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MEETING

Cafcass Cymru Advisory Committee meeting minutes: 15 March 2022

Minutes from the Advisory Committee meeting held on 15 March 2022.

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Present

- Jackie Murphy: Chair
- Hannah Lamb: Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB)
- Plam: Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB)
- Paul Apreada: FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru
- Rocio Cifuentes: EYST Wales
- Sarah Coldrick: Association of Fostering and Adoption (AFA) Cymru
- Beth Flowers: Office of Children's Commissioner for Wales
- Gareth Jenkins: ADSS Representative
- Wanjiku Mbugua: BAWSO
- Sean O'Neill: Children in Wales
- Samantha Williams: Learning Disability Wales
- Nigel Brown: Cafcass Cymru
- Matthew Pinnell: Cafcass Cymru
- Beth Altman: Cafcass Cymru
- De Litchfield: Cafcass Cymru
- Anna Sinclair: Cafcass Cymru
- Rhianon James: Cafcass Cymru (Secretariat)

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting including Wanjiku Mbugua, Acting Chief Executive, BAWSO, who was attending for the first time. In addition, the Chair gave a particularly warm welcome to Plam and Hanna who are members of the FJYPB

Apologies were received from:

- Tracey Holdsworth: NSPCC Cymru
- Sharon Lovell: National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) Cymru
- Don Ronson: Family Mediation Council
- HHJ Jayne Scannell: Judiciary

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 2 November 2021 – sign off prior to publication on Cafcass Cymru website – and Matters Arising

Agreed. There were no amendments to the minutes and there were no matters arising.

3. North Wales Pathfinder – Overview of Operational Model

Nigel introduced Beth Altman, Cafcass Cymru Lead for Private Law Reform and Anna Sinclair, Cafcass Cymru Quality Assurance Manager. They delivered a presentation on the Private Law Reform and provided a detailed overview of the North Wales Pathfinder Pilot. Following the presentation, members had an opportunity to ask questions and give feedback.

The Chair thanked Beth and Anna for their stimulating presentation, which provoked a lively and informative discussion.

4. Family Justice Young People’s Board –

Presentation

Plam and Hannah delivered a presentation on the work of the FJYPB across Wales. They also introduced the FJYPB's book, "In Our Shoes", which details the experiences of children and young people in the Family Justice system.

Copies of the book are available on the FJYPB's website and hard copies are available on request.

Nigel recommended that everyone read the book, which contains powerful accounts of the experiences of young people.

The Chair thanked Plam and Hannah for their excellent presentation.

5. Management Information

Nigel provided an overview of the referrals and performance figures for February 2022. There followed a detailed discussion and Nigel and Matthew responded to questions raised by Committee members.

6. Family Justice Board – Six Key Priorities

Nigel gave an outline of the Family Justice Board's six key priorities. The three priorities for public law are:

1. Identifying ways to address cases that are in the system the longest and understanding the impact of adjournments on case duration

2. Understanding the high number of emergency/short notice applications and the increase on previous year(s)
3. Improving practice at the pre-proceedings stage.

The three priorities for private law are:

1. Government and all partners understanding and influencing wider societal views on separation and the use of the courts
2. Better support for local areas to scrutinise their performance challenges and share best practice
3. Increasing efficiencies in the private law process

7. Update on Public Law

It was agreed that as this was partially discussed under item six, Matthew would provide a further update at the next meeting.

8. Any Other Business

As this was Rocio's last meeting in her current role, the Chair took the opportunity to congratulate her on her new position as Children's Commissioner for Wales and wished her every success for the future.

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

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held remotely at 4.00 pm on Tuesday, 28 June 2022.

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

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