to reduce time wasted in court, work with local authorities (LAs) on defining the urgency of care applications, and to ensure First Hearings are effective.
- 3.5 Following an overall grading of Outstanding by Ofsted in the 2018 national inspection, a short action plan (shared with Ofsted) has been put in place by OMT (endorsed by CMT) to address the recommendations and findings. The delivery of the plan has started with all allocated action points planned for completion during the 2018/19 financial year. The plan seeks to further improve recording of management oversight at earlier stages in cases and smarter PLR action setting and tracking. The plan also seeks to strengthen the monitoring of quality of case work and recording.
- 3.6 Innovation with our support to frontline practice via Cafcass' Model Office continues. The 'Support with Making Child Arrangements' pilot in private law commenced January 2018 in Manchester and is due to end in August 2018 for evaluation. The aim is 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.

- 3.7 Along with increased recruitment, the use of IT innovation continues to sit at the centre of increasing our workforce capacity. The use of Skype for meetings, general communication and training continues to embed and is 'business as usual' across much of the business. This sees a direct impact on both the saving of time, travel and also direct staff engagement through better communication. The new PLR self-assessment asks staff to feedback on IT confidence so targeted support can be provided at an individual level.
- 3.8 During 2017/18 'Providing a timely, productive and responsive service to children' training was successfully delivered to 90 staff who were identified as having lower productivity levels. Feedback from the process was positive and more importantly there were assessed improvements in both the quality of work and productivity in 70% of this targeted group of staff. A further group of staff (151) have currently been identified as requiring support with productivity. An audit of PLR records will be carried out to inform future training and to ensure appropriate levels of management support are being made available to develop skills and productivity in their work.
- 3.9 Development is underway to roll out workforce and cost related analytics to managers in Q3 2018/19 to support improved planning with regard to staff turnover, T&S and other devolved costs.
- 3.10 Electronic tools to support managers in the allocation of new work are now available and continue to be developed directly in consultation with our managers. These tools provide managers with a significant range of information, including workload information, to enable them to fully consider appropriate workload management of individual staff. All frontline social work managers have attended specific training regarding the use of analytics during Q2, Q3 and Q4 (2017/18) and in Q1 (2018/19).
- 3.11 The new electronic Performance & Learning Reviews (PLRs) are now embedded with **99.6%** of our eligible/available social work staff having completed at least one self-assessment and PLR since the new system launched in September 2017. As at 30 May 2018 **5,393** self-assessments had been completed of which **4,561** are from social work staff. The self-assessment provides a mechanism to ensure better and more targeted support consistently to all employees; this has been achieved by aggregating all available data on performance, learning, quality assurance audits and self-evaluation. The new PLR is used to pinpoint support required to improve quality and productivity. Feedback from staff and managers has been overwhelmingly positive and further enhancements to the system and associated analytics are planned for 2018.
- 3.12 Learning and Development (L&D): There are a range of different learning programmes available that target specific groups of staff. The Management Development Programme supports front-line managers in the critical role they play in managing increased demand. During 2017/18 we undertook a review of which managers have completed all relevant management development training and managers have since booked on any relevant courses to ensure they have completed this. There is a full programme of workshops running through 2018/19.
- 3.13 New schedule of workshops and webinars launched to provide development around our holistic model of Optimising Wellbeing for Performance. Continue to deliver workshops on a commissioned basis for teams, and development days. Since April 18, 7 workshops and 2 webinars delivered to almost 100 people. Other activity in the period includes:
- Supported Cafcass Cymru to raise awareness of wellbeing, delivering 4 x 1-day workshops to 90 staff.

- Since April 2018 there have been 18 new referrals for 1:1 health and wellbeing support, 2 colleagues have concluded their support with 22 continuing to receive on-going support during the period.
- Continue to raise awareness of mental health through activity during Mental Health Awareness Week, a new stress guide for managers and developing the role of our 18 Mental Health Aiders.

3.14 From a staff engagement and motivation perspective, this year sees a focus on using strengths to deliver team building with five sessions delivered since April and a further five to be delivered in next quarter. This builds on the use of Strengthscope questionnaire which has been used successfully with individuals on Emerging Talent and with management teams. ADs and managers can now commission a team strengths session allowing the team to build on each other's strengths to create effective team working and relationships. It's been particularly powerful for teams that work more flexibly such as the Practice Supervisor group in A1 and A2.

3.15 Take up of apprentices increased with the latest application window – there are now 39 members of staff either currently studying for an apprenticeship or about to start by September 2018. This includes 15 staff from Business Services, 10 Service Managers/Practice Supervisors, 9 graduates and 5 staff in corporate roles. We are also planning to recruit 6 more into new apprentice roles in BS and NBC to start in September.

3.16 The latest intake of staff for the Cafcass Graduate Scheme started their roles in March and April 2018. Ten new graduates are now in positions within both corporate and operational teams.

3.17 A new on-boarding platform has been successfully piloted between December and April and will be launched for all new hires in July to improve the experience of candidates offered a role at Cafcass and provide some important pre-start learning.

