



**Cafcass Cymru Advisory Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2017
Cafcass Cymru Offices, Cathays Park, Cardiff**

Present:

Jackie Murphy	Tros Gynnal Plant (Chair)
Paul Apreda	FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru
Eleri Butler	Welsh Women's Aid
Sarah Coldrick	AFA Cymru
Christopher Dunn	Voices from Care
Sean O'Neill	Children in Wales
Dan Ronson	Family Mediation Council
Nigel Brown	Cafcass Cymru
Matthew Pinnell	Cafcass Cymru
Rhianon James	Cafcass Cymru (secretariat)

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. A particularly warm welcome was given to Dan Ronson who was attending on behalf of Jane Robey.

2. Introductions and Apologies

Round the table introductions were led by the Chair.

Apologies were received from:

Catrin Cracroft	Law Society Representative
Denise Inger	SNAP Cymru
Gareth Jenkins	ADSS Cymru
Sharon Lovell	NYAS
Des Mannion	NSPCC Cymru
HHJ Helen Mifflin	Judiciary
Zoe Richards	Learning Disability Wales
Jane Robey	National Family Mediation
Rakhshanda Shahzad	BAWSO
Hugh Simkiss	HMCTS
Rachel Thomas	Children's Commission for Wales
Sue Thomas	Magistrates Association

3. Minutes of meeting held on 11 July 2017 – sign off prior to publication on Cafcass Cymru website

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters arising

Matthew Pinnell will contact Jane Robey to discuss Mediation Information and Assessment Meetings.

Cafcass Cymru will consider publishing a child-friendly version of its next annual report. Sean O'Neill offered the support of Children in Wales.

5. Performance Framework Update

Cafcass Cymru has been developing a new performance information framework to include a greater focus on outcomes. As part of this work consultation has taken place with two members of the Advisory Committee which has been invaluable.

The performance information report presented today represents the first iteration under this revised approach. It will continue to evolve over the coming months and will include "outcome" focused measures from April 2018.

Nigel Brown added that Cafcass Cymru is developing and piloting a range of new ways of seeking and securing feedback from children, adults and stakeholders. A comprehensive presentation on how we are developing feedback mechanisms and their success will be delivered to a future committee meeting.

6. Cafcass Cymru Innovation Programme – Safeguarding Enquiry Report Pilot

As agreed at a previous Advisory Committee meeting, Matthew Pinnell presented an overview of Cafcass Cymru's role in completing Safeguarding Enquiries Reports (SERs) and the pilot project where business support staff undertake some SERs. The pilot is due to conclude in March 2018 and a further update will be provided to the Advisory Committee in 2018. Members asked a range of questions in relation to the pilot project.

7. Referrals and Performance

Nigel Brown gave an overview of the performance report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Nigel reiterated the points made in 5 that this was work in progress and the documents will be developed further over the coming months. Cafcass Cymru's workload continues to increase and Nigel Brown commended staff for their hard work and commitment during these busy times.

Overall public law applications have increased in the past two years, with a 21% increase in 2016-17 followed by a further 8.3% increase in 2017-18. Section 31 applications have increased in the past two years, with a 4% increase nationally on top of the 28% increase in 2016-17. Nigel referenced that this increase has not been experienced uniformly and for example whilst a couple of areas have seen a small reduction in referrals since April 2017, other areas have had an increase – some of which has been significant.

Private Law Referrals (post Work to First Hearing) have remained at the same level for 2017-18 when comparing them to the same period in 2016-17.

The number of Safeguarding Enquiries Reports (SERs) has increased over the past two years, with a 7% increase so far this year and more than 35% increase in Enforcement Checks Responses (ECRs).

The number of Section 7 and addenda reports has slightly decreased compared to the same period in 2016-17 but the number of Rule 16.4s has increased from 86 to 103 (20%) felt most particularly in South Wales and Gwent.

Sarah Coldrick congratulated Cafcass Cymru on the way it is managing its allocations in the context of continuing pressures.

8. Family Justice Reform Update

Nigel Brown reported that there is very little to update on Family Justice Reform other than progress being made to digitalisation of the courts and the C100.

Cafcass in England are piloting in Manchester an early intervention approach for private law applications where they will work with both parties (where there are no safeguarding concerns) to seek a resolution before the FHDRA. If the pilot proves successful, it may be rolled out to a further 4 or 5 DFJ areas which may include one in Wales.

Following the recent Cabinet reshuffle, Huw Irranca-Davies AM, has been appointed Minister for Children and Social Care. Nigel Brown will have an initial meeting with the Minister on 15 November 2017.

9. Any Other Business

Following a discussion, it was agreed to change the start times of future meetings. Meetings will now start at 9:30 am with the exception of the next meeting on 14 March 2018 which will start at 11:00 am.

Members of Family Justice Young People's Board have been invited to deliver a presentation at the next meeting and in order to allow them to travel to Cardiff the meeting will start at 11:00 am.

The following dates and times were agreed:

14 March 2018 – 11:00 – 13:00 – Cardiff
10 July 2018 – 09:30 – 11:30 – Cardiff
14 November 2018 – 09:30 – 11:30 - Cardiff

The following agenda items were noted for future meetings:

- A presentation on Service User Feedback to be put on the agenda for a future meeting.
- A demonstration of Cafcass Cymru website

The Chair thanked members of Cafcass Cymru Advisory Committee for their valuable contribution to the meeting.