



2020/21

Annual Report and Accounts

An executive non-departmental public body

HC 813



Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service

2020/21 Annual Report and Accounts

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Introduction and overview



Foreword from the Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB)

The work of the FJYPB focuses on improving the experiences of children and young people who are involved in family court proceedings and over the last 12 months we have been busier than ever before.

Since March 2020 and the introduction of the COVID-19 restrictions, we have adapted and continued our vital work across the family justice system via video conferencing, emails, and telephone calls. These have been exceptional times and something that has affected all our lives. We have had to get used to a new 'normal'.

Our priorities of work for 2020 centred on: raising the awareness of the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people; developing effective practice tools and resources; and raising the awareness of the impact of family law proceedings on the mental health of children and young people.

We are really proud to say that through collaborating with Cafcass, we have been able to share our unique perspective and ensure that changes in practice, policy and innovation have been focused on children and young people.

The FJYPB and Cafcass are proud of the work that we have achieved and in such challenging times. We have detailed our achievements with the Cafcass Family Forum, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and the Learning and Improvement Board. Furthermore, our Voice of the Child Conference this year was held for the first time in three live webinars and focused on how domestic abuse impacts on children and young people.

We are very aware of the impact COVID-19 has had on us as members and the way in which we work. Some of our newest members joined us in 2020 and have yet to meet in person. This has been a challenge and we have worked hard to offer opportunities for members to get to know each other, to collaborate on projects and to focus our work on improving the experiences of children and young people who are involved in family court proceedings.

“Working with Cafcass during the pandemic has been incredible. When we initially went into lockdown, I was worried that our voices would be lost but actually the exact opposite has happened. Given that events have been taking place online we have been able to work with stakeholders at this crucial time and support children’s services every step of the way, in a way that just wouldn’t have been possible before.”
Katie, FJYPB Member

2021 marks the FJYPB's 10-year anniversary and we are excited to offer the opportunity for members to come together to celebrate in person. We will be reaching out to all our stakeholders including Cafcass staff and FJYPB members old and new to help us celebrate. Looking ahead we want to be able to capture some of the new ways of working, combining virtual meetings with 'in-person' events to ensure we offer our members the options and the opportunity to offer their unique contributions.

We want to express our gratitude towards Cafcass for their unwavering support to the FJYPB. In the next 12 months, we will continue to focus on those children and young people involved in family court proceedings and identify opportunities across our stakeholder group where children and young people can have their voices heard, valued and respected.

Going forward we want to continue our work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and we want to challenge Cafcass on the language that is spoken or written about a child or young person to ensure that it is respectful, jargon free and clear. We want Cafcass staff to be more thoughtful about a child's file and our next challenge to Cafcass will be about the process for subject access requests. We are collaborating with Cafcass to make this process simpler, to offer more support to the individual receiving their file and to ensure that children and young people are aware they can access their files should they wish to later in life.



1.2

Introduction from our Chair and Chief Executive

“A sustained and improved focus on children at the centre of our practice and

“a passionate culture centred around doing the right thing for children.”
(Ofsted, summer 2021)

The most effective and respectful annual report that we can submit this year is one that is both a tribute and a commitment to children and young people whose lives have been forever affected by the extraordinary experiences of the 2020 global pandemic. Managing change is difficult for everyone in more usual times but, in the period that this report covers, children and young people have had to manage change that has disrupted their families, their schooling, their friendships, their futures, and their sense of security and certainty. For some, the change has been made worse by the loss of parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, teachers, relatives and friends to COVID-19. For those whose family lives are already difficult and who are vulnerable as a result, it has been ever more difficult, frightening and prolonged.



Sally Cheshire CBE
Board Chair



Jacky Tiotto
Chief Executive

“I didn't see my mum or my brother and sisters – I only saw everyone remotely. The normal fun things like dance school, Brownies and swimming that would help me forget all went.”

Child aged 8

“My parents are in the process of getting divorced but are still living together in separate rooms. Last night, they had a massive argument. Mum was abusive as she had been drinking. I had been getting support from school but it has stopped because of the coronavirus. I have missed school as it is my safe space.”

Child aged 12

As adults and professionals working with children and young people in family proceedings, our first and most important national task in the years ahead is to prioritise their needs, helping to repair their

self-confidence and reassure those who are frightened, facing an uncertain future and in need of protection and care. We need wider co-ordinated action and a national plan to help all children to process and recover from the life changing outcomes of the pandemic.

The skilled expertise and unwavering commitment of all professionals in the children's social care and family justice systems has delivered a great deal in an exhausting and unnerving year. We would like to thank and pay tribute to all Cafcass and Cafcass Cymru family court advisers, corporate and business services staff, local authority social workers, court staff, judges, magistrates, legal professionals, voluntary service providers and civil servants across justice and education who have united as a system to prioritise the needs of children and families. During the last 15 months we have together moved successfully to virtual work with families in difficulty, enabled family proceedings in the courts to take place remotely, undertaken assessments with families in more unusual places such as on doorsteps and in parks, completed a whole series of risk assessments before visits to family homes amidst constantly changing guidance and created materials to help us understand children's wishes and feelings when we haven't been able to meet them in person.

Our family court advisers have heard, thoughtfully analysed, and presented often distressing evidence about children's family situations whilst working in their own family homes, simultaneously schooling and caring for children, parents and friends. During such a pressured period, perhaps one more difficult than our workers and the families we serve have ever experienced, it has been remarkable and rewarding to continue to offer our services to the same very high standard and to enable the voices of children to continue

to be clearly heard. We applaud the efforts of our staff and all public servants for their willingness to undergo personal risks and to keep children and their safety and wellbeing at the heart of their daily endeavours.



“We do see enough of you and we know how to get hold of you. We can text or phone, you always ring us after hearings and come to see us to tell us what the judge says whenever there has been a hearing.”

Child aged 15



In the year 2020/21, despite the pandemic and a predictable record low of applications in the first quarter, Cafcass helped 143,129 children (63,211 new cases) – a total increase on the previous year of 1.3%. This statistic masks, however, one of the greatest impacts on these children, which is the inevitable disruption and delay to their proceedings throughout the pandemic and the stress they have had to endure as a result. Children tell us that the uncertainty, the continued exposure to parental conflict, the fear of harm and the impact of no predictable ending to their family situation, increase their vulnerability to mental ill health, bullying at school and impaired academic achievement. On average, in private law cases which do not conclude at the first hearing, children are waiting 10 weeks longer for their proceedings to conclude (the equivalent of a quarter of their learning year). In public law, the average duration for section 31 applications has increased from 36 to 43 weeks (which for infants is a significant and damaging proportion of their primary attachment years).

The family justice system was under sustained pressure before the pandemic and is now having to manage significant delays and increased volumes of work. It is proving difficult to identify solutions for recovery which do not require additional resource to recover us even to the case durations, volume and throughput of March 2020. Cafcass' recent appearance at the Justice Select Committee set out the key reasons why children currently face such lengthy delays in family proceedings and the unsustainable pressure Cafcass now has to manage in both public and private proceedings with 22% more open active work than 31 March 2020 (~10,500 children in 6,686 cases) and very little capacity across the country to absorb new cases. Despite the significant and highly commendable efforts of the entire family justice system, including the highest level of judicial sitting days and a priority on case disposals, we have not been able to slow demand for family proceedings. The operational difficulties in listing and hearing capacity, the finite supply of social workers, experts and judicial expertise and the persistent pandemic challenges in carrying out effective in-person family and child assessments mean that children may face delay and uncertainty for months or years to come.

Throughout this year we have done our utmost to protect the quality of our social work practice through careful monitoring of caseloads, effective supervision, audit, management oversight and the pragmatic use of our duty system, traditionally a short term and effective means of holding work to allocate. Ofsted published their new framework for the inspection of Cafcass this year and their focused visit in April 2021 relates largely to the period covered by this annual report. We are incredibly proud that despite the pressures of the pandemic, Ofsted found a sustained and improved focus on

children at the centre of our practice and **“a passionate culture centred around doing the right thing for children.”** They saw our social workers supporting families as they move through proceedings and **“accomplished FCAs patiently working with children at their own pace, helping them to understand what is happening so they can tell their story.”**

As we take forward our National Improvement Plan into 2021/22, we will uphold our constant focus on the protection and welfare of children, who feel able to express to us their unique and very personal wishes and feelings. The Family Justice Young People's Board, who have challenged us strongly and advised us eloquently and wisely, will play an even greater role in practice improvement. In the year ahead, our practice framework, Together with children and families will formally launch, introducing new values for all staff and focusing on stronger assessment and case planning, clearer rationales for our recommendations and the sharing of these with children who are able to provide feedback.

A new range of listening initiatives will strengthen family feedback including through our quality assurance programme, a 'listening post' for children to tell us their experience of proceedings and targeted surveys with families. We have responded thoughtfully and proactively to the challenges laid down in the Ministry of Justice Expert Panel's report on Harm in the Family Courts, setting up our externally chaired Learning and Improvement Board, whose development plan in respect of domestic abuse will be managed through a new performance and accountability framework. We will continue to be actively engaged in the reform of public and private law through the President's working groups and the national Family Justice Board.

¹ Cafcass inspection framework: April 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

We will, however, have to continue to cope with record workloads, significant backlogs and slower throughput in the courts including in remote and hybrid hearings. This situation directly impacts the wellbeing of our own staff and we will have to be thoughtful and innovative to protect them and to allow practitioners the time they need to develop relationships with families and to have enough contact with children so as to understand their experiences and hopes for the future.

We are in no doubt that the year ahead will be a tough one as we try to manage demand in a recovering system. The last year has, however, shown us that the family justice and children's social care systems are sustained by strong leadership, proactive partnerships and the unwavering commitment of practitioners who are driven every day to help, protect and support children and young people. On behalf of the Cafcass Board and senior team and all our staff, we commit wholeheartedly to playing our part in improving the lives of the children and adults we are privileged to meet during family proceedings.



Jacky Tiotto
Cafcass Chief Executive



Sally Cheshire CBE
Cafcass Chair

In this exceptional year we asked the President of the Family Division, Sir Andrew McFarlane, for his reflections on our contribution:



Sir Andrew McFarlane
President of the Family Division

“ I am very grateful for the opportunity to record my gratitude and admiration for all that Cafcass and its teams around the country have done, and are continuing to do, to serve the needs of children, families and the courts in these most difficult times. The family court has simply kept going from day one, but this impressive result was only achieved by sheer hard work and commitment from very many people.

The pandemic has necessarily required the judiciary and Cafcass to work more closely together, both locally and nationally. This has been a very positive experience and I am particularly grateful to Jacky Tiotto and her senior team for their leadership in this regard. I hope that this good and effective working relationship will continue long after the current strictures are removed.”

July 2021



1.3

Our statutory responsibilities

Cafcass stands for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service. We independently advise the family courts in England about what is safe for children and in their best interests.

We work with more than 143,000 children annually, whose future is decided by the family courts by providing a service that prioritises their safety, their voices and their needs, taking into full account their families and those who are connected to them.

We operate within the law set by Parliament (Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000) and under the rules and directions of the family courts. Our role is to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- give advice to the family courts.
- make provision for children to be represented.
- provide information, advice and support to children and their families.

We may be asked by the court to work with families in two main areas:

- **private law**, including arrangements for children after parents have divorced or separated. In these cases, a Cafcass social worker will be appointed by the court to act as a family court adviser (FCA). Their job is to provide information to the court about what is needed for a safe decision to be made about arrangements for who the child lives and spends time with and what is in their best future interests.

- **public law**, including care applications where a local authority has serious concerns about the safety or welfare of a child. In these cases, a Cafcass social worker will be appointed by the court to act as a children's guardian. Their job is to work alongside the local authority to make sure that the plan for that child is in their best interests and will secure a safe outcome for them.

We are a non-departmental public body accountable to the Lord Chancellor, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice. We work to strategic objectives agreed by our sponsor department and contribute to wider government objectives relating to children. We also set our own strategic plan that describes what we are aiming to achieve, and we report on our progress in section 6 of this report.

Our Chief Executive is supported by five directors. Our Corporate Management Team (CMT) is accountable for the leadership of the organisation and is in turn accountable to the Cafcass Board. CMT is assisted by a range of internal boards and groups. For more information about our organisational structure please see section 7 of this report.

Overview of our work with children

Characteristics of the children with whom we worked this year

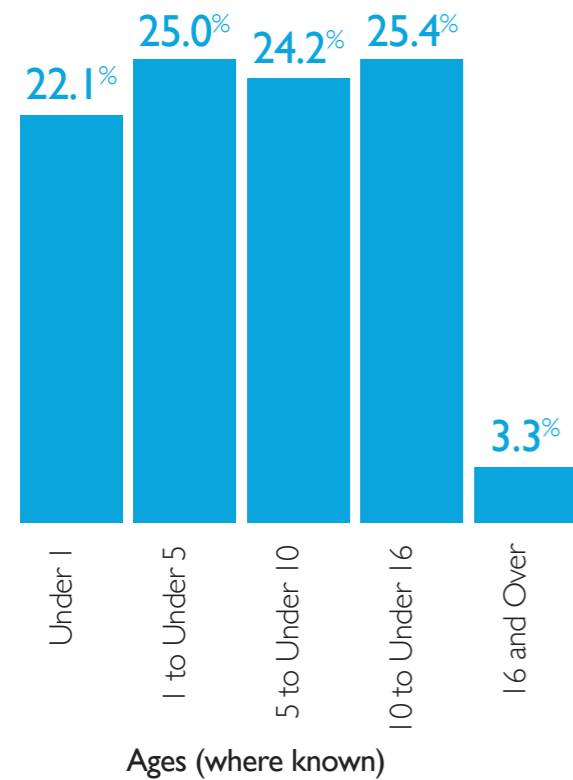
Age

The age profile of children and young people in public and private proceedings is different from each other (and from all children in England). In general, children involved in public law proceedings are younger, with nearly half being under the age of 5. More than 1 in 5 (22%) of children involved in public law proceedings are infants under 1 year of

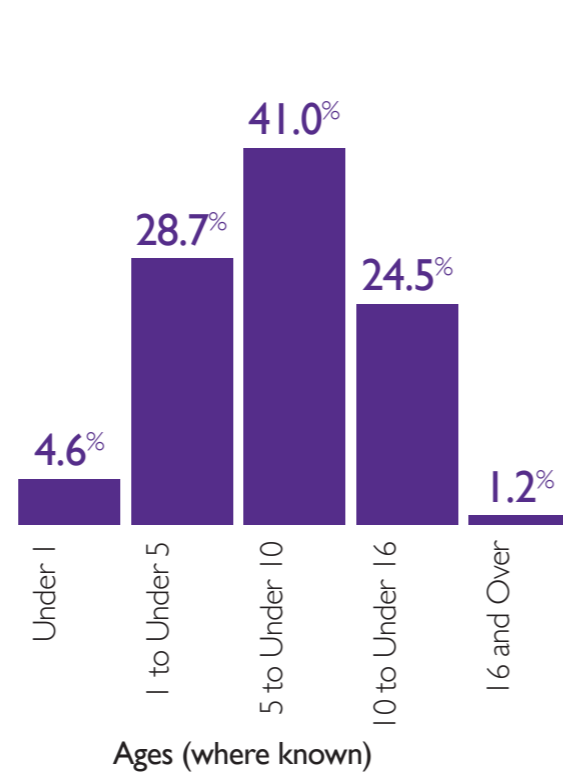
age. This is substantially higher than infants in private law proceedings (5%), and in the wider population.