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

- PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards – Category 'Improving productivity through better work life balance' (WINNER)
- HR Distinction Awards 2018 – Category 'Holistic Approach to Wellbeing.' (WINNER)
- Reward & Employee Benefits Association REBA Awards 2018 – Category 'Mental Health Strategy.' (SHORTLISTED)

4 **CURRENT SOCIAL WORK RESOURCING**

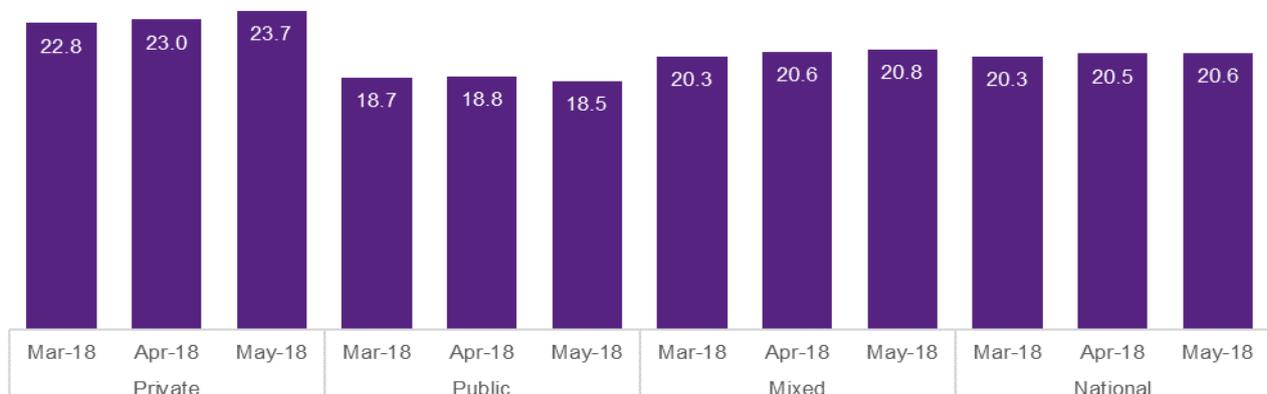
4.1 Supporting the strategy of Forward Recruitment, every service area works with HR and Finance to predict future leavers, and early recruitment to fill those posts is ongoing. Through online recruitment and other changes the application process is now easier and faster. This continues to achieve significant success in increased applications and appointments particularly in some of the hard to recruit to areas. The number of applicants continues to rise and the improvements in the recruitment process is supporting applicants being offered jobs and commencing their posts more quickly. In 2017/18 Cafcass employed **412** new staff compared to 154 in 2016/17.

- As 31 May 2018 we have an employed¹ social work FTE of **1,334**. In line with the overall recruitment plan we have reduced the number of agency social workers from 104 in the last reporting period to **62** (31 May 2018). We have also converted some of the best agency talent to permanent positions from the vacancies they were covering, in the last 12 months **61** agency social work staff have been converted to permanent positions. We remain committed to using only high-quality agency workers, reflected by the average tenure of 72 weeks.
- Cafcass Associates work across both public and private law and can be deployed to the service areas most in need, providing an experienced and flexible additional workforce. We also encourage retiring staff members to consider continuing to offer their experience and expertise as bank workers, thereby retaining key skills, and this is proving to be a popular choice. This overall pool of non-agency flexible workforce has decreased to **162** as at 30 April 2018 (from 182 on 31 March 2018).

5 CURRENT SOCIAL WORK CAPACITY

- 5.1 Demand for services continues to increase with overall national open caseload (stock) levels increasing by **9.3%** in the last 12 months.
- 5.2 In the last three months, average active caseloads have shown a marginal increase which can be attributed to the ongoing record Private Law demand. In May 2018, the average active caseload for a FCA is **20.6** cases. This is a steady increase from around 19 active cases in Q3 2017/18. Historical data tells us that this figure was around 21.4 in April 2017, therefore the level is still 3.7% lower than 12 months ago.

