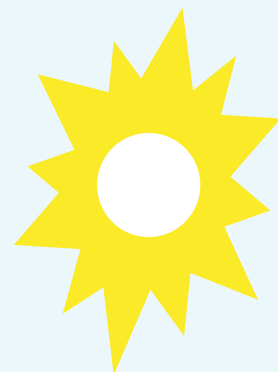


Cafcass Cymru Annual Report 2020–2021



For children and young people



Message from Nigel Brown, Chief Executive for Cafcass Cymru



This year has been really difficult for Cafcass Cymru as COVID-19 made us have to change the way we worked very quickly. We've worked with over 11,000 children this year and I'm really proud of everyone for working hard to make the changes we needed so that we could continue to do our work. To keep everyone safe, we joined court proceedings remotely using our laptops and phones. We also began using video calls (like Skype and Facetime) to speak to children and young people. Before COVID-19, we always did these things face-to-face, so this was a big change for us. We also worked hard to keep our staff safe and look after their health and wellbeing.

We have worked with lots of other people and organisations this year too, so that we could make sure all the changes we had to make worked well. We really appreciate all the help and support members of the Family Justice Young People's Board gave us over the past year to change how we work.

Next year, we will look at all the changes we made this year and decide if we want to keep any of them. We will do this by listening to our staff and the Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB). Our goal is to make sure we are helping children and their families in the best ways possible.

Our Service (What we do for children, families and the courts)

We had to make some big changes to our service during 2020–2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of the things that we changed were:

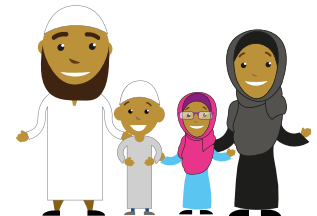
We updated our “statement of expectations” – this tells people what we are supposed to do, when and how.



We put our letters and information leaflets on our website.

We wrote a new complaints guide.

We used remote interpretation services, to make it easier for families whose first language is not English or Welsh to speak with us.



Some other work included:

In June, the Ministry of Justice published a report telling us how we can better help children and families in Private Law cases in Wales. We have been working with other organisations to figure out the best way to make these changes.

We also told everybody about our new strategic plan, which has all our goals for what we want to do over the next five years.

FJYPB

We still have a strong relationship with the Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB) and they have continued to play an important role this year.

We have sent out blogs written by members of the FJYPB for our all our staff to read.

We shared 'Top Tips' on subjects like communicating with children and equality and inclusion.

Some staff went to Voice of the Child webinars which the FJYPB held.

We asked for feedback on how we will capture diversity and inclusion information on cases in the future.

The FJYPB told us how we could improve our website.



Our Staff (people who work for Cafcass Cymru)

Over the last year, there have been lots of problems around working directly with people because of COVID-19. This has been a really big change for us and we have had to make sure all our staff are ok and have been kept safe.

What have we done to make sure this has happened?



We ran wellbeing sessions for everyone, helping staff know how to stay healthy while working from home. This is about them feeling ok as well as making sure they are getting enough exercise and not staying in front of their computer all the time!

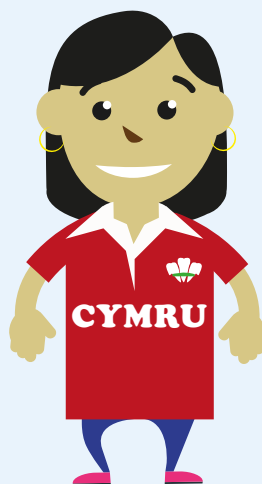
Working from home was a big change for lots of staff, so we looked at what we could do to make it easier for them by giving them new stuff like bigger computer screens and desk chairs.





We wrote newsletters to make sure everyone knew what the plans were and had information on what was changing and when.

There was more work in the family courts this year than before, so we made sure that we got more people to work for us when we needed them.



We found out from other organisations how they were doing things. Cafcass in England had some good ideas, so we liked that they shared these with us.

Our Stakeholders (people or organisations who we get support and feedback from)

Stakeholders are people from different organisations who work together to get the best results.

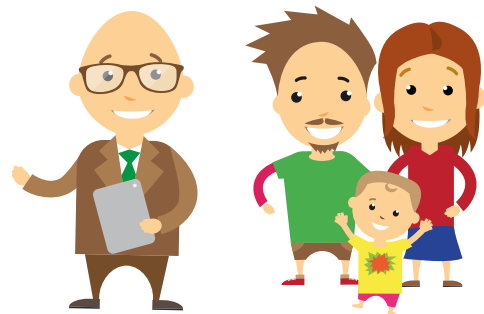
Who are our stakeholders? (This is just a few to give you an idea)

The Family Courts – that's people like the Judges, the Magistrates, the Legal Advisors, the people who work in the courts and make sure all the right paperwork goes to all the right people.



Social Services – these are all the social workers, managers and reviewing officers that tell us the things we need to know when they are supporting a child and their family along with us.

The Children's Commissioners Office – The people who work here safeguard and promote children's rights to make sure that they have a voice and ensure that children are given the opportunity to have their say in matters that impact them.



Other Welsh Government Departments – We are part of the Welsh Government, and we work together with other teams who also support children, young people and families.



Advisory Committee – this is a group of people made up of members of different stakeholders, we let them know what we are doing and how well we are doing and they tell us if we need to do something better or differently.



Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB) – This is a group of over 50 children and young people aged 7 to 25 years old who live across Wales and England. All of them have either had direct experience of family courts or have an interest in children's rights and the family courts.

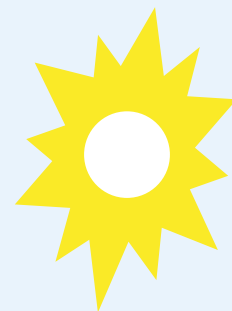




Researchers – We work with researchers and universities to understand how we can make our services better.

We are also members of lots of other groups and networks that help us to provide the best service we can.





A look to the future

Our Service

Over the next year, lots of work will be taking place to help us all recover from the effects of the pandemic. There will also be other changes in Family Law and we will be working with our stakeholders, including the FJYPB, on these.

Our Staff

Even though there were many challenges last year, we know that we can still learn from the changes we made. We will be working with our staff to see what we would like to keep doing and create a new way of working for the future.

Our Stakeholders

We will make sure we keep working closely with our stakeholders. We will look at the best ways to engage with our stakeholders, children and families, like using phone and video calls, so that we can work together to get the best results for children and young people.

