



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Cafcass
Cymru**

Strategic Plan

2020-2025



Our Purpose

“We represent the wishes, feelings and best interests of children and young people involved in family court proceedings in Wales, providing independent social work advice that protects and promotes their welfare.”

Our strategy

This Strategic Plan has been developed with and for our staff. It will provide direction and focus to what we do and how we do it and ensure our involvement in the lives of children and families continues to make a positive difference.

In developing our strategy for the next 5 years we have worked closely with staff, stakeholders and the Family Justice Young Peoples Board. In so doing, we are passionate in wanting this strategic plan to have genuine meaning for all those connected with Cafcass Cymru, a plan that all of us can live and breathe by as we strive to deliver the best possible services for the children and families involved with the family justice system in Wales.

In developing our strategy we have been strongly influenced by the central tenets of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015¹ in terms of thinking about the long-term, working better with people, communities and each other, trying to prevent problems and taking a more joined-up approach. More detail on this can be found in Annex 1 at the end of this document.

We are committed to investing in this strategy and bringing it to life. As an organisation aspire to be delivering services to children and families that are widely recognised as consistently high quality, effective, accessible, sensitive to their needs and provide measurably improved outcomes.

We will continue to contribute to the development of the family justice and social care systems in Wales and seeking to be innovative and reflective as we continually improve.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents

UNCRC

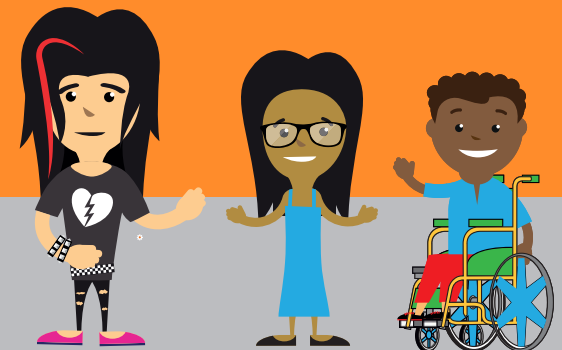
The Welsh Government has adopted Welsh Government's formal adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Cafcass Cymru is committed to promoting children's rights within the family justice system. The UNCRC is the basis of our work with children and young people as we ensure the child take centre stage in all we do at an organisational and case level. In line with this commitment, this strategic plan ensures children and their rights are at the heart of what we do. You can find out more about this in Annex 2.

Welsh Language

In 2010, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 was introduced to update the legal framework on the use of the Welsh language in delivering public services within Wales. The standards introduced by the Measure place duties on Cafcass Cymru in respect of the Welsh language and cover Service delivery, Policy making, Operational, Promotion and Record-keeping. We are committed to providing a service and ensuring our staff have the skills and support to work with the children, families and stakeholders.

Social Partnerships

Cafcass Cymru recognises the importance of working with Trade Unions in a Social Partnership to develop and support its work force to deliver the best service possible for children, families and the family court. We will continue to take forward a progressive relationship with Trade Unions, regularly meeting with them and seeking their important input into the development of our services and staff well-being.



Who we are and what we do

We play a vital role in supporting children and families in family court proceedings. We are a demand led service and all cases are referred to us by a court. We advise the courts on the best course of action on what we consider to be in the best interests of individual children.

At all times, the child's future welfare is at the heart of every recommendation made and every action taken by Cafcass Cymru. Our purpose is to safeguard the child and ensure their voice is heard within the family justice system.

Our values

It is important to us our staff, service users, partners and stakeholders have confidence in the way we work.

In developing this 5 year plan we engaged and consulted with our staff to agree the core values for the organisation core values for the organisation i.e. that guide and reflect how we behave towards those we work with and each other. These values underpin the services we deliver and we expect all our staff to embrace and promote them in everything we do.

Child-centred

We have children and young people at the heart of all our work.

Inclusive

We respect difference, challenge discrimination, promote inclusivity and embrace diversity.

Integrity & Respect

We work in a fair, honest and transparent way with everyone we work with, valuing and respecting their individuality.



Our goals for the next 5 years

As a learning organisation we are strongly committed to continuing to invest in our staff to maintain consistent levels of quality, develop our services and innovate and continuously improve in response to future challenges.

We also actively seek to work collaboratively with our partners as part of our own development and improvement but also to influence and improve the family justice system in Wales.

Our strategy includes 3 over-arching goals that describe how we will focus our efforts towards achieving our purpose. These goals are focused on **Our Service**, **Our Staff** and **Our Stakeholders**.

Our Service

We want to provide the best quality service to support improved outcomes for every child, young person and family we work with.

Our Staff

We want an environment and learning culture where staff feel valued and their well-being is supported.

Our Stakeholders

We want to share our knowledge, learn from partners and use our collective influence to improve the family justice system and children's social care in Wales.

How do we plan to achieve our goals?

Whilst the plan is ambitious, we have created detailed actions that will provide focus and direction to ensure the achievement of our goals over the next five years.

Progress against this plan will be reviewed and published in our annual reviews. These reviews will be an opportunity to reflect on our progress over the preceding year against stated actions. On an annual basis we will review the strategic plan and its detailed actions so we can remain confident the strategy remains focussed on the challenges we face. Any adjustments can then be made to ensure we continue to do the right things in providing a voice for children involved in family courts.

Our service

We want to provide the best quality service to support improved outcomes for every child, young person and family we work with.