Average Active Caseload by FCA Workload Type

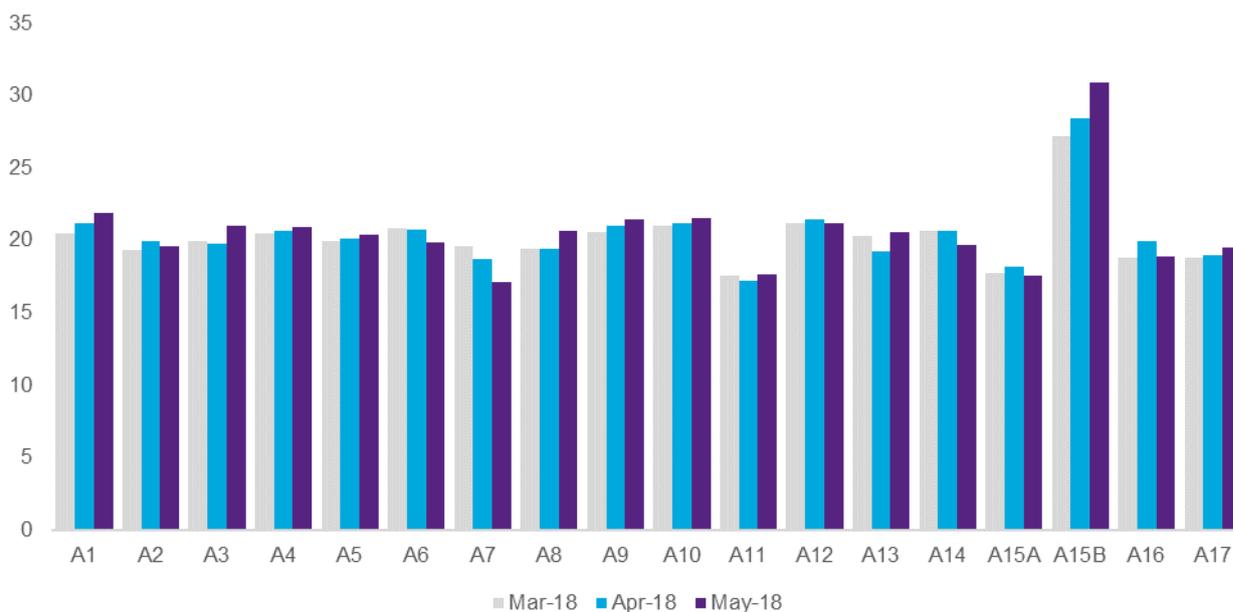


- 5.3 We continue to manage the pressures of demand on our staff to keep social work attendance levels as high as possible. Current sickness levels are higher than the same period last year at **10.7** Average Working Days Lost (AWDL) for the past 3 months (8.7 days last year). Non-social work sickness was **9.0** AWDL for the past 3 months (8.7 for the same period last year).
- 5.4 Sickness as a percentage of employed FCA capacity reduced to **3.89%** for the 12-month period (May 17 – April 18) compared to 4.80% for the previous year (May 2016 – April 2017). In FTE terms, this equates to **44.91** FCAs and 51.54 FCAs unavailable for case allocation due to sickness in these periods.
- 5.5 As at February 2018, a combined total of **2.2** FTE was unavailable for workload allocation due to miscellaneous reasons and a combined FTE of **32.18** were provided workload relief in recognition of court duty work across the organisation.

¹ 'Employed' refers to staff with Cafcass contracts of employment and excludes all flexible workforce staff.

- 5.6 Cafcass staff turnover has decreased to **10.3%** for social work staff compared to a national average of around 15% for local authority children’s services social work staff.²
- 5.7 Localised active caseload trends vary across the areas, but generally have remained in-line with national trends over the past three months against the context of increasing demands for service. Comparing May to March, notable decreases can be seen in A6, A7 and A14 whilst A1 and A15B show a significant increase.

Adjusted Active Caseload (FCA - Non-EIT)



Month Year	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15A	A15B	A16	A17	National
Mar-18	20.5	19.3	19.9	20.4	19.9	20.8	19.6	19.4	20.6	21.0	17.6	21.2	20.3	20.6	17.7	27.2	18.7	18.8	20.3
Apr-18	21.2	19.9	19.7	20.6	20.1	20.7	18.7	19.4	21.0	21.2	17.2	21.4	19.2	20.6	18.1	28.4	20.0	19.0	20.5
May-18	21.9	19.6	21.0	20.9	20.4	19.9	17.1	20.6	21.4	21.6	17.6	21.1	20.6	19.6	17.5	30.9	18.9	19.5	20.6
Growth #	1.4	0.3	1.1	0.5	0.5	-0.9	-2.5	1.2	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.3	-1.0	-0.2	3.7	0.1	0.7	0.3
Growth %	6.8%	1.6%	5.4%	2.3%	2.3%	-4.3%	-12.6%	6.1%	4.0%	2.9%	0.3%	-0.2%	1.5%	-4.8%	-0.9%	13.8%	0.8%	3.9%	1.3%

6 BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN AND SERVICE USERS

- 6.1 All the actions taken are ensuring that children and families have continued to receive a timely and quality service.

7 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The organisation has received a budget settlement to sustain frontline staffing levels.

8 RISK ANALYSIS

- 8.1 The risk of not being able to allocate work remains, if the applications continue to rise and recruitment becomes more difficult.

**Christine Banim,
National Service Director**

1th June 2018

² Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-work-workforce-2017>

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Definition</u>
AWDL	Average Working Days Lost
CMT	Corporate Management Team
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DFJ	District Family Judge
ECMS	E-Case Management System
FCA	Family Court Adviser
IT	Information Technology
L&D	Learning & Development
Las	Local Authorities
LFJB	Local Family Justice Board
LinkedIn	Worldwide professional network
MIS	Management Information Systems
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
OMT	Operational Management Team
PLR	Performance & Learning Review
S31	Section 31
SEC	Self-employed contractor (now Cafcass Associates)