Two fifths (41%) of children in private law proceedings are aged 5-10 years. This is higher than in public law proceedings and the wider population of children.

Public law



Private law

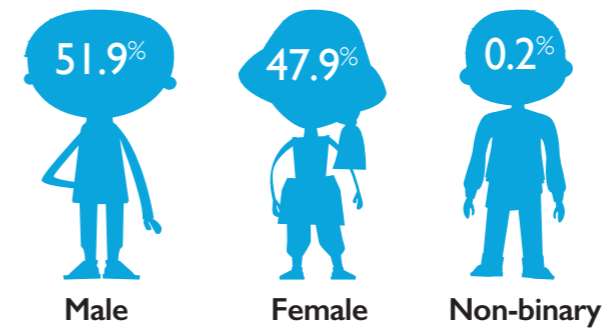


Gender

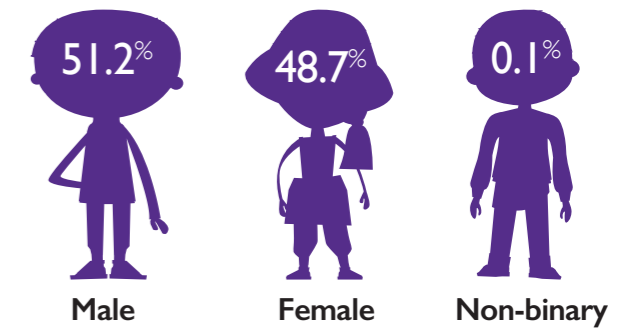
Children in both public and private law proceedings are slightly more likely to be boys than girls. This is in line with the national population of children, where the ratio of boys to girls is greater than 1:1 for ages up to 25.

In 2019 we amended how we record gender to enable children and young people to tell us if they preferred to identify as being gender neutral, non-binary, or transgender in addition to preferring not to say. A very small proportion of children in public law have selected this option (0.2% in 2020/21), while in private law this remains exceedingly rare.

Public law



Private law



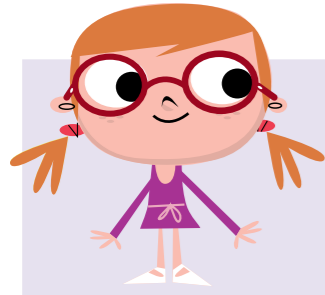
Heritage

Last year, we said that we were unable to report on the ethnicity of around one in five of the children with whom we work (18% in public law and 22.6% in private law). This was because the information was not recorded, unknown, or the child (or their carer) preferred not to tell us. We have worked hard to improve the way we ask children about their heritage and how this is recorded and analysed as part of their case plan. We have seen substantial improvement as a result of this work, with known ethnicity now recorded for 93.8% of children in public law proceedings; and 85.6% of children in private law proceedings by the end of March 2021 (equivalent data for 2019/20 was 82% and

77.4% respectively). We will take further steps to improve recording, including ensuring this is completed early in a family journey with our service so that we can plan our work effectively.

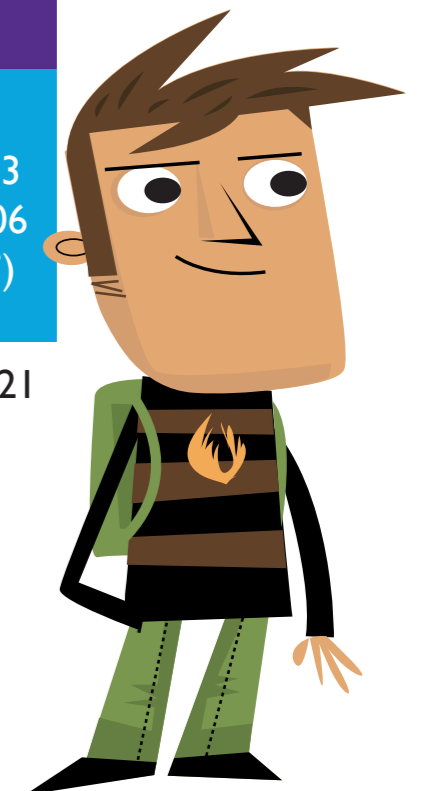
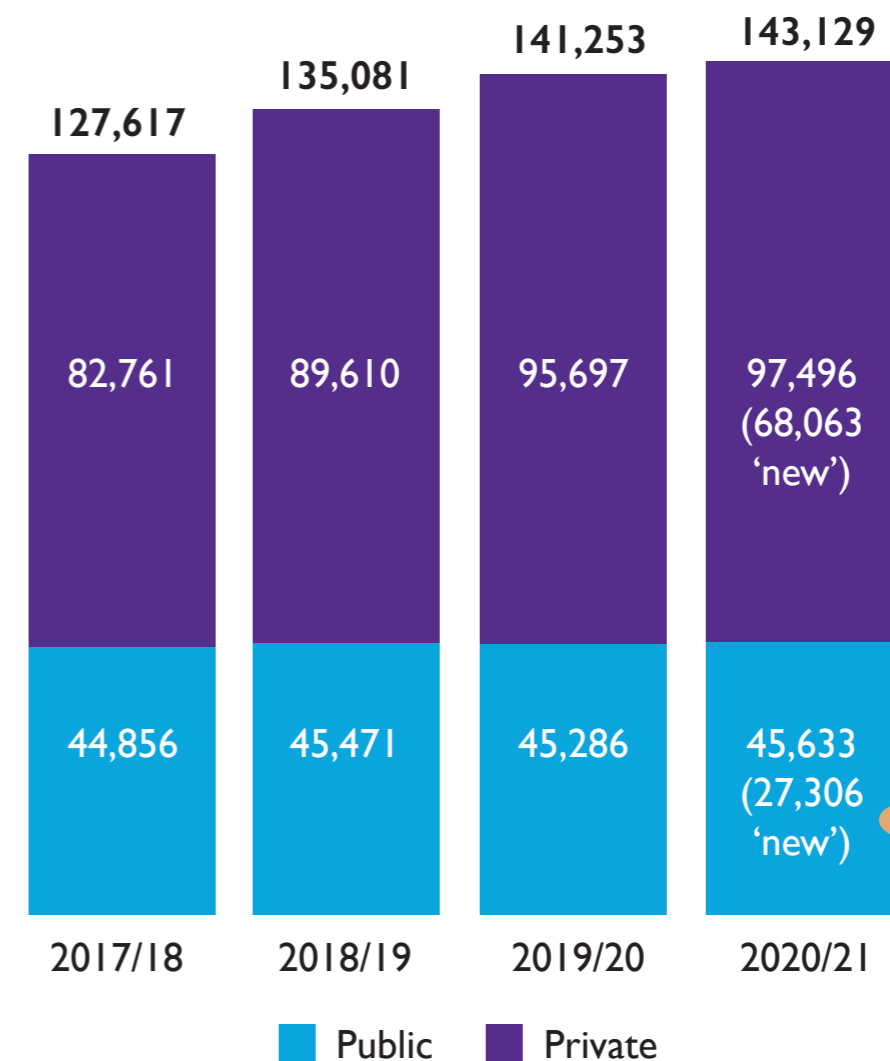
In this year's report we are providing a more detailed breakdown of the heritage of the children with whom we work, based on the main census categories. These are presented for all children we worked with and separately for children in public and private law proceedings in the charts below, with percentages based on children for whom ethnicity is known.





	Children in public law proceedings	Children in private law proceedings	All children worked with	National population comparison (Census data based on all children)
All children for whom ethnicity is known	42,800 (100%)	83,491 (100%)	126,291 (100%)	
Asian/Asian British	1,691 (4.0%)	6,321 (7.6%)	8,012 (6.3%)	9.1%
Black African, Caribbean or Black British	2,262 (5.3%)	3,668 (4.4%)	5,930 (4.7%)	4.6%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group	4,964 (11.6%)	9,453 (11.3%)	14,417 (11.4%)	4.3%
White - all (British + other)	33,461 (78.2%)	62,863 (75.3%)	96,324 (76.2%)	80.9%
White - British	31,245 (73.0%)	58,466 (70.0%)	89,711 (71.0%)	
White - other	2,216 (5.2%)	4,397 (5.3%)	6,613 (5.2%)	
Other ethnic group	250 (0.6%)	741 (0.9%)	991 (0.8%)	1.1%
Arab	172 (0.4%)	445 (0.5%)	617 (0.5%)	
Data on not declared/not known/not recorded as % of all children worked with				
Not declared	0.007%	0.1%	0.08%	
Not known (including no record)	6.2% (5.1% no record)	14.2% (6.4% no record)	11.7% (6.0% no record)	

We worked with a total of 143,129 children and young people in 2020/21, a small increase (1,876 children more, an increase of 1.3%) compared with the previous year. Of these 45,633 were involved in public law proceedings and 97,496 were involved in private law proceedings, the latter being the area of our work which continues to increase steeply each year.



Disability of children worked with by Cafcass in the financial year 2020/21

Key points

- We recorded whether or not the child has a long standing health condition or disability for 126,428 (88.3%) out of a total of 143,129 children worked with in 2020/21. This means there were 16,701 (11.7%) children for whom we did not record this information, and a further 9,509 children whose record stated that their disability status was unknown.
- Of the remaining 116,919 children, 11,557 (8.1%) had a longstanding health condition or disability. In most cases children had just one condition recorded (10,250 children, 7.2% of all children for whom disability is known); and a further 1,307 had more than one condition.
- In comparison with national data collated by Department for Education on children with an Educational Health Care Plan or Special Educational Need, recorded incidence of disability is much lower among the children Cafcass worked with (8.1% compared with 15.9% in the DfE data).
- This gap is particularly pronounced for conditions relating to 'social, emotional and mental health' or to 'speech, language and communications' and seems likely to be the result of under recording rather than a real difference in incidence.
- In the coming year we will take action to improve the completeness of our recording by reducing the proportion with no recorded disability status. We will align our recording categories based on the DfE's Special Educational Needs in England census, and pay special attention to ensuring we identify children who may have needs relating to their social, emotional and mental health, or to speech language and communications.



Supporting data

	Children in public law proceedings	Children in private law proceedings	All children worked with	National comparison**
All children for whom disability is known	37,653 (100%)*	79,266 (100%)*	116,919 (100%)*	8,911,887
Autistic spectrum disorder	1,098 (2.9%)	2,896 (3.7%)	3,994 (3.4%)	1.8%
Hearing impairment	142 (0.4%)	232 (0.3%)	374 (0.3%)	0.3%
Moderate learning difficulty	1,206 (3.2%)	1,258 (1.6%)	2,464 (2.1%)	2.6%
Physical disability	1,623 (4.3%)	2,733 (3.4%)	4,356 (3.7%)	0.4%
Social emotional and mental health	147 (0.4%)	227 (0.3%)	374 (0.3%)	2.7%
Speech, language and communication	545 (1.4%)	390 (0.5%)	935 (0.8%)	3.3%
Visual impairment	202 (0.5%)	286 (0.4%)	488 (0.4%)	0.1%
Other difficulty/disability	80 (0.2)	120 (0.2%)	200 (0.2%)	0.6%
None	34,649 (92.0%)	73,925 (93.3%)	108,574 (92.9%)	84.1%
Data on not known/not recorded as % of all children worked with				
Not known (including no record)	17.5% (11.9% no record)	18.7% (11.6% no record)	18.3% (11.7% no record)	

*As children can have more than one disability, numbers and % may sum to more than 116,919 (100%)

**DfE Special Educational Needs census, school year 2020/21. Data based on primary need for children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or Special Educational Need support. DfE record the following additional categories: Learning difficulties which are severe, specific or profound/multiple (2.5%), multisensory impairment (less than 0.1%) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities support for which there has been no specialist assessment (0.5%)



Our work with children in public law



Public law cases received in 2020/21

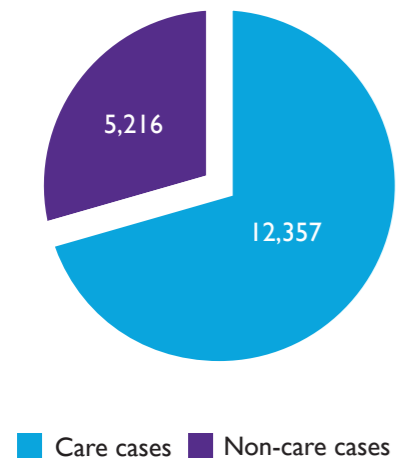


Public law care section 31 cases received in 2020/21

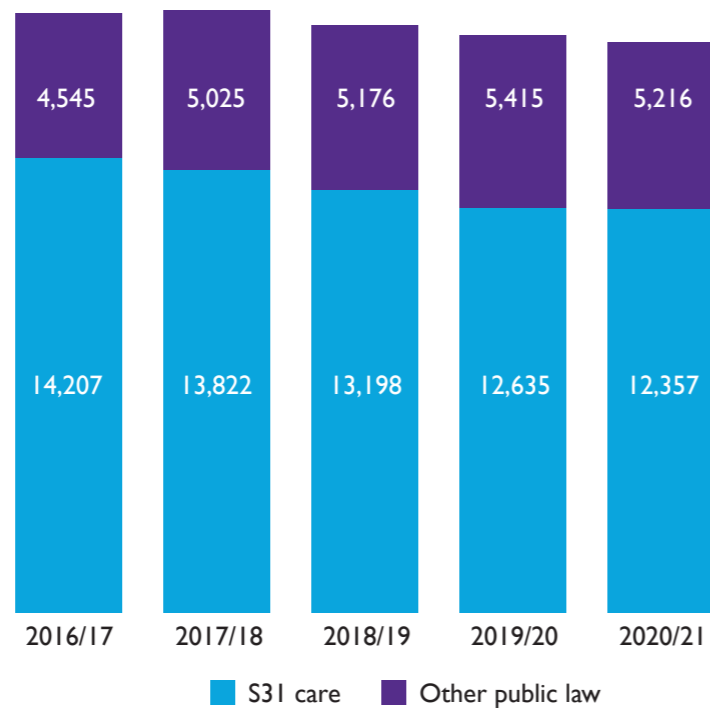
We worked on 17,575 new public law cases involving 28,186 children this year, of which 12,357 were section 31 care cases involving 20,675 children, where a child is placed in the care of a designated local authority with parental responsibility being shared by the parents and the local authority. An individual case can involve more than one application – either because different arrangements are

proposed for individual children within the family or because of the stage of involvement with a family. For example, an application for an emergency protection order may subsequently become a care application. Over time section 31 care cases have reduced both in number and as a proportion of all public law applications.

Care and *non-care cases 2020/21



Comparison of care and non-care cases 2016/17 - 2020/21

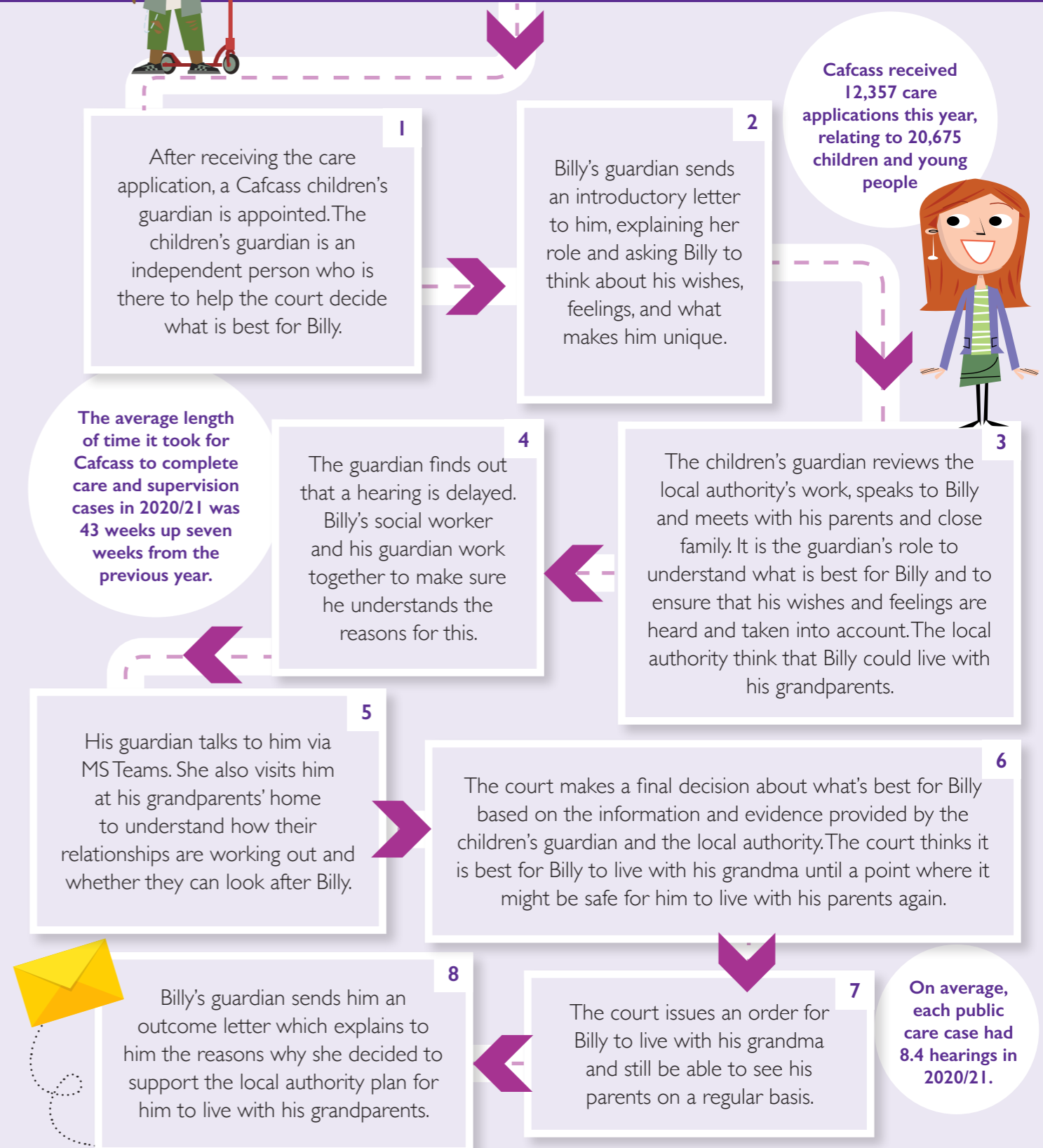


* Non-care cases = public law cases where section 31 (care) is not the lead application, for example Discharge of Care Orders and Deprivation of Liberty Orders.

A child and family journey through public law



²Billy is 10 and lives with his mum and dad. The local authority has judged that Billy cannot be kept safe with his parents and have made a care application for him to be looked after by the local authority.



² The child's journeys contain elements that feature in our public and private law cases but are illustrative only and not based on one particular child or case.

Our work with children in private law



Private law cases received demand in 2020/21



Private law child section 8 cases – child arrangements received in 2020/21

We received a total of 45,636 private law cases this year featuring 69,646 children. The majority of these cases (91.2%) related to either child arrangements or assignment of parental responsibility. Of these new cases, 40,705 (89.2%) had a **lead application** relating to child arrangements: these concern who the child lives with, and who they spend time with. A small proportion related to 'prohibited steps' such as preventing a parent from changing their child's school,

or other 'specific issues' such as passport applications. An even smaller minority (910 cases, 2.0%) related to the assignment of parental responsibility, mostly applications for 'family and friends' care through a special guardianship order. Other applications assigning parental responsibility related to parental orders which transfer parental responsibility following surrogacy, and other applications for parental responsibility involving step-parents.

Please note the table below only relates to those private law cases received with a lead application type relevant to child arrangements or assignment of parental responsibility.

Private law child section 8 cases – child arrangements	Number	%
Child arrangement order – live with	21,218	52.1
Child arrangement order – spend time with	14,732	36.2
Specific issue	3,845	9.5
Prohibited steps	910	2.2
Child arrangement totals	40,705	
Assignment of parental responsibility	Number	%
Special guardianship (s14A)	412	45.3
Parental order (s54 HF&E)	343	37.7
Parental responsibility (s4)	155	17.0
Parental responsibility totals	910	



A child and family journey through private law

Ben is 12 years old and lives with his mum. His dad has applied for a Child Arrangements Order because he has not seen Ben since their separation three months ago. He has asked the court to make an order for Ben to spend alternate weekends with him because Ben has said to him that this is what he wants.

32.3% of the private law applications we received in 2020/21 related to the time a child spends with a parent (child arrangements orders).



Family Justice Young People's Board work programme

The FJYPB continued to undertake work with Cafcass despite the COVID-19 pandemic, with most of the commissions undertaken virtually. Cafcass has embedded members of the FJYPB and the voice of the child into all aspects of work across governance, policy, training, and the recruitment of Cafcass staff and Board members.

The FJYPB completed a total of **141** commissions during the 2020/21 year and **58** of those were commissioned by Cafcass, including:

- Members of the FJYPB joining the 'Keeping it real' sessions which focused on the three pillars of the **Cafcass strategic plan**. We focused on ensuring the priorities were in the best interests of children and young people and aimed at achieving best outcomes. We contributed to several strategic priorities which included:
 - Resource packs for children and families
 - Introduction and closure letters for young people and feedback to inform social work practice
 - Receiving feedback from children and families
- Several of our FJYPB members undertook training and have formed part of the Family Forum team and met with children and young people who have provided

feedback to Cafcass. Our role is to offer an opportunity for a restorative discussion with children about their experiences of proceedings and their work with the family court adviser.

- Members of the FJYPB have contributed to the work of Cafcass' Research Advisory Committee. One of the members commented: *"Sitting on the Cafcass Research Advisory Committee is an excellent branch of our work. We are able to represent the voice of the child in circumstances that are not directly related to proceedings but are of equal importance. When I personally attend meetings, I place emphasis on consideration of the longer-term benefits of the research and help the committee to weight up the strengths and limitations of each proposal. I feel that my contributions are understood and valued."*
- We were invited to contribute to the **Cafcass Diversity and Inclusion strategy** and to consider how it can be inclusive of the voice and needs of children and young people. We continued to raise the voice of the child during key events such as Black History Month and LGBT+ History Month, where members of the FJYPB wrote personal blogs that were shared across Cafcass.

- As the FJYPB we have continued to raise the impact of **domestic abuse** on children and young people as one of our key priorities during 2020 and 2021. In response to the MoJ Harm Panel report we were invited to be part of the Cafcass Learning and Improvement Board as experts by lived experience. Additionally, two FJYPB members took part in the learning review of cases involving domestic abuse. Two of our members took part in auditing a selection of case files including court orders and section 7 welfare reports. A member commented: *"Our role was to assess how effectively FCAs drafted their recommendations and translated the wishes and feelings of children and young people. We felt really privileged to have been given such an opportunity and hope that our contributions assisted"*.

- Between 26-30 October 2020 we held our annual **Voice of the Child conference**. This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the conference was adapted into three webinars exploring the theme of domestic abuse. Approximately 100 people attended each webinar, with representatives from across the family justice sector. The webinars were hosted via Zoom and led by FJYPB members and we looked at:

- COVID-19 and domestic abuse: the impact on children and young people**
- Domestic abuse: the effects and impact on children and young people**
- Domestic abuse: the family court's responsibility for children and young people.**

"These young people are amazing! Getting us thinking and committing to do more and then to be asked to come back and say what we have done!!! Well done to all for arranging such a great conference."

Voice of the Child conference attendee



Section 2

Our performance in the context of COVID-19



2.1

Demand for Cafcass services and the impact on caseloads

In the year 2020/21, despite the pandemic and a predictable record low of applications in the first quarter, Cafcass helped 143,129 children (63,211 new cases) – an increase in the number of children with whom we worked compared to the previous year of 1.3%. Although demand was depressed during periods where lockdown restrictions were in place – we saw a reduction of 10.6% in the first quarter (compared to the same period in 2019/20), and smaller drops late autumn and the first two months of 2021 - in other periods we saw the highest ever levels of new applications. The second quarter of 2020/21 saw the highest new case demand for a financial quarter in Cafcass' history as initial lockdown restrictions were eased.

Demand – as measured by new applications - is only one indicator of pressure on our service, however, and a key impact of COVID-19 has been to exacerbate trends that we saw prior to the pandemic: high demand for private law proceedings; longer case durations; fewer final hearings and disposals of cases and many more adjournments. The overall impact has been a persistent lower throughput of work through the family courts (cases ending more slowly than new cases come in), and an increase in caseloads for Cafcass practitioners given that the volume of open active work has been at record levels in this past year. This slowdown is visible through the significantly lower level of Cafcass case closures during the period, therefore contributing to the significant growth in open children's cases:

- Cafcass received 63,211 new cases in 2020/21, a decrease of 0.4% (230 cases) compared to 2019/20. Despite the number of cases decreasing slightly, we have actually supported more children overall
- Cafcass closed 54,624 cases in 2020/21, a significant decrease of 13.2% (8,334 cases) compared to 2019/20.

By the end of March 2021, there were 36,822 open active children's cases with known future work for Cafcass. This represented a 22.2% increase in comparison with the previous year and ~10,500 more children.

In addition, the pressure of longer durations resulted in a higher number of recommendations for new welfare assessments and updates to assessments already completed (section 7 reports and addendums) in the latter part of the year.

For our staff, the main impact has been relentless and fast increases to the number of families with whom they are working, which before the pandemic had already been above the benchmark of 20 cases for practitioners undertaking direct work with children and 40 cases for work to first hearing colleagues. We could already see by late summer 2020 that there would come a moment whereby we would no longer be able to safely allocate work to our family court advisers (FCAs) within either the prescribed timescales, or to enable them to sustain the effectiveness of their work without personal compromise and unreasonable pressure. The number of families with whom FCAs were working directly reached a historic high of 24.1 on

average by October 2020, having shown month-on-month increases in year.

We took national action in early 2021 to formally slow the allocation of new work to family court advisers, by holding firm on a caseload cap of 25. This saw the increased use of first- and second-line managers holding casework and a threefold expansion of work held in our duty system.

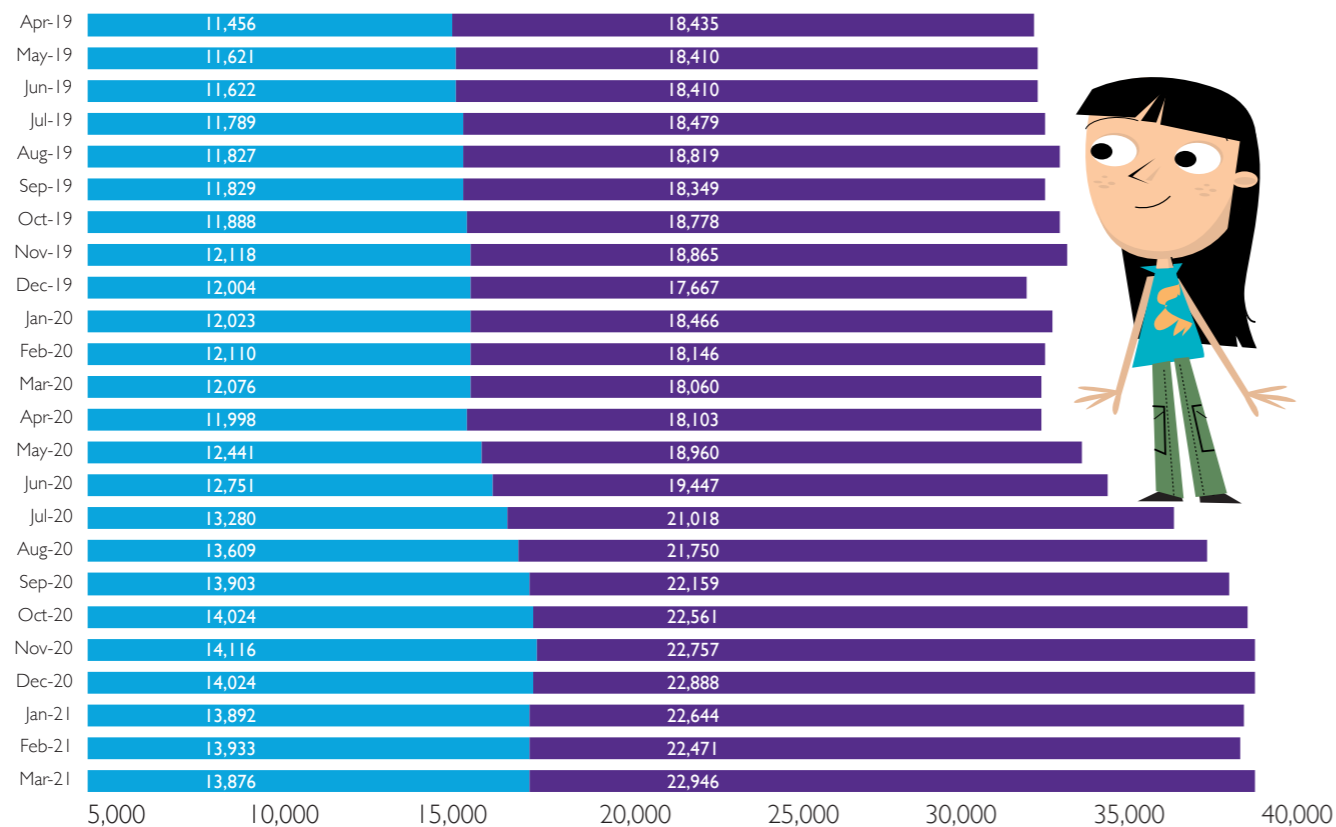
A substantial increase in the number of children 'held' on duty by managers to protect practitioner workloads brought a reduction in management capacity to oversee work and to support their staff. By the end of March 2021, there were 1,466 private law cases held in duty allocation, compared with only 432 the previous year. These duty allocated cases represented 4.0% of open private law cases, up from 2.0% the previous year.

