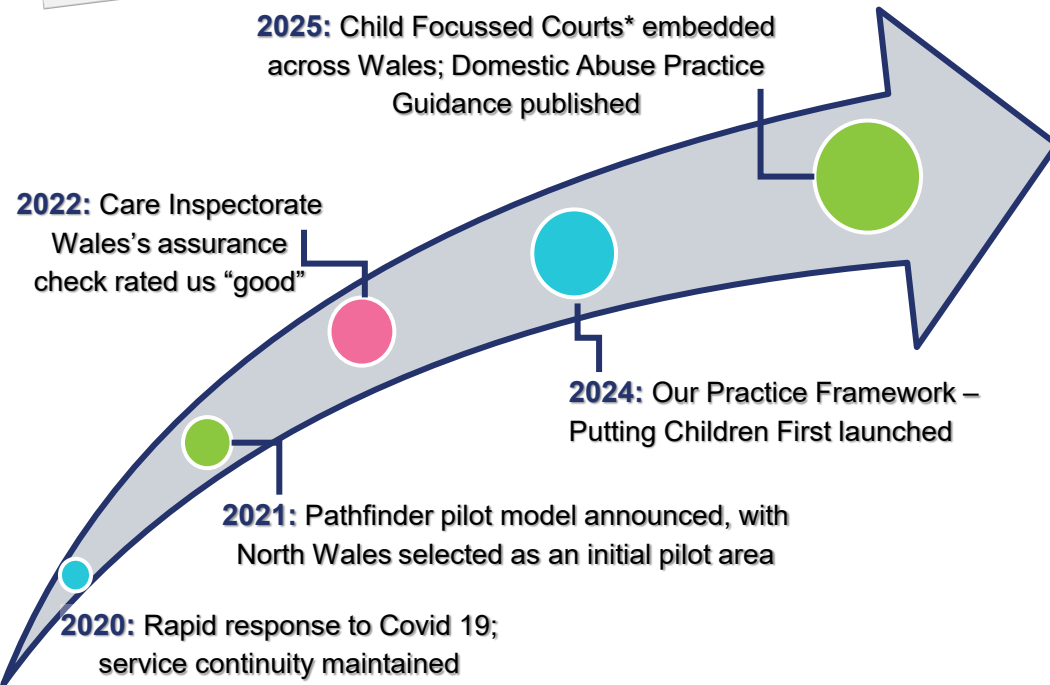


Cafcass Cymru Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025

Five Years of Change and Impact



Between 2020 and 2025, Cafcass Cymru navigated major change while continuing to support children, young people and families across Wales. Our strategic goals and values guided our work throughout, ensuring children and young people remained at the heart of everything we do. This overview highlights the impact of that work and what it has achieved for children and families in Wales.



* previously known as the Pathfinder Model

- 100%** of our operational areas operated the Child Focussed Courts* model by March 2025
- 91%** of cases show effective child engagement
- 94%** of cases demonstrate strong child-centred practice
- 80%** of staff report confidence in leadership across successive People Surveys
- 74%** score for staff engagement reported across successive People Survey during sustained change
- Gold Award** from Operational Delivery Profession (OPD) for collaboration, with HMCTS in implementing Child Focussed Courts* in Wales

Cafcass Cymru Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025



What We Delivered: Our Strategic Goals in Action

Our Service

Better, Safer, More Child Centred Practice

Over this period, our service changed significantly to better support children and families. We embedded Pathfinder across Wales, strengthened child-centred practice, and improved how children's voices and diversity are understood and reflected in our assessments and reports. Together, these changes have strengthened how we evidence impact and ensure children's experiences and outcomes remain central to service improvement.

Key outcomes

- Children's voices consistently heard and reflected in court decisions
- Earlier assessment and safer planning through Child Focussed Courts*
- Strong, consistent practice across Wales
- Improved understanding of children's lived experience and diversity

Quality assurance:

CIW found the voice of children and young people clearly evident across our work (2022).

Our Staff

Skilled, Supported and Ready for Change

We invested in our people to build a skilled, resilient and sustainable workforce. Targeted learning, leadership development and wellbeing support, including trauma-informed practice and expanded practice development, equipped staff to deliver high quality practice during a period of significant change. New pathways, including the Assistant Family Court Social Worker initiative, are helping attract talent, strengthen future capacity and support the sustainability of social work in Wales.

Key outcomes

- High staff engagement and confidence in leadership
- Strong focus on wellbeing during system reform
- Consistent, trauma-informed practice across Wales
- Clear development pathways for future roles and leadership

People survey highlights:

- 74% overall engagement
- 80%+ confidence in senior leadership
- 70% feel safe to challenge how things are done

Our Stakeholders

Stronger Partnerships, Greater Influence

We strengthened collaboration across the family justice network, increasing our influence and shared learning at local and national levels. Through active engagement in Pathfinder, domestic abuse policy development and wider reform, we contributed practice insight that helped shape system change. Stronger use of data and research partnerships has further improved how intelligence is shared and how system wide improvement is delivered for children and families in Wales.

Key outcomes

- Welsh perspectives represented in national reform
- Trusted leadership within Local Family Justice Boards
- Strong partnerships with HMCTS, judiciary and local authorities
- National recognition for collaborative delivery

Recognition:

Joint Gold Award with HMCTS for Pathfinder delivery in Wales (2025).

* previously known as the Pathfinder Model

Spotlight on Transformation: Child Focussed Courts* and Domestic Abuse

Child Focussed Courts*: A Different Way of Working

Child Focussed Courts represents the most significant change to how family court cases have been managed in Wales during this strategic plan period. By front loading enquiries and centring children's safety and voice from the outset, the model has fundamentally reshaped practice and improved the timeliness and quality of decision making for children and families.

Delivering this change required substantial support for staff. Recognising the shift in practice, we introduced a structured programme of preparation alongside each rollout phase, ensuring practitioners were confident, supported and equipped for new ways of working. As Child Focussed Courts transitions into business as usual, we continue to focus on wellbeing and on ensuring workload expectations are manageable and sustainable.



Average case durations reduced from 39 – 45 weeks to 16 – 17 weeks.

Domestic Abuse: A Cultural Shift

Alongside Child Focussed Courts, Cafcass Cymru strengthened its understanding and response to domestic abuse, embedding a trauma-informed, survivor-focused approach across practice. This has represented a significant cultural shift, strengthening how harm, risk and safety are understood within family court proceedings.

A major part of this shift was investment in workforce capability. Between October 2024 and March 2025, all practitioners completed Safe & Together Core Model training, strengthening our ability to recognise and assess the complex impact of domestic abuse on children and families.

What changed:

- Specialist domestic abuse expertise embedded within the organisation
- All practitioners trained in the Safe & Together Core Model
- Domestic Abuse Practice Guidance and document suite launched (May 2025)
- Strong partnerships developed with specialist organisations

This work has strengthened how we assess risk, understand harm and support safer outcomes for children.

A Strong Foundation for the Future

The achievements of 2020–2025 provide a strong foundation for Cafcass Cymru's next strategic period; ensuring children's safety, voice and wellbeing remain at the heart of everything we do.