



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEETING

Cafcass Cymru Advisory Committee meeting minutes: 3 November 2020

Minutes from the Advisory Committee meeting held on 3
November 2020.

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Present

- Jackie Murphy: Chair

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- Paul Apreda (PA): FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru
- Sarah Coldrick (SC): Association for Fostering and Adoption (AFA) Cymru
- Catrin Cracroft (CC): Law Society representative
- Beth Flowers (BF): Office of Children's Commissioner for Wales
- Gareth Jenkins (GJ): ADSS Cymru
- Sara Kirkpatrick (SK): Welsh Women's Aid
- Mark Lewis (ML): HMCTS
- Des Mannion (DM): NSPCC Cymru
- Judge Helen Mifflin (HHJ M): Judiciary
- Sean O'Neill (SO): Children in Wales
- Zoe Richards (ZR): Learning Disability Wales
- Dan Ronson (DR): Family Mediation Council
- Rakhshanda Shahzad (RS): Black Association of Women Step Out (BAWSO)
- Nigel Brown (NB): Cafcass Cymru
- Matthew Pinnell (MP): Cafcass Cymru
- Rhianon James (RJ): Cafcass Cymru (Secretariat)

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting.

Apologies were received from:

- Sharon Lovell National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Members of Cafcass Cymru Advisory Committee paused to remember Denise Inger, SNAP Cymru, who sadly passed away in September. Her contribution to the work of the Committee was very valuable and she will be much missed.

Amanda Daniels, Interim CEO, SNAP Cymru has been in touch to confirm that she will be participating in future meetings.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 30 June 2020 – sign

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off prior to publication on Cafcass Cymru website

There was one change to note. The date of the next meeting should have read 3 November and not 30 November.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising. However, there was one outstanding action under item 5. It was noted that the Secretariat had contacted DM to request the minutes and presentation from a roundtable discussion for circulation. This action will be carried forward.

4. Performance Data September 2020

NB provided an overview of the referrals and performance figures for September 2020. There followed a discussion and NB and MP responded to questions raised by committee members. PA asked about feedback received from parents and children. MP explained that Cafcass Cymru has a complaints and compliments process in place and welcomes all feedback as the organisation is committed to learning and improving its services.

5. Update on Covid-19 Temporary Service Delivery Framework, and Beyond

The default position for the organisation is that attendance at court and direct work with children and families should be undertaken remotely. However, face-to-face meetings with children and attendance at court by practitioners can take place when it is necessary and can be undertaken safely. The “blended” approach is working well and indeed some young people prefer to meet online rather than in person. NB said he hoped that, in the future, a blended approach

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of face-to-face meetings and remote meetings would be adopted.

MP informed members that face-to-face meetings with children and families are taking place when necessary at Cafcass Cymru offices in Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Llandudno Junction and, also, Carmarthen. It is hoped that Wrexham, Swansea and Newport offices will become available soon.

PA asked what percentage of direct work with children is taking place. NB said the organisation does not capture that precise information but stated that between the first week in September and the third week in October, a total of 160 risk assessments had been completed in connection with direct work with children.

PA then asked why practitioners do not give their e-mail addresses to service users. MP explained that generic, operational area e-mail addresses are provided and encouraged for use.

PA also queried if Cafcass Cymru records conversations. MP confirmed that the organisation does not record any of the platform discussions with children and families.

6. Update on Family Justice, Recovery and Reform

This update had been distributed to members prior to the meeting. NB provided a full overview of the information contained in the report with input from GJ. GJ added that the Family Justice Network has been working on a proposal to have a strategic work plan. In addition, an announcement has been made that Welsh Government will provide short term funding to pilot a Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) in Wales.

In answer to PA's question regarding representation on each of the Public Law and Private Law working groups, MP stated that both Working Groups are chaired by High Court judges – Mr Justice Keehan for public law and Mr Justice

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Cobb for private law. MP added that both groups include representation from a range of stakeholders including Cafcass, Cafcass Cymru, MOJ, HMCTS, judiciary, mediation and local authorities.

HHJ Mifflin said she did not see encouraging the use of s76 very much as a sea change and that the issue is what local authorities do whilst a child is looked after under s76. GJ responded that children in some circumstances, particularly older children, s76 could be appropriate as a long-term plan.

7. Nuffield Family Justice Observatory – Report on Private Law Cases

Members had received copies of this report in advance of the meeting which is the first in a series due to be published by the NFJO. The report highlights a strong link with areas of deprivation and private law referrals. MP said this was a very illuminating report and encouraged members to read it.

8. Cafcass Cymru Annual Report

NB informed members that because of this year's events, there has been a delay in producing the organisation's annual report. It will be a shorter version this year and will link back to Cafcass Cymru's Strategic Plan. It will be published between now and mid-March 2021. When a final draft is available, this will be circulated to members for comments.

9. Any Other Business

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was brought to a close.

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10. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 9:30 – 11:00 on 16 March 2021.

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

Action sheet

Agenda item number	Action	Lead
Item 3 – Matters Arising - Update on Service Delivery (Covid-19) (Meeting held on 30 June 2020 – Item 5)	DM to send RJ the minutes and presentation from a roundtable discussion for circulation.	Secretariat / DM

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