While our duty allocation system helped

to protect the volume of work allocated to practitioners, it became 'saturated' as a holding system by the end of the year. The number of children being supported by practice supervisors, combined with the pressure on managers to be in communication with families about their situations, and maintaining oversight of an increasingly large number of children and families in the duty system meant we needed to identify a new mechanism to protect capacity to supervise practice and quality assure our work. We therefore worked internally and with partners to develop a 'Prioritisation Protocol' to be activated in the event that there was too much work to allocate safely within normal timescales in specific service areas. The process was used in one Cafcass service area (Yorkshire and Humberside) between November 2020 and February 2021 and was being actively considered in other areas by the end of the year.³

Open active children's cases (April 2019 to March 2021)

Public law Private law



When activated in an area, the protocol sets out a consistent approach for working collaboratively and constructively with local partners to prioritise children in terms of the likely risk of or actual harm to them rather than the chronological order in which applications are received. This enables Cafcass to have in place a safer, fair and transparent system for holding work that cannot be allocated in a timely way.

Additional funding has been secured from the Ministry of Justice to establish regional 'allocation hubs' to hold work assessed as less urgent that cannot be allocated within a reasonable timescale. Allocation hubs will not be implemented unless and until all measures to reduce workloads in a short timescale have been explored and tested. Under the protocol, Cafcass accepts the orders of the courts in the normal way, undertakes an additional risk assessment and decides which families should be prioritised for allocation and which work can be delayed. The court is informed and a request to extend filing dates is submitted. Cafcass provides the courts with a weekly update of the delayed work held in the hub.

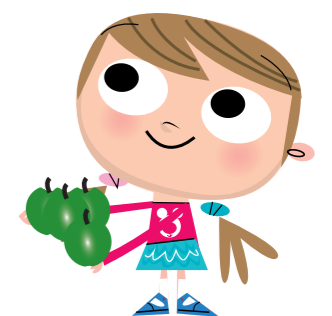
Public law work is allocated in the normal way, as is private law work deemed urgent or where there are material concerns about the welfare of the child. Only the less urgent private law work is delayed and managed by the allocation hub staff.

Children and families are informed by letter and provided with a single point of contact to seek advice, make representations and send in any additional information. We communicate with families every 4-6 weeks to inform them of the progress of their case towards allocation.

This system may be activated in a particular area via the following process:

- Regular review of a range of data to assess whether the capacity of a local area is becoming saturated and where it is becoming increasingly difficult to allocate work safely.
- The data are scrutinised by the Director of Operations who will, if necessary, make a recommendation to the Cafcass COVID-19 Board to progress to a challenge meeting with local managers.
- Once a first challenge meeting has been held, the Cafcass Assistant Director works closely with the senior judiciary and other local partners to identify and agree any additional measures that may help to prevent prioritisation. This commitment to liaison and discussion can take up to seven weeks before the final decision is made to activate prioritisation. The final decision to delay work through the allocation hub is only made following consultation with the relevant Designated Family Judge(s) and further assessments of the impact of measures to reduce workloads.

The protocol sets out the process for deciding whether prioritisation is needed in any area, national standards for managing the work, and how prioritisation can end. Work is not held in the hub for more than 20 weeks and further extensions will only be requested in exceptional circumstances. Work is allocated more quickly than 20 weeks where enough existing open work is completed freeing up capacity of FCAs to undertake new work. Work may also be allocated sooner on the basis of additional information or alerts, and Cafcass writes to the relevant court when this happens.



³ The Cafcass website is updated with the use of prioritisation at Prioritisation protocol - <https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/about-cafcass/prioritisation-protocol/>

2.2

The experiences of children, young people, families and carers

The two biggest impacts of the pandemic on our service to children in the family justice system were the move to a remote assessment model and significant delays to how quickly we were able to undertake work with them. On average in private law cases which do not conclude at the first hearing, children are waiting 10 weeks longer for their proceedings to conclude (the equivalent of a third of their learning year). In public law, final hearings to resolve a permanent outcome for children are hugely delayed with the average duration for section 31 applications increasing from 36 to 43 weeks (which for infants is a significant and damaging proportion of their primary attachment years).

In May and June 2020, in response to the increased use of remote working arrangements through the first national lockdown, we undertook an early assessment of the impact on children and families. A team of our FCAs completed interviews with 186 children and families (two thirds were adults and one third were children) with whom we had undertaken direct work in public and private law proceedings.

Adults gave an average score of 8.89/10 when asked how helpful the meeting with Cafcass had been; 90% of children agreed with the statement “my Cafcass worker listened to me”; and 82% agreed with the statement “I think my Cafcass worker will help me.” Consistent feedback from children and adults was that they wanted to know more about what to expect in advance of their meeting with Cafcass.

We have acted on their feedback by introducing introductory letters for children and families that explain our role and what will happen next, and to ask children to let us know the best way to communicate with them. We also introduced outcome

letters for children at the end of our work, which FCAs tailor for each individual child. The Family Justice Young People’s Board were instrumental in the co-design of these letters, and the new formats are consistent with our new policy on engaging with and meeting children.

While FCAs and adult parties expressed a preference for meeting in person, the picture was more mixed for children, particularly older children who are more familiar and comfortable communicating online. In response, we now include in our case planning the preferences of children and adults for in-person and remote visits. Our decision about the right approach to adopt is based on balancing what is in the children’s best interests, what is safe for them and what is possible with caseload pressures.

We wanted to understand more about the particular impact of delay and so we conducted interviews with 43 adults and children who had experienced delay in public and private law proceedings. There were many positive responses about Cafcass listening and assisting in the resolution of delay. There were also comments letting us know that our communication could be better, particularly during the already uncertain times resulting from the pandemic.

By listening in this way, we have been able to understand what needs to improve in our practice and to respond. Explaining to children and families what to expect and the reasons for our decisions is a fundamental principle of our **Together with children and families** practice framework which is being implemented in the autumn of 2021.

“The FCA was very helpful but I felt lost in a process that was incredibly stressful. I did not understand a lot of what was going on”

90%
of children
agreed with the
statement
*“My Cafcass worker
listened to me.”*

82%
of children
agreed with the
statement
*“I think my Cafcass
worker will help me.”*



Commissioned services

The pandemic also impacted on the delivery of the services that we administer on behalf of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ): the Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP); Child Contact Intervention (CCI) and Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP). Up to March 2020, each of these services was provided in person although we had started exploring the feasibility of blended digital and in-person delivery models. The introduction of national social distancing measures impacted on the ability of some of these services to continue accepting referrals at all, while others continued but were only able to work with a reduced number of families.

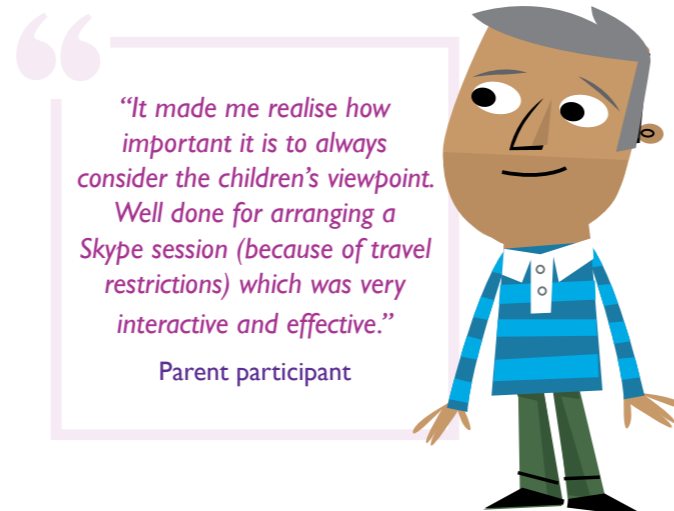
Throughout the pandemic we worked with the President of the Family Division and Designated Family Judges to keep local courts updated on the availability of each of these services. We quickly agreed a number of temporary measures to reduce court ordering of activities where services were not available. By mid-April we had developed new provider guidance to enable a switch in delivery of court ordered support services to remote/online where it was safe to do so.

The Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP) was originally a four hour, in-person group session. It was successfully switched to remote delivery with positive feedback from parents and providers reporting that some parents engaged better when attending a remote group session than in person.

By the end of March 2021, 16,160 parents or carers had completed a SPIP. Although this was a reduction of 23% on 2019/20, by year end there were no known delays with providers reporting they had capacity to deal with a potential increase in referrals from court backlogs. We therefore initiated work with the Ministry of Justice and the

courts to make the programme available before the first hearing, provided that initial safeguarding checks did not identify circumstances, such as domestic abuse, that would make a referral inappropriate. Earlier access to the programme is intended to help parents have a better understanding so that they can focus on the needs of their children earlier in the process, especially where they are likely to experience longer waiting times for their first hearings.

Where participants gave feedback (12,934) the scores have improved since delivery has switched to remote methods and they have been overwhelmingly positive. The time between a referral made and a parent/carer attending a course has significantly reduced (from an average of 20-25 working days to 10-14 working days).



“It’s in the kids’ benefit to put aside differences and do what is best for them. I found the video conferencing course extremely well organised. Doing it from home was actually beneficial in putting me at ease and I was able to interact more.”

Parent participant

The Child Contact Interventions (CCI) we commission, where we support parents in agreeing safe, beneficial time with their children, were more severely impacted. A total of 1,196 interventions were delivered which is a reduction of 43% compared with 2019/20. The remote delivery option offered to suitable families from April had little uptake because parents want to physically spend time with their children and around a third of providers were unable to offer this due to national restrictions still in place at year end. The disruption to in-person delivery has caused some delays to children and families as final recommendations could not be made. We continue to identify alternatives and have, for example, worked with colleagues from our estates team to update the Cafcass office protocol to allow Child Contact Interventions to be offered from our premises. These arrangements are being carried forward into the successor service to CCI – Improving Child and Family Arrangements – which commenced in May 2021.

The provision of Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes (DAPPs) was the most

severely impacted by the pandemic with 520 programmes delivered this year compared to 1,272 in 2019/20, a reduction of 59%. New referrals were even slower, with just 210 this year compared to 895 last year, a reduction of 77%. We therefore took action to enable more than 1,500 risk and safety management sessions to take place remotely for cases where court-ordered Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes could not be delivered. A new bespoke remote Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme with integrated victim/ex-partner support was commissioned in May 2020 and is now being piloted, so that the results can inform the Government’s review of Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes which is yet to commence.

In spite of this work, around 700 families continued to be affected by long delays because a court decision about child arrangements still awaited final recommendations following completion of the programme. An action plan for these families, and how to manage the limited provision expected to be sustained until late 2021, has subsequently been agreed with the judiciary and MoJ and is a priority for 2021/22. We have established a small, dedicated team to review the circumstances of families for whom a DAPP had been ordered but not yet completed. This involves a re-assessment of the strengths and risks in the family and the options open for recommendation. Children are given the opportunity to write to the court explaining the impact for them and their wishes and feelings.

2.4

Our staff capacity and approach to practice

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the professional and personal lives of our workforce has been a key focus since March 2020. We supported our staff by creating a wide range of additional resources and services for employees at all levels, including targeted materials and sessions for our managers. We used the findings from regular 'pulse check' surveys and feedback to design and refine our offer and some of our resources were also made available to staff across the wider Ministry of Justice group. These included guidance documents on social distancing, supporting the health and wellbeing of others, balancing effective remote working and a busy home life, and top tips for returning to the offices. Support drop-in sessions on managing stress were offered to staff and managers which provided a safe space to gain peer support. A schedule of health events to support staff throughout three national lockdowns to date (March 2020 to March 2021) was also offered, which consisted of a combination of 94 workshops, drop-in sessions and webinars that covered topics relevant to the current circumstances and engaged 1,400 members of staff.

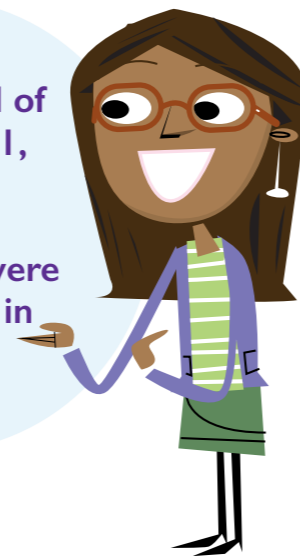
On average each member of Cafcass staff lost 8.6 working days due to sickness absence during 2020/21. This was 1.3 days lower than the average for the previous year. Eleven percent of our workforce experienced absence due to COVID-19. Of these, 8.8% of staff had a period of sickness absence and 2.7% of staff had absences related to caring responsibilities, with a small number experiencing absence for both reasons.

As we responded to the pandemic, we adapted the way we conducted our assessments with children and their families. Life changing decisions are being made for children, informed by our advice, so we restricted our in-person face to face work with families only when this was essential to keep them families and our staff safe. Our core policy is that all children are seen 'in person' at least once during their proceedings and we applied this dynamically through the year. We restored in-person work during summer and autumn 2020, with a return to

remote working in January 2021 given the rise in new variants and the beginning of the third national lockdown.

By the end of March 2021, 40% of children were being seen in person and we continue to strive to find the optimum way to balance record numbers of children who are the subject of proceedings with a full understanding that in person work provides the best opportunity to understand the child's experiences, the strengths and opportunities in their lives as well as the uncertainties and risks for them.

By the end of March 2021, 40% of children were being seen in person



2.5

Assessment and management of COVID-19 risks

In response to the emerging COVID threat, our Incident Management Team was stood up in February 2020, followed in March by our Gold Command (attended by a senior Ministry of Justice official) some weeks before the national lockdown. As a result, over a four-day period we were able to close all 33 offices (including the National Business Centre which is home to critical functions such as the call centre and Police National Computer team). All staff were already equipped with the technology (laptops and mobile phones) required to work from home and in addition we provided access for staff to recover the costs of equipment needed to support continuous home working. We held daily Gold Command meetings for some weeks and moved to three times a week by late April. We were supported throughout by an experienced Silver Command (our Incident Management Team). We sent daily communications to staff and alerted families of our intention to work remotely to support and assess children's needs, wishes and feelings.

Over time, our leadership structures and arrangements for overseeing the impact of the crisis have adapted to accommodate COVID-19 related issues as part of our business as usual work. We now lead our impact and recovery work through a weekly COVID-19 Programme Board where we review data (including net increases in open cases) and use this to inform any guidance, resources or practice changes which may be required.

The COVID-19 Board has centred its focus on the profound impact that COVID-19 has had and continues to have on the childhoods, families, friendships, education, and futures of our children. This in turn renewed our focus on the importance of seeing children both in-person and remotely, which has been underpinned by a suite of risk assessments. Our estates team undertook a comprehensive risk assessment and action plan for each of our 33 offices⁴, so that

we could begin a phased re-opening of COVID-secure offices between July and December 2020. In parallel, we assessed the elevated risk for individual members of staff who were pregnant, had underlying health conditions themselves, or who were needing to protect people with whom they live. We also introduced specific provisions to support colleagues who are vulnerable or otherwise concerned about how to work safely.

We sent daily communications to staff and told families about our intention to work remotely



⁴ Correct as of 31 March 2021

Each proposed visit with children and families away from our secure offices was and remains subject to a specific risk assessment. The visit-specific risk assessments continue to be well used, and by the end of the year more than 1,000 were being completed every month, supported by guidance on seeing children, attending court and working in our offices. We continue to seek regular reassurance on the quality of our practice and the wellbeing of our staff so that they can give their best, while recognising their personal strains alongside record caseloads and navigating remote ways of working.

Another early decision of the COVID-19 Board was to recognise the main risk to the organisation of increased caseloads resulting from the combination of restored new demand and sustained slowdown in court disposals. Average caseloads for staff and frontline managers grew rapidly from an already concerning average of 22.7 cases through to a peak in October and November 2020 of 24.1. Our analysis of the cost of the additional staff capacity to carry this to the end of the financial year was £3.4m and we are grateful for the MoJ for granting approval to spend up to £3.4 million above our budget allocation during the reporting year. We increased our social worker and social work manager capacity through a combination of

employed full time equivalent social workers and locum social workers. Although this yielded around 10% additional social work capacity, the overall impact on caseloads has been limited due to the record levels of active cases open to Cafcass.

An additional priority of the COVID-19 Board during the year was the early development of a Cafcass protocol for prioritising casework (see section 2.1) as we knew that even with the additional £3.4m headroom we were likely to reach a point when we could no longer safely allocate work to our social workers within the prescribed timescales. The protocol was therefore developed proactively in the event that we might have to delay allocation of less urgent or lower risk work. The severity of this step has been well understood by all partners, including our sponsor government department and the President of the Family Division. The protocol was first activated in November 2020.



2.6

Leadership

Over the past year we have strengthened our leadership and our partnerships and focused on listening to children and family experiences to manage the most challenging delivery period in our history. The family justice system is under considerable pressure and this impacts heavily on the leadership and practice decisions we are taking, on staff morale and wellbeing and on our long-term strategic planning.

We are proud of our internal and external communication through the crisis and leaders from the organisation have worked tirelessly to support the frontline. Our national Operational Management Team (OMT) continues to be highly effective, supported by regional and local management teams. Throughout the year they have developed virtual support networks and supported FCAs closely, providing much appreciated visible leadership. Our initial Gold Command and then the COVID-19 Board have functioned as agile decision-making teams, providing clear lines of accountability through all executive functions and connecting well with existing leadership and management cascades. Our Cafcass Board has continued to host open board meetings, with good attendance from the public and from system partners. The ordinary programme of governance was enhanced by monthly board briefings and meetings attended by members of the Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB) and practitioners and managers who present on challenges and excellent practice.

We drew upon and developed our existing methods of internal communication, including cascades from OMT through service area meetings, and the weekly blogs and vlogs published by the Chief Executive which provide a strong leadership message to all staff. In addition, the COVID-19 Board

provides brief updates about the implications of the pandemic and key decision-making through a weekly email.

We launched a series of 'think ins' which are informal events where the views of frontline colleagues are sought in respect of any number of issues from seeing children in-person to the role of Cafcass at the start of proceedings. The last initiative in our visible leadership and engagement series is a programme of 'live events' which provide an opportunity for all staff to hear directly from leaders and to ask questions which are answered live. These are chaired by the Chief Executive with presentations from senior leaders and guest appearances from young people about issues that matter to them, such as equality, diversity and inclusion.

The feedback from our staff about our leadership and engagement through the crisis, and the impact on their wellbeing, has been consistently positive and this is reinforced by the reduction in staff absence by 1.3 days this year. We are clear that our early decisions in March 2020 made it possible for us to continue to deliver a service to children whilst also protecting and promoting the wellbeing of our colleagues.

The Family Justice System response to COVID-19

Our national leadership presence through the pandemic has been visible and influential internally and externally, specifically in relation to planning for the recovery period and reviewing priorities for longer term reform in the light of the pandemic. Working in close partnership with family justice leaders has been critical to managing and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 in the family courts and our strategic, operational and delivery relationships have strengthened significantly over the past year. From the first week of national lockdown, we established and led a daily system-leaders' meeting to discuss unfolding pressures and decisions that were needed to reopen the courts. This recovery group has continued to meet throughout, chaired by our Chief Executive. Now a fortnightly meeting, attendance includes the President of the Family Division and senior judiciary, HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) officials, senior local authority directors, Welsh Government officials, Ministry of Justice and Department for Education officials, Cafcass and Cafcass Cymru leaders. It has become a place to review improved analysis of data on the operation of the family justice system and to review and strengthen protocols for prioritisation, attendance at court, and seeing children.

The recovery group oversaw the development of a comprehensive data pack to consider system performance and to review urgent areas for improvement. In the summer of 2020, and in response to growing concern about the significant and increasing delays for children in public law proceedings, Cafcass offered to undertake a snapshot of the issue, given that there is no national database to inform a national strategy. Working in partnership with the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), Cafcass issued a three-week snapshot survey to all (then) 151 English local authorities. Of the 149 which had open Cafcass cases, we received responses from 117 authorities in total, relating to 16,270 children (of whom 3,692 were infants) with 929 sets of proceedings assessed as being severely impacted by the delay (on average each application concerns 1.6 children). Each local authority was sent an individually tailored report summarising local findings and regional

comparisons and we know that this has heavily influenced their planning and oversight of children who are currently having decisions made for them in the courts. Following the success of this exercise Cafcass facilitated a repeat survey in March 2021.

Responses from
117 authorities in
total, relating to
16,270
children (of
whom 3,692
were infants)



We are proud of our role in recovery, and our shared leadership of many initiatives, including the establishment of the Family Justice Reform Implementation Group as a forum for ensuring the much-needed longer term reforms are prioritised and planned for alongside recovery. We built on our involvement during 2019/20 in the two judicial working groups developing proposals for public and private law reform. In private law, we worked closely with the judiciary and HMCTS to develop, promote and review the use of 'options' for adapting some aspects of the Child Arrangements Programme, which Designated Family Judges were able to do under Practice Direction 36Q. These options were based on the thinking of the private law working group as a means of helping to progress work during the pandemic in a way that would be consistent with longer term reform.

Alongside Cafcass Cymru we have played an active role in the development a new delivery model in the two pathfinder sites (North Wales and Dorset) testing private law reforms. The approach builds on the thinking of the judicial Private Law Working Group, some of the proposals emerging from the MoJ Expert Panel on Harm in the Family Courts and is additionally drawing on the wider experience and evidence base through the involvement of the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory. We and Cafcass Cymru have partnered with the Observatory by providing research access to anonymised case-file data and are assisting with new research in the

two pathfinder areas to map child and family 'pathways' through family separation and transition, including court.

It is widely accepted by system leaders that the regular discussions and problem solving of both the Recovery Group and the Family Justice Reform Implementation Group have been instrumental in both reassuring Ministers that the system has been remarkably resilient but also in establishing urgent reform priorities for long-term recovery.

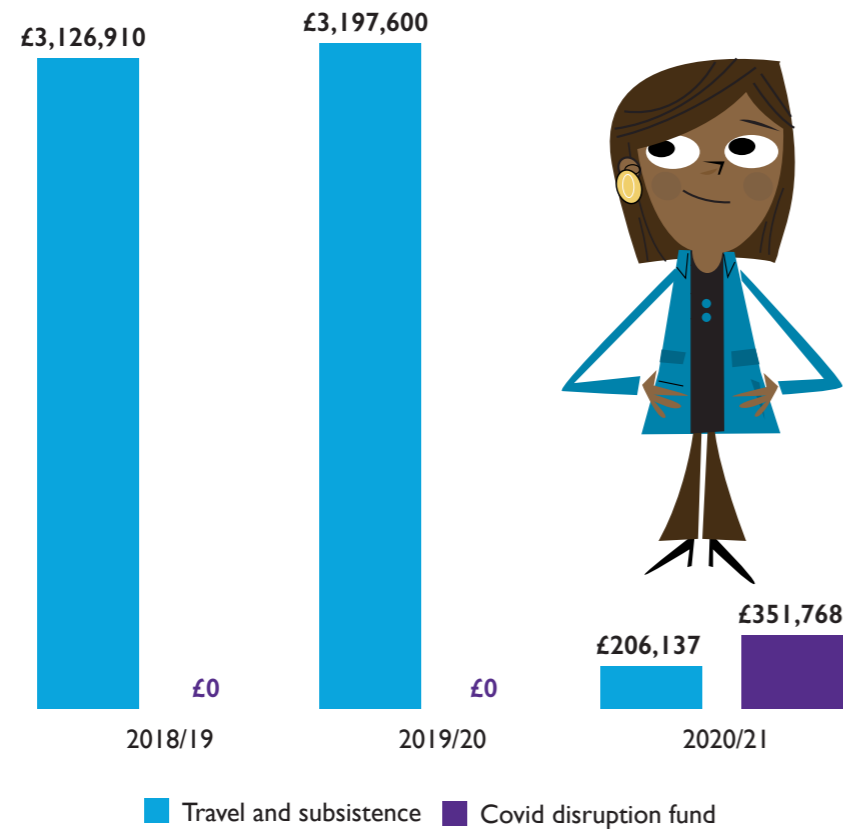
We built on our involvement during 2019/20 in the two judicial working groups developing proposals for public and private law reform.



Impact of COVID-19 on spend

Managing the effects of COVID-19 changed our spending in a number of key areas. Our spending on travel and subsistence (T&S) reduced significantly with the increased working from home and reduction in work-related travel. There were also savings on office supplies and postage. We reinvested these savings in spending on additional staff to carry the rising level of open work held by our practice staff as court throughput reduced.

In February we reopened our disruption fund, which allowed staff to claim up to £100 to assist with working from home, such as purchasing a monitor or a desk.



We estimate that T&S would have been around £100,000 more in March 2020 without the pandemic. Savings in 2020/21 were around £3m.



We saved **£3 million** on travel and subsistence due to increased working from home and reduction in work-related travel.

We reinvested these savings in spending on additional staff to carry the rising level of open work held by our practice staff as court throughput reduced.

Our key performance indicators and quality of practice



How we measure performance

Cafcass works to four key performance indicators (KPIs), which are agreed with our sponsor department, the Ministry of Justice. These cover our work with families in both public and private law proceedings. For each, we include two types of measure: a measure of the proportion of cases allocated to an FCA; and a timeliness measure. Allocation to an FCA is important because work can only start with a child and family once an individual practitioner has been allocated. We monitor timeliness because we recognise the impact that unnecessary delay has on children, who need safe and stable outcomes as quickly as possible.

For both public and private law, the allocation measure is the percentage of 'open' (ongoing) cases, taken as a snapshot at the end of each month, which have an allocated Cafcass practitioner: a children's guardian in public law (KPI 1); and an FCA in private law (KPI 3). Our target for both KPIs is for 97% to be allocated.

For public law, our timeliness measure is how quickly a Cafcass practitioner is allocated to a section 31 care case (KPI 2). Our target is for allocation within three working days, although in practice we usually need to allocate more quickly than this because the majority (around two thirds) of the applications we receive are for first hearings taking place within seven working days.

For private law, our timeliness measure is based on the proportion of section 7 welfare reports filed by the date the court has set (KPI 4). Our target is for at least 97% of reports to be filed by the agreed date.

Our target is for at least 97% of reports to be filed by the agreed date



3.2

Summary of performance against our key performance indicators (KPIs)

Cafcass achieved the expected standards in 2020/21 although additional indicators of pressure on our system show a concerning trend linked to longer term increases in demand and the impact of COVID-19 on throughput and case durations.

This performance is testament to the dedication of all our staff, and especially our family court advisers (FCAs), who are collectively managing significantly more work (21.7% more open cases, and ~10,500 more children) than last year.

Although KPIs provide an assurance that Cafcass is achieving its required minimum standards, taken on their own they fail to convey the unprecedented pressure faced

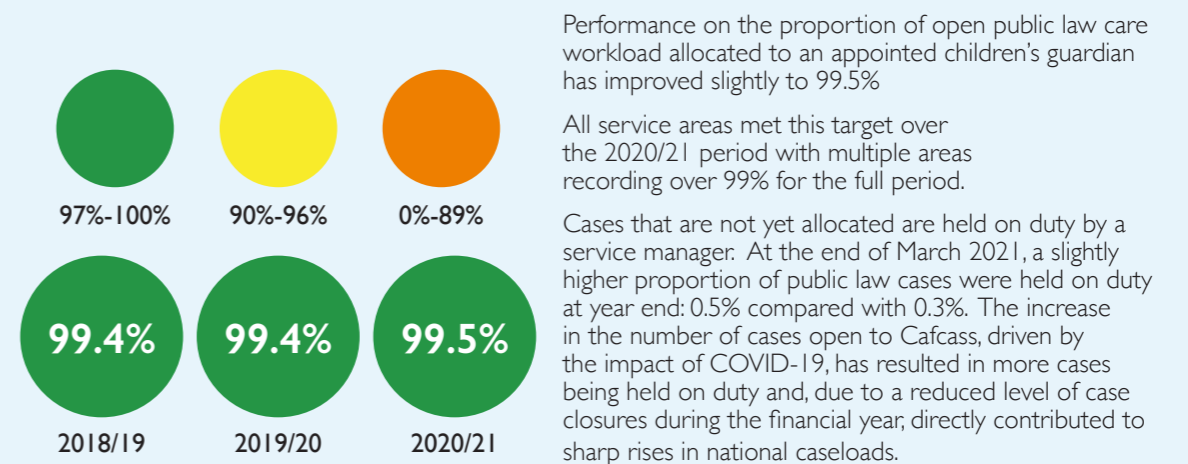
by the organisation and our staff who carry record levels of active children's proceedings, alongside the risks that such volumes create in respect of the quality of work with children and their families. On our main KPIs, there has been further fallback in performance compared to last year, especially in the timeliness of our private law work.



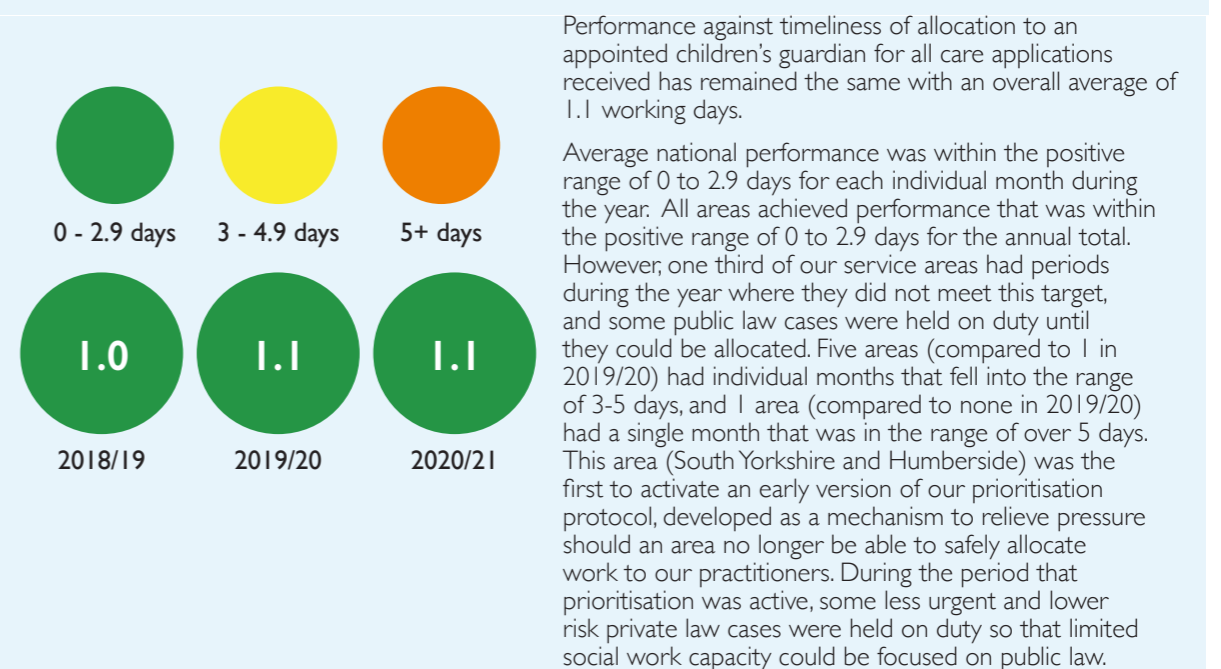
3.3

Public law key performance indicators

KPI 1: Cafcass will measure the proportion of open public law care workload allocated to an appointed children's guardian.



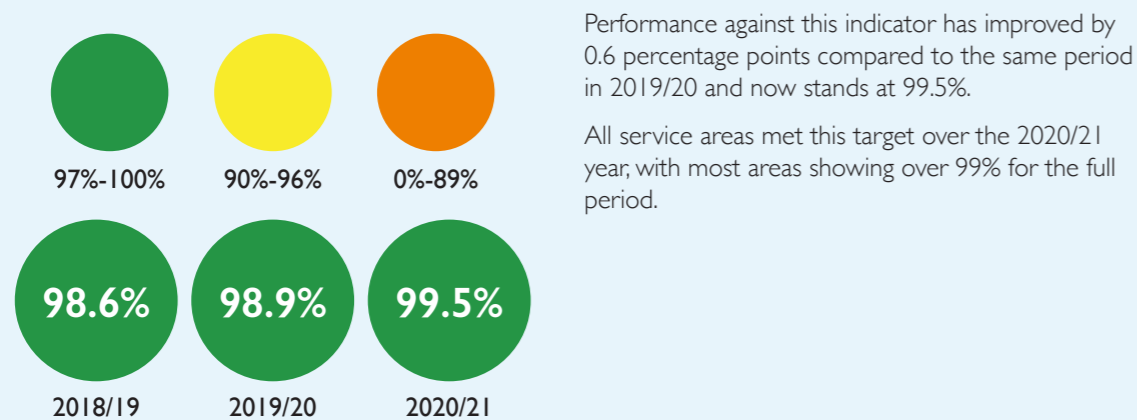
KPI 2: Cafcass will measure the timeliness of allocation to an appointed children's guardian for all care applications received.



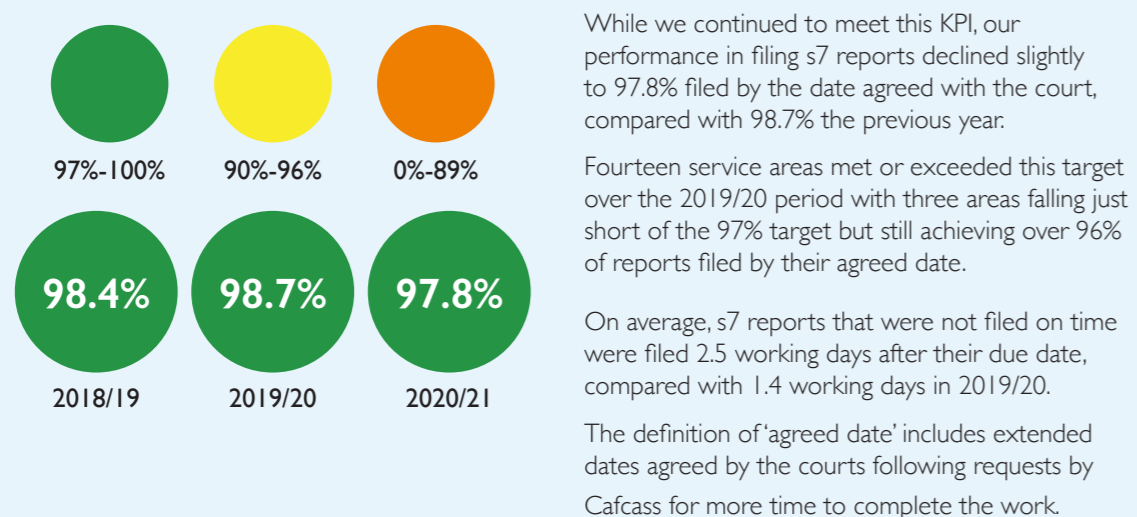
3.4

Private law key performance indicators

KPI 3: Cafcass will measure the proportion of open private law workload allocated to an FCA



KPI 4: Cafcass will measure the proportion of section 7 reports that meet their agreed filing times.



Unprecedented system pressure

Alongside headline performance indicators, Cafcass reviews a range of additional data as part of its regular performance reporting. These data offer a much clearer account of the cumulative and unrelenting pressure on Cafcass staff and on the wider family justice system. These indicators show that work is 'held' by managers, that children and families are waiting longer for their proceedings to conclude and that the throughput of activity is lower. Overall, there has been a deterioration in the efficiency of core tasks due to the sheer volume of work in our system and the constraints imposed by the social distancing measures that were in force during most of the year. Essentially this translates to higher number of cases held on duty (and not yet allocated), too many family court advisers (FCAs) with caseloads above our advised safe maximum, report filing delays and longer proceedings for children and their families.



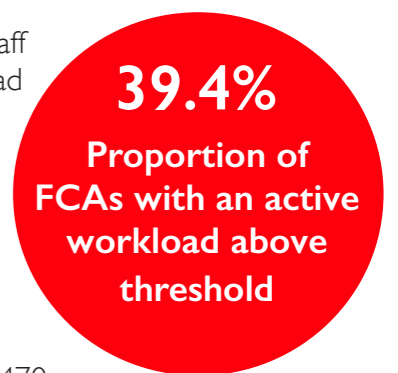
There was a significant rise in the number of cases in our operational area duty allocation system during the last quarter of the year, as the decision to avoid where possible caseloads rising above 25 cases for frontline practitioners started to take effect.

The median number of private law cases in our duty allocation system⁵ during the previous financial year (April 2019 to March 2020) was 691. Immediately following the first national lockdown in March 2020, private law demand fell sharply to a record low levels and this saw the level of cases in the operational area duty allocation system fall sharply with the average for the first two financial quarters for the year (April 2020 to September 2020) being

349. As the system began to recover, Cafcass experienced record levels of new private law case demand and this saw the average for the second two financial quarters for the year increase to 766 (October 2020 to March 2021).

By 31 March 2021 the national total in operational areas had increased to 1,146 alongside first and second-line managers also holding increased levels of substantive work as lead practitioners and in turn reducing their capacity to supervise and oversee the quality of work.⁶

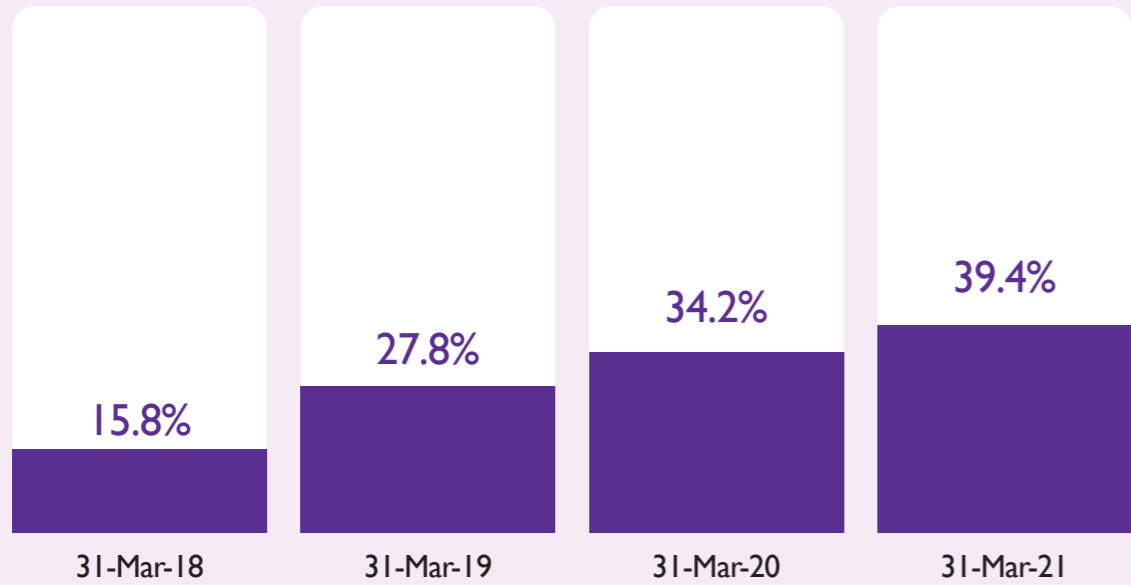
The proportion of staff with an active caseload above the threshold of 40 cases for FCAs providing safeguarding advice to the first hearing in private law cases and 25 cases for all other FCAs – was 39.4% (470 headcount) in March 2021. This has more than doubled over the last 3 years from 15.8% (173 headcount) in March 2018. A threshold of 25 is already considerably higher than the benchmark of 20 cases that we regard as acceptable for staff not involved in private law work to first hearing.



⁵ At all times a number of new cases are duty allocated within National Business Centre teams as they are triaged prior to moving to operational areas for allocation. This number can fluctuate significantly depending on demand levels and is excluded from analysis.

⁶ At any given time, there are a small number of unallocated cases (approximately 100 cases nationally) which are not included in the above because they have only just been created or are being transferred between teams and have therefore not yet been allocated.

FCA's with active caseload above threshold (adjusted for FTE) 2018 to 2021

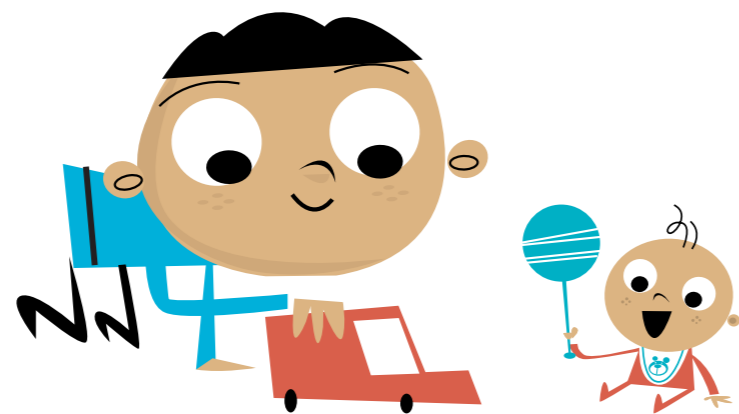


For public law applications, Cafcass achieved expected timescales for allocation within three days for the majority of new cases meaning that average national performance is within the KPI 2 target. Additional indicators of pressure show that the actual percentage of individual cases allocated within three days as 89.0% meaning that more than one in 10 cases was not allocated within the timescales expected to meet minimum standards.

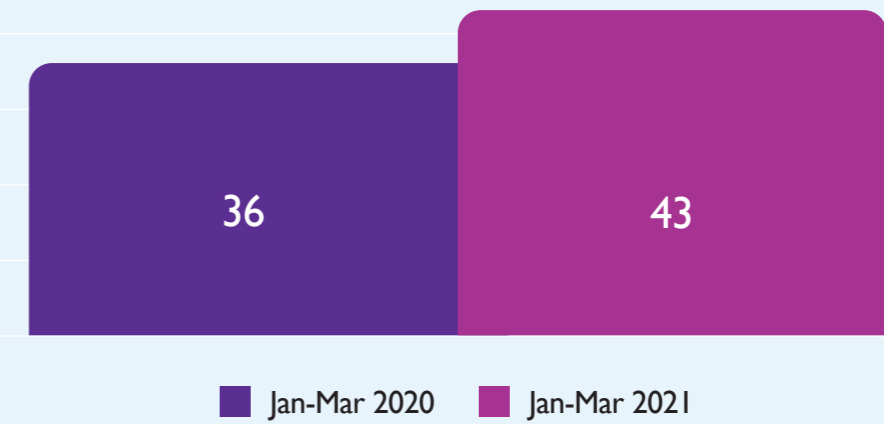
11% of public law care applications are not allocated within the minimum standard of three days

Closed case durations for section 31 care and supervision cases have increased by seven weeks over the course of the year with average durations of 43 weeks for cases closing in the last quarter of the 2020/21 compared to 36 weeks a year earlier. Longer durations mean delay for children and families and additional work for Cafcass as we hold larger caseloads and try to support more children and families during very unsettled and difficult periods of their lives.

43 weeks: the average duration of section 31 care proceedings



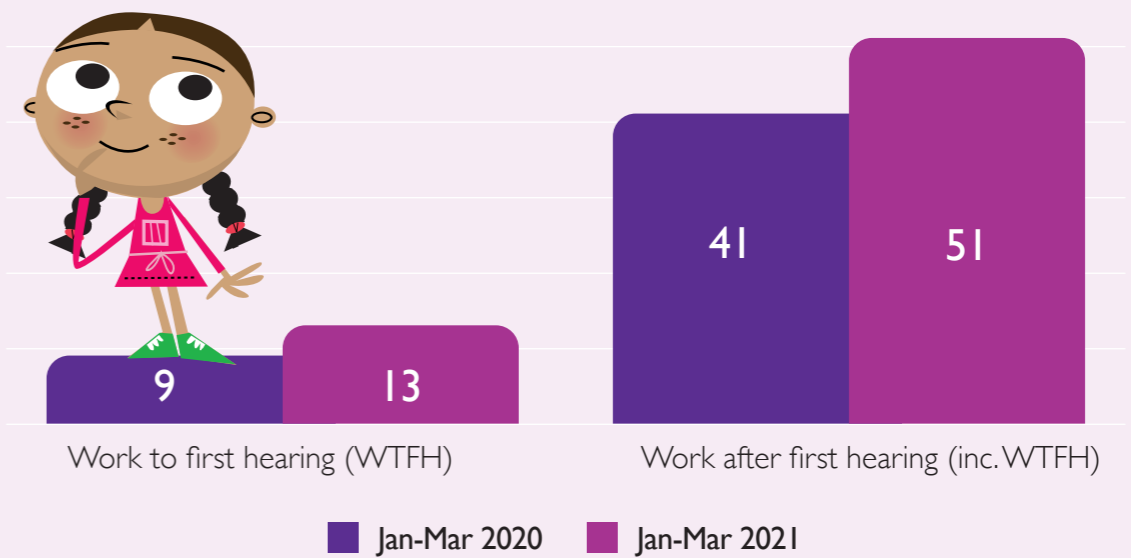
Section 31 care and supervision closed case duration



+10 weeks: The increase in duration of private law proceedings where Cafcass is involved after the first hearing

In private law, work to first hearing took 13 weeks (+ four weeks longer than in March 2020) and cases requiring further work after the first hearing took an average of 51 weeks to complete (+10 weeks compared to March 2020).

Private law durations
Private law closed case duration: January - March (weeks)



68.9%
of section 7 reports
filed by original
date set
by court

The large majority (97.8%) of section 7 reports in private law were filed by the date agreed with the court (KPI 4). This is because the courts will endeavour to agree timescales that are manageable either by ordering a date that takes account of known performance in the first place, or by agreeing to requests for extensions. The proportion of reports filed by the original filing date requested by the courts is however much lower. In 2020/21 we filed 68.9% of reports by the first agreed date indicating that around one in three reports required an extension to the original timeline. The average filing time in weeks for a section 7 report has increased by 0.7 weeks over the last year from 11.1 weeks in 2019/20 to 11.8 weeks in 2020/21.

92.3%
proportion of
all reports filed
by the agreed
date

Performance for all reports filed by the agreed date in public and private law (including section 7s) is at 92.3%, lower than the target of 97%. Cafcass filed 3,634 fewer reports to court by the agreed date in 2020/21 than in the previous year.



3.5

The quality of practice

Our quality framework – an overview

The basic performance framework in operation remained the same in this reporting year. We have however, been focused on improving the coaching, learning and family feedback aspects of quality assurance, as an important means of reflecting on practice and the difference we make. During this year we have made changes which include:

- A strengths-based audit focused on learning, to improve the impact we have on children.
- The incorporation of collaborative (alongside FCAs) audit and family feedback. This enables a more complete picture to be formed of the quality and impact of the work for the child, which supports improved practice and our own learning about what we do well and what needs to change. This takes longer than previous forms of audit. In order to recognise the time pressures on managers, supervisors and FCAs, the number of case file audits per year and per FCA has reduced from eight nationally reported quality assurance and impact audits to four, two of which involve the full collaborative process and family feedback. The two full collaborative audits are on closed cases and all four full case file audits continue to be selected randomly.
- The level of management oversight for staff not approved to self-file is retained by additional auditing between quarterly audits. For self-filing FCAs, this is now completed via 'dip sampling quality assurance'.
- Our National Improvement Service undertakes moderation of audits on a regular basis and works with regional teams where there is a difference in judgement as well as overseeing learning and improvement actions.



What do we know about the quality of practice?

The quality of our practice has sustained and improved over the past year. Our quality assurance audits find close to 63% of the work to be good or better, with a further 30% meeting our standards. We see strong evidence of child-centred practice focusing on the impact of conflict on children, good analysis of risk and recommendations clearly associated with children's best interests. Children confirm overwhelmingly that they feel listened to and often enjoy their work with FCAs. They are clear that they want more contact with us during and after proceedings so that they understand our recommendations to the court and the outcome for them.

Our work on children's uniqueness is stronger, our assessments of risk are well-evidenced and well-written in reports. In public law, there is good challenge of local authority social work analysis and recommendations where this is warranted. Throughout the period of our increased remote working, more children completed direct work with their FCA and the 'children seen' audit findings show that children are being seen, with defensible decisions set out to the court where this is not the case. Our safeguarding letters submitted before first hearing in private law are judged to be good or better in seven out of ten cases.

In evidence to the Ofsted inspection of April 2021 (see section 5.5), District Family Judges (DFJs) submitted that there is an effective and collaborative approach between Cafcass local managers and Judges.

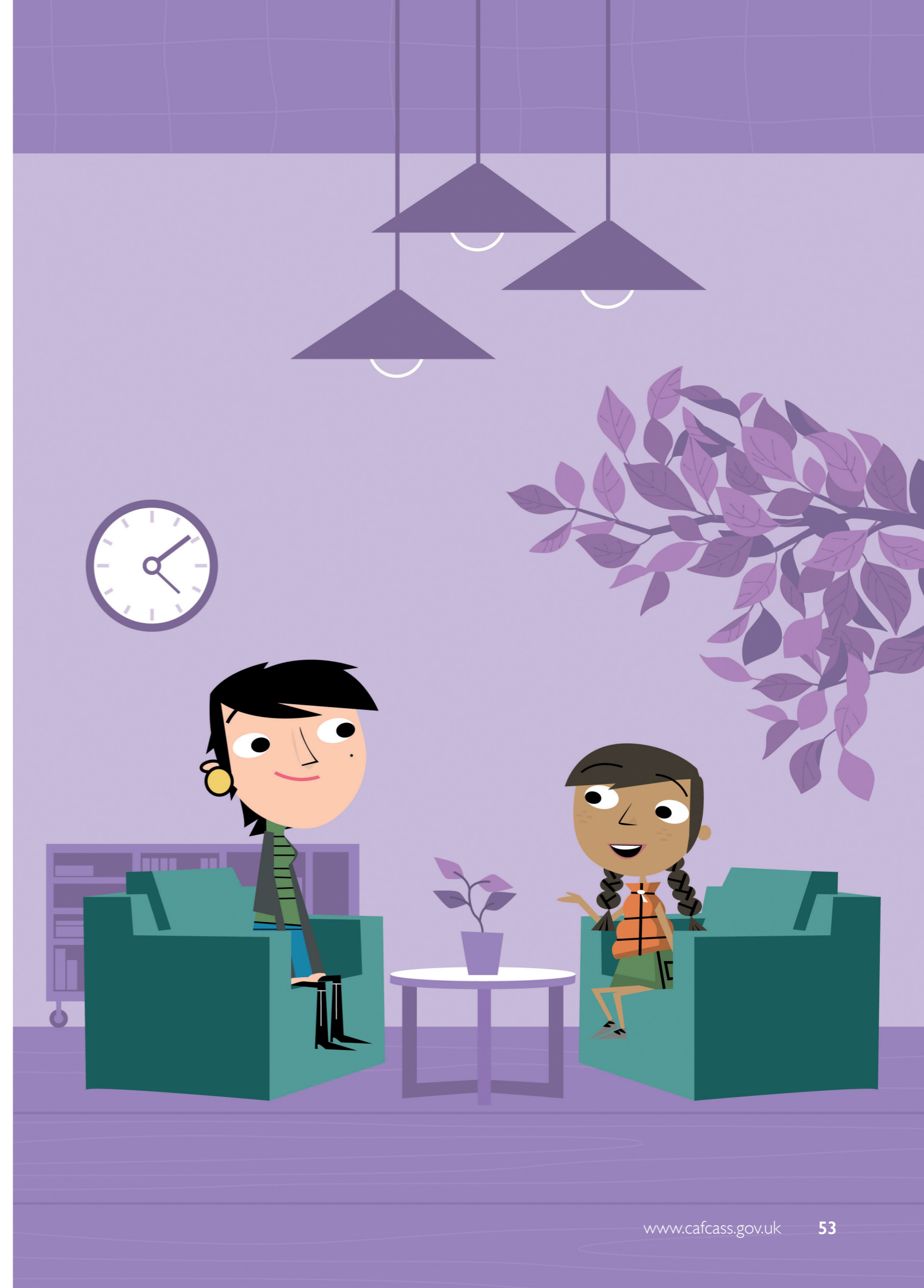
Headline improvement themes arising from our work judged to be less than good, include:

- maintaining a focus on children's experiences and ensuring their unique needs are the central focus of all our work;
- clearer analysis and rationales for recommendations in reports;
- better use of feedback from children and families, and reflection in reports;
- making sure that children and their families understand the basis for our recommendations to the court and – where we are involved right to the end

- that they receive a clear outcome from those proceedings;

- in families where there is alleged domestic abuse, identifying more clearly the difference between high conflict and harm;
- in private law cases, where there are many complex issues for the children in the family, the risks need to be more clearly explained with regard to the recommendations we make to the court in relation to each separate child;
- writing clearer accounts to the court in respect of decisions about contact with a non-resident parent;
- clearer evidence that management advice and oversight has been actioned on each case receiving supervision or audit.

In the feedback we received from children during the year, we heard that they need more help in advance of our initial meetings so that they can prepare for and understand the purpose of our engagement with them. In response to this particular point, we have revised and re-issued our introductory letters to enable children to plan what they would like to say and for us to explain clearly the purpose of the meeting – including asking for their feedback on how well they judge we have helped them. Children are also asked in the new letters, what is special about them and what they would like us to know about how this affects their experiences, wishes and feelings.



Our people and practice development



4.1

Our workforce

Cafcass is the largest employer of social workers in England. As at 31 March 2021 we had 2,134 employees (1,951 FTE). In addition to the Chief Executive and five directors in post on that date, there were 1,633 social workers, and 495 corporate or other professionals. In addition, there were 263 contingent workers, including 112 agency social workers, 109 Cafcass associates who undertake discrete social work assessments, and 42 agency workers in corporate and professional roles.

Employed social work roles

Number of social workers in post on 31 March 2021

There were 1,633 social worker roles in post on 31 March 2021 (1,485 FTE), an increase of 5.5% from the same point in the previous year, continuing the trend over the last five years. All social work staff are registered with the new regulator for social work, Social Work England, and did so to the required deadline of 30 November 2020.

There were 112 agency staff in social work roles, a more than three-fold increase since the same point in 2020.

Employed social work FTE				
16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
1,179.0	1,329.7	1,376.4	1,407.5	1,485.1

Starters, leavers and turnover

	Starters	Leavers	% Turnover
Social workers	217	139	9%

There were 139 social work leavers during the preceding 12 months which equates to a turnover rate of 9% which reflects a small decrease in turnover compared to the previous year.



Age and gender

Social work staff are predominantly female (86.7%) compared to male (13.3%) which is in line with the gender distribution for the wider children's social work workforce. 0.18% of staff are recorded as having completed gender re-assignment.

Social work gender

Gender	Headcount	% Headcount
Female	1,415	86.7%
Male	218	13.3%

In 2020/21 57.2% of Cafcass social work staff were between the age of 30 and 49, with a further 27% aged 50 to 59 and 12.7% were over 60 years old. Cafcass age distribution is therefore significantly older than the wider children's social work workforce.

We have seen a 1.8% reduction in the proportion of our social workers aged over 50, against last year. The average age of new social work joiners in 2020/21 was 38.8 years. We monitor retirement to support the forward planning for our recruitment.

Social work age

Age group	Headcount	% Headcount
18 - 29	49	3.0%
30 - 39	455	27.9%
40 - 49	479	29.3%
50 - 59	443	27.1%
60+	207	12.7%



Time in service with Cafcass

On 31 March 2021 53.8% of social workers had been employed for less than five years. A further 23.1% had been in post for between 5 and 10 years, with another 23.1% in post for 10 years or more. Cafcass staff have on average significantly longer tenure than the wider children's social work workforce. There has been an increase in the proportion of staff with less than five years' service when compared to the previous year.

Social work tenure - 2020/21

Tenure group	FTE	% FTE
2 years or less	354.5	23.9%
2 years or more but less than 5 years	444.1	29.9%
5 years or more but less than 10 years	342.9	23.1%
10 years or more but less than 20 years	343.5	23.1%

Social work roles

The significant majority of Cafcass social work roles are family court advisers (frontline case-holding roles).

Role	% Headcount
Case holder	81.05%
Senior practitioner	9.11%
First line and middle managers	7.91%
Senior manager	1.93%

Social work ethnicity

15.8% of Cafcass social work staff identify as belonging to a minority ethnic group. A more detailed breakdown of workforce ethnicity is included in the Accountability Report at Section 7.

Social work ethnicity

Ethnic group	Headcount	% Headcount
Asian	63	3.8%
Black	124	7.6%
Mixed	66	4.0%
Other	6	0.4%
Not declared	100	6.1%
White	1,274	78.0%

*These figures are rounded to one decimal place.

Disability

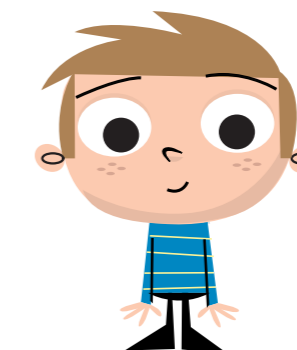
8.1% of Cafcass social work staff have a declared disability. Further details of workforce disability are included in the Accountability Report at Section 7.

Corporate and professional roles

Number of corporate and professional staff in post as at 31 March 2021

There were 501 staff in corporate and professional roles in post on 31 March 2021 (466 FTE) which is a 6.7% increase from the previous year.

Employed corporate and professional FTE				
16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
336.9	401	424.1	436.9	466



Turnover

The headcount of leavers in the preceding 12 months was 42. This equates to a turnover rate of 8.7% which reflects a notable decrease from 12% for the previous year.

	Starters	Leavers	% Turnover
Corporate and professional	65	42	8.7%

Age and gender

The corporate and professional workforce is predominantly female (78.2%) compared to male (21.8%).

Corporate and professional gender

Gender	Headcount	% Headcount
Female	392	78.2%
Male	109	21.8%

In 2021 the majority of staff were in the age range 30 to 49 (54.2%). Younger employees aged 18 to 29 made up 17.3% of the workforce with 28.5% aged 50 or over.

Corporate and professional age

Age group	Headcount	% Headcount
18 - 29	87	17.3%
30 - 39	149	29.7%
40 - 49	122	24.5%
50 - 59	105	20.9%
60+	38	7.6%

Time in service with Cafcass

On 31 March 2021 50.3% of corporate and professional staff had been in post for less than five years. A further 20.9% had between 5 and 10 years with 28.9% having 10 years' or more service.

Corporate and professional tenure - 2020/21

Tenure group	FTE	% FTE
2 years or less	102.0	21.9%
2 years or more but less than 5 years	132.2	28.4%
5 years or more but less than 10 years	97.2	20.9%
10 years or more but less than 20 years	134.6	28.9%

*These figures are rounded to one decimal place.

Ethnicity

18.4% of Cafcass corporate and professional staff identify as belonging to a minority ethnic group. A more detailed breakdown of workforce ethnicity is included in the Accountability Report at Section 7.

Corporate and professional staff ethnicity

Ethnic group	Headcount	% Headcount
Asian	52	10.4%
Black	26	5.2%
Mixed	12	2.4%
Other	2	0.4%
Unknown	41	8.2%
White	368	73.5%

*These figures are rounded to one decimal place.

Disability

9.2% of Cafcass staff in corporate and professional roles have a declared disability. Further details of workforce disability are included in the Accountability Report at Section 7.

Impact of EU exit

During 2020/21 we have communicated with all staff and directly to EU nationals on the importance of application for the EU Settlement Scheme. In 2020/21 we conducted no recruitment from overseas and had not applied for a sponsor licence. EU exit has not had any effect on Cafcass workforce this year.

There have been no impacts on our spending as a consequence of the EU exit.

Sustainability

Cafcass is committed to sustainable practices which consider our environmental, economic and social impact. We have a Sustainability Steering Group, chaired by the Director of Resources, which monitors our progress and promotes these values within Cafcass.

Cafcass is required to report against the requirements of the Greening Government Commitments (GGC). Our reporting on sustainability will be done via the GGC report, with data provided to our sponsor department.



4.2

Overview from our Principal Social Worker

The Principal Social Worker oversees the quality of our social work practice and this year has prioritised initiatives which deepen our commitment to listening to children and families and learning from their feedback. For example, our introductory and outcome letters for children, which provide information about what to expect from working with Cafcass and feedback to children on the outcome of their case are having a positive impact in practice. Here is an extract from a letter from a father in private law proceedings on receiving his young child's outcome letter.

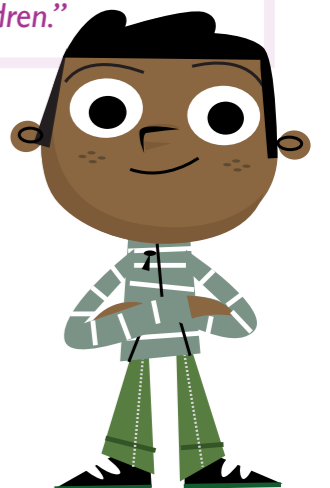
"I just wanted to say thank you for your help and work on our case. I've also received your letter for 'R' today and many thanks for that too. It's very thoughtful and will help explain things for her in the future. I will put that in her keepsake box for when she is old enough to read and understand it."

Learning derived from audit, from our staff and from practice has led to clear and accurate improvement priorities, contained in the National Improvement Plan. This in turn provides the blueprint for the learning and development programmes which take place alongside daily supervision and team learning.

A new Practice Framework

Our major programme this year and next is the development and implementation of our new Practice Framework. Together with children and families is designed to build on what is best in our work already but to recognise also where we could do more to make a positive difference to the children and families we work with in proceedings.

"Together provides us with a set of values that, no matter what our role within Cafcass, should guide and influence how we work. Every single person within the organisation should be able to connect with the values of the framework in some way, not just those staff directly involved with social work practice. Central to the framework is the importance of relationships; relationships with one another and with children and families, making sure that the rationale for decisions we recommend is always clear. Where we can all work together as an organisation to demonstrate these values, we have the greatest opportunity to achieve the best outcomes for children."



Our five key values in action are:

- 1 Promoting a strengths-based approach, helping us to make balanced decisions.**
- 2 Believing in respectful relationships so that when we work with children, adults and each other, they feel respected and valued.**
- 3 Striving for clear decision-making and analysis which is explained to children and families.**
- 4 Children and families will be held at the heart of our practice across the organisation.**
- 5 Respecting, valuing and responding to the uniqueness and diversity of each child, family and colleague.**



The framework does not only apply to our social work practice: the values, principles and tools of Together are being adopted across the whole organisation and apply as much to our relationships internally and with partners as they do in our work with children and families.

Learning from our audit of children's experience of remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic

In response to the first COVID-19 national lockdown when we worked remotely we needed as leaders to understand impact on children of less in person work and the new online methods we had to use to engage with them. 150 cases were selected for this audit sample, with 235 children in total. Auditors were operational heads of practice.

The audit evidenced that most children (85%) were being seen whether in person or remotely, with just under half of children seen in person. There was an equal split of in person and virtual meetings and we found no evidence that the type of engagement negatively influences the quality of the meeting.

At the time of the audit 35 (15%) children had not been seen at that point in their proceedings. There was evidence of good/ outstanding quality meetings with children both in person and virtually in equal numbers and evidence of defensible decision making when children were not seen.

In respect of the children for whom there was no defensible decision recorded about why they had not been seen, local area reviews of the case were requested.

Action was then taken to ensure all children were either subsequently seen where this was appropriate, and that the necessary management oversight was provided in these circumstances or, exceptionally where there was a decision not to see a child, that this was recorded along with the reason for this.

We operate on the principle that all children should be seen, at least once in person during proceedings. Where in exceptional circumstances, the child is not seen, a defensible decision and rationale is required on the file with supporting management oversight.

Strengthening our practice in domestic abuse

A key area of practice improvement is associated with domestic abuse, particularly in private law proceedings. We responded to the report of the MoJ Expert Panel on Harm in the Family Courts and established our Domestic Abuse Learning and Improvement Board. The Board is independently chaired and includes young people and parents with lived experience alongside other agencies and professionals in the family justice system. It provides external scrutiny on our improvement activity.

We have in our view been serious and authentic in our openness to learning and listening to those who have experienced our services. Children have told us about the profound and lasting impact of living with domestic abuse and have worked with us to deepen our understanding and to develop our training materials. The 200-case audit in November 2020, which included moderation by a panel chaired by Professor Eileen Munro CBE, including experts by experience as well as an experienced magistrate, has provided a clear account of the strengths in our practice and where improvement is needed.

We now have an improvement plan which will guide our priorities, and which will be overseen by the Learning and Improvement Board for the next year. The plan sets out key priorities to strengthen our practice with children and families who have experienced domestic abuse, being clearer about how we explain our decisions to them and improving the effectiveness of our management oversight. The plan informs a new mandatory learning and development programme for all Cafcass practitioners, developed in partnership with domestic abuse charities and survivors of domestic abuse. Children and families will have more opportunity to give feedback about how they have experienced Cafcass, and we will use this learning to keep improving the quality of our work.

Commitment to understanding children's unique experiences

When managers audit the quality of our work, we routinely look at the recording of protected characteristics, and how the analysis of heritage and identity informs our recommendations to the family court. When we draw samples for thematic audits, we ensure groups with unique experiences are included in proportionate numbers.

Children now receive a letter giving them an opportunity to share with their FCA what we need to know about their identity and heritage, their likes, dislikes and what makes them individual and special. We have an established network of peer practice specialists on issues such as working with trans adults and young people, honour-based abuse, Roma families and female genital mutilation. These specialists are a highly-valued addition to the regular supervision available in teams.

The Social Work Academy

Cafcass' Social Work Academy aims to contribute to both Cafcass and the wider social work sector's development and retention of social workers. Our three-year Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) programme provides a unique insight and exposure to the vital role of social workers in the family justice system, whilst offering opportunities for Cafcass and local authorities to work together on providing a fully rounded experience in their early years in the profession. This year:

- We have placed 42 students nationally who have been offered the opportunity to work in private law and to shadow public law proceedings.
- Four NQSWs successfully passed the Assisted and Supported Year.
- We placed three NQSWs with local authorities to complete their second year.
- We developed an Aspiring NQSW programme that keeps the most talented students, bridging the gap between the end of a student placement and being recruited as a NQSW.
- We adapted the Practice Educator Training to be delivered online which has further added to the range and number of practice educators and refreshed their training in line with sector requirements.
- We undertook a recruitment campaign which attracted 180 applications for 12-15 NQSW posts commencing in autumn 2021.
- We identified placements in local authorities who are Partners in Practice (good or outstanding as judged by Ofsted and working with the Department for Education to support sector improvement) for eight of the current year one group of NQSWs, to commence in January 2022.
- We produced the NQSW brochure, handbook and programme and the brochure for the Aspiring Newly Qualified Social Worker Programme.



4.3

Learning, development and talent management

Performance and learning reviews

Through the year we have focused on improving the use of performance and learning reviews (PLRs) and situational supervision, supported by a cross-organisation working group. Feedback from a range of sources has been considered including audits of the quality of PLRs, staff survey and real-time feedback on the PLR recording system. This informed a continuous improvement plan which has included: new training for managers, enhanced self-assessment and PLR recording to support reflection on the impact of learning and more focus on equality, diversity and inclusion.



Emerging Talent

Our Emerging Talent programme continues to provide learning, development, support and opportunities for high-performing staff who wish to stretch themselves or work towards a promotion or change of role. The programme is underpinned by a strengths-based approach to learning, combined with development opportunities identified by the individual, their line manager and support from human resources and organisational development colleagues.

There are currently 115 participants on our Emerging Talent programme, with participants spread across 22 different service areas or departments.

There have been 368 members of staff who have completed the programme since its inception in 2013. During that time 163 members of staff have achieved either a promotion or a change of role whilst being on the programme.

Eligible operational staff 31 March, PLR logged Apr 20 - Mar 21

Staff group	Headcount	Headcount %
Practitioners	1,333	98.2%
Corporate & professional	273	83.7%
Managers	107	100.0%

Apprenticeships

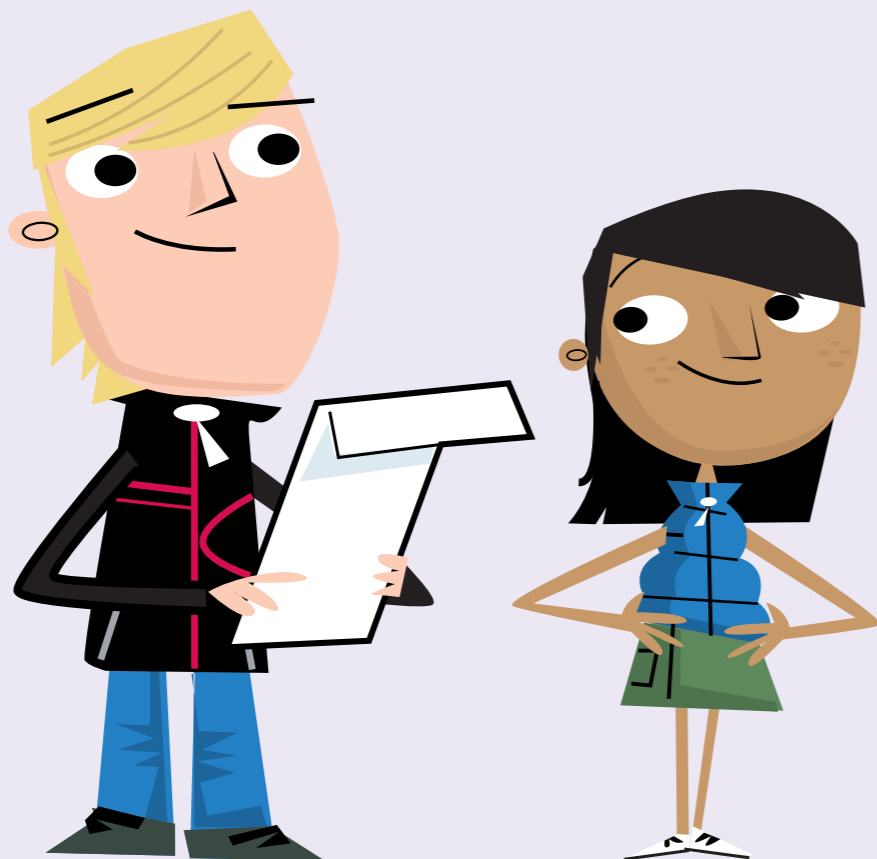
Our apprenticeship programme offers accredited qualifications to both internal staff and new external appointments through work-based learning. The programme uses funding from our apprenticeship levy account to pay for the cost of the apprenticeship itself. At 31 March 2021 there are 29 staff currently undertaking an apprenticeship with a further 26 staff who have successfully completed their qualifications doing