



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Cafcass Cymru Advisory Committee meeting minutes: 2 November 2021

Minutes from the Advisory Committee meeting held on 2
November 2021.

First published: 5 April 2022

Last updated: 5 April 2022

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Present

- Jackie Murphy: Chair
- Andrew: Family Justice Young People’s Board (FJYPB)
- Laura: Family Justice Young People’s Board (FJYPB)
- Paul Apreda: FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru
- Sarah Coldrick: Association of Fostering and Adoption (AFA) Cymru
- Beth Flowers: Office of Children’s Commissioner for Wales
- Tracey Holdsworth: NSPCC Cymru

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- Lesley Hyde: HMCTS
- Gareth Jenkins: ADSS Representative
- Sara Kirkpatrick: Welsh Women's Aid
- Donna Mulhern: HMCTS
- Sean O'Neill: Children in Wales
- HHJ Jayne Scannell: Judiciary
- Samantha Williams: Learning Disability Wales
- Nigel Brown: Cafcass Cymru
- Matthew Pinnell: Cafcass Cymru
- De Litchfield: Cafcass Cymru
- Rhianon James: Cafcass Cymru (Secretariat)

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting including HHJ Jayne Scannell and Sam Williams who had recently joined the Committee. In addition, the Chair gave a particularly warm welcome to Andrew and Laura who are members of the FJYPB

Apologies were received from:

- Catrin Cracroft: Law Society representative
- Sharon Lovell: National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) Cymru
- Beth Altman: Cafcass Cymru

The Chair informed Committee members that Sharon Lovell had sent her apologies for the meeting, stating the meeting was the same day she would be in Windsor collecting her MBE. The Chair congratulated Sharon on her wonderful achievement.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 29 June 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. Performance Data/Resourcing Pressures

Nigel provided an overview of the referrals and performance figures for September 2021. There followed a detailed discussion and Nigel and Matthew responded to questions raised by Committee members.

The data showed that pressure on staff has been significant, not only because of increasing referral rates but also because of a backlog of cases in the family justice system. The Chair asked about contact with children. Nigel said that following a consultation with staff during the summer, Cafcass Cymru issued new staff guidance. Practitioners are encouraged to continue with a blended approach, seeing families and children in person and remotely. Practitioners are expected to hold at least one face-to-face meeting with children during the life of a case.

4. Family Justice Young People’s Board – Verbal Update and Presentation

Andrew and Laura delivered a presentation on the work of the FJYPB. This included the role of FJYPB members, who the Board works with, the Board’s work with Cafcass Cymru, a list of top tips for practitioners and FJYPB priorities. Advisory Committee members complemented Andrew and Laura on their presentation in terms of content and delivery. Committee members provided feedback and there followed an enthusiastic discussion. They were impressed

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with the extent of their work and some Committee members were keen to help FJYPB develop this work further.

The Chair thanked Andrew and Laura for their excellent presentation and thanked De for facilitating the session.

5. Update on Private Law

Matthew delivered a presentation on the Private Law Reform. His presentation looked at the reasons for private law reform and its long-term objectives. Matthew also presented the key findings of a report published by the Ministry of Justice in June 2020, “Assessing Risk of Harm to Children and Parents in Private Law Cases”, Cafcass Cymru’s next steps, and gave a brief outline of the North Wales Pathfinder Pilot, which is estimated to start in January 2022.

There followed a lively discussion and members shared their comments.

The Chair thanked Matthew for his detailed presentation.

6. Update on Public Law

As members had had a rich discussion on Private Law, Matthew suggested moving this agenda item to the next meeting. This was agreed by all members.

7. Any Other Business

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

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held remotely at 4.00 pm on Tuesday, 15 March 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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