



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

# Cafcass Cymru Advisory Committee meeting minutes: 7 March 2023

Minutes from the Advisory Committee meeting held on 7 March 2023.

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# Present

- Jackie Murphy, (Chair), TGP Cymru
- Helal Uddin, Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team Wales (EYST Wales)
- Aiden Jones, Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB)
- Andrew Willcox, Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB)
- Jennifer Gibbon-Lynch, Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB)
- Paul Apreada, FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru
- Sarah Coldrick, Association of Fostering and Adoption (AFA) Cymru
- Caroline Rawson, Special Needs Advisory Project (SNAP) Cymru
- Tracey Holdsworth, NSPCC Cymru
- Gareth Jenkins, ADSS Representative
- Neil Pring, HMCTS
- HHJ Jayne Scannell, Judiciary
- Emma Phipps-Magill, Voices from Care
- Nigel Brown, Cafcass Cymru
- Matthew Pinnell, Cafcass Cymru
- De Litchfield, Cafcass Cymru
- Lucy Roberts, Cafcass Cymru (Secretariat)

# Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. As some members were attending for the first time the Chair asked all members to introduce themselves and their roles.

Apologies were received from:

- Sean O'Neill, Children in Wales
- Sharon Lovell, National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

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# Minutes of meeting held on 08 November 2022 – 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.

## Data / Performance

Nigel provided an overview of the referrals and performance data consisting of two separate reports. The first report contained the usual set of data that is shared with members and the second report provided data on the Pathfinder Pilot in North Wales.

A detailed discussion followed and Nigel and Matthew responded to questions raised by Committee members.

## TIG Media Reporting Pilot

Matthew provided an overview of the Transparency Implementation Group Reporting Pilot that was launched on the 30th January in three courts – Cardiff, Leeds and Carlisle, for a period of 12 months. The aim of the Pilot is to achieve “the transparency principle” – meaning approved journalists and legal bloggers will be allowed (within certain parameters) to report on what they see and hear in court. The Guidance makes it clear that all reporting will be subject to ensuring the anonymity of the child/ren involved in the proceedings.

The Pilot will initially apply to certain types of public law cases before being

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extended to private law cases at a date yet to be confirmed. The pilot will be reviewed after 12 months.

Matthew advised that several cases have been reported by the media. Cafcass Cymru will continue to keep the committee up to date as the pilot progresses.

## **FJYPB Presentation**

Aiden and Andrew delivered an excellent presentation on the reflections on the TIG Media Reporting Pilot from children involved in family court proceedings which the committee found incredibly insightful.

The Chair and members of the Advisory Committee thanked Aiden and Andrew for their excellent presentation which had been very impactful.

## **Re-launch of the PLO (Public Law**

Nigel provided an update following on from the official re-launch of the PLO on the 16th January, where the President of the Family Division highlighted the need for all involved in public law children cases to reconnect with the core principles of the Public Law Outline.

Cafcass Cymru have highlighted six key areas of focus and since the re launch have been working with staff to ensure they understand the expectations on them. This has been done through a series of workshops with all staff involved in public law, providing the opportunity to understand the Presidents message and expectations. Plans are currently underway to work with the liaison Judge for Wales and 3 DFJ's to facilitate a joint workshop to discuss Wales's approach. Cafcass Cymru will continue to keep the committee up to date with progress.

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# Working Together for Children (Private Law) Update and Pilot Project

Matthew provided an update on the Working Together for Children (WT4C) Pilot Project.

The WT4C programme is designed to help family members following court application understand what their children need most when making arrangements about spending time with separated parents and other important family members.

The MOJ have agreed to fund an 18 month pilot project that will see two significant changes made to the programme, the first being that the fee of £180 will be removed and the programme will be made free to all during the pilot project.

Secondly, participation in the programme previously would need to be agreed within a court order following the initial hearing. However, Cafcass Cymru practitioners can now refer parents / carers to the programme once the court application has been received and following the completion of safeguarding checks. This means the programme can be made available in cases where there are no safeguarding concerns, at a much earlier stage in proceedings to the benefit of many children and young people. Matthew will keep the Advisory Committee up to date with the pilot's progress.

## Recruitment of Social Work Practitioners

Nigel updated the Advisory Committee on the current challenges around recruiting suitably skilled and experienced social workers. This is due to the shortage of social workers in Wales that is having effects on both Cafcass

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Cymru and within local authorities.

Cafcass Cymru will be piloting a new initiative to recruit “Trainee Social Workers”, sponsoring them to complete an Open University Social Work degree course commencing in October 2023.

## Any other business

In response to points raised by Paul Apreda, it was confirmed:

1. Advisory Committee meetings will continue to be held on MS Teams as this approach has increased attendance at meetings. The next meetings have been arranged for; 05 June: 16:00 – 17:30 and 07 November: 16:00 – 17:30
2. Cafcass Cymru does not permit practitioners making audio recordings of interviews with parents.
3. Cafcass Cymru continues to work with MOJ and HMCTS to develop outcome focused KPI's

Finally, the Chair took the opportunity to notify advisory committee members that she will be retiring and will be stepping down from her role as Chair following the meeting on the 5th June. Nigel thanked the Chair for her hard work and support and wished her all the best, this sentiment was echoed by all members of the committee.

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

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