What we want to achieve	What we will do over the next 5 years to deliver against this:
Provide high quality, evidence based analysis and recommendations tailored to the needs and circumstances of each child and young person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to improve the consistency and quality of our work.• Embed a culture of using, and referencing, evidence based research to inform our work.• Review, develop and raise awareness of our practice tools.
Consistently listen to and promote the voice of the child in everything we do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the individual voice and needs of children and young people are evidenced throughout our work.• Through the use of direct work, engage with each child individually to understand their unique needs and circumstances.• Continue to work with members of Family Justice Young People's Board, to improve and develop our services.• Explore different ways to communicate with children and young people.
Understand and demonstrate the difference our service makes to children, young people and families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an outcome based management information framework.• Commission thematic audit reports, to identify learning and the added value of our work.• Further develop the way we capture, learn from and act upon feedback.
Continuously improve our service by exploring new ways of working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a digital strategy to drive the modernisation of our systems, practices, communications and connectivity to ensure we can work in the best ways possible.• Create a unified organisational improvement plan that coordinates future service developments.• Ensure we align our resources to allow us to adapt and respond to changes in legislation, policy and demand.• Continue to invest in the training of our staff to ensure that best use of the technology available to them to improve our service.

Our staff

We want an environment and learning culture where staff feel valued and their well-being is supported.



What we want to achieve	What we will do over the next 5 years to deliver against this:
Promote the health and well-being of all staff, to achieve a work-life balance whilst sustaining the delivery of an efficient and effective service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen our staff well-being opportunities and raise awareness of the resources available. • Use technology to embrace modern and flexible ways of working. • Learn from our partners and colleagues about how best to promote our health and well-being.
Invest in continuous learning, helping to inspire and motivate staff to develop in their roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden our learning and development opportunities to meet the needs of all staff. • Create opportunities to harness and share the wide range of skills, knowledge and experience across Cafcass Cymru and wider Welsh Government. • Strengthen the Quality Assurance, Learning and Improvement (QALI) framework to support organisational learning and development.
Recruit, retain and invest in a highly skilled, motivated and diverse workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to review and develop our workforce strategy to ensure we attract and retain the best people. • Explore how we attract a workforce that more accurately reflects the diversity of the citizens of Wales. • Raise staff awareness and encourage involvement with Welsh Government Diversity Networks.

Our stakeholders

We want to share our knowledge, learn from partners and use our collective influence to improve the family justice system and children's social care in Wales.



What we want to achieve	What we will do over the next 5 years to deliver against this:
Enhance and strengthen our relationships with stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to strengthen our relationships with our key stakeholders including local authorities, the judiciary, Her Majesty's Court Tribunal Service and our Advisory Committee.• Strengthen our role and contribution to the Family Justice Board & Family Justice Council, Family Justice Network and local Family Justice Boards.• Continue to advocate for Wales within the Family Justice System.• Build upon and extend our relationships and influence within Welsh Government departments.
Continue to improve our systems for capturing, reporting and analysing information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve staff understanding and skills in recording consistent and accurate information.• Create a data strategy that sets out the organisation's expectations of how we collect, manage, use and share data.• Develop an outcome based management information framework.• Continue to develop our case management system (IRIS), to inform and improve the quality of our service.
Play a leading role by appropriately sharing our information and intelligence with stakeholders to support improvements in the family justice system and social care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to ensure we comply with data protection legislation and internal governance regulations regarding appropriate data sharing.• Continue to work with the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory and Cafcass to strengthen research on family justice issues and outcomes through improved access to our data, analysis and practice insights.• Identify opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders to commission and inform research.• Influence and encourage stakeholders to contribute to data sharing initiatives.

Annex I

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and it requires us to think more about the long-term, to work better with people and communities and each other, to look to prevent problems and to take a more joined-up approach.

The Cafcass Cymru Strategic Plan 2020-25 sets out how we will meet our obligations under the Act in terms of thinking about the long-term, collaborating and working better with others, including service users, to prevent problems and taking a more joined up approach in our work.

This will help us to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language
- A globally responsible Wales.

The following table sets out how we will use the 5 ways of working, outlined in the Act, to work with staff, service users, stakeholders and partners and contribute to the Well-being Goals.

Long term	Balancing short term needs within the life of a case, with longer term outcomes and their impact on the children and their families.
Prevention	Acting to prevent problems within our work with children and families by continuously improving our services and staff to meet the changing needs of our service users.
Integration	Promoting integration across services by understanding what different stakeholder organisations are doing to address the needs of our service users, inviting them to contribute to our knowledge base, and feeding back from our own involvement.
Collaboration	Acting in collaboration with service users and other professionals across organisations to bring ideas and knowledge to help us develop our service.
Involvement	Involving service users in our service development by providing us with information about what it is we need to know more about to maintain effective services.

Annex 2

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement setting out the rights of children. The rationale for the UNCRC is that children's rights need specific consideration due to the special care and protection often needed by children and young people.

The UNCRC is a list of rights that all children and young people, everywhere in the world have. Children and young people aged 18 and under, have the right to be safe, to play, to have an education, to be healthy and be happy.

The Welsh Government has led the way in promoting children's rights and in 2004 formally adopted the UNCRC as the basis of its work with children and young people. In line with this commitment, this strategy recognises the UNCRC is at the heart of all that we do.

The work of Cafcass Cymru considers many aspects of the UNCRC, in particular:

- Article 3 –** All organisations concerned with children should work toward what is best for each child.
- Article 9 –** Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents.
- Article 12 –** Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.
- Article 18 –** Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child.
- Article 19 –** Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
- Article 21 –** When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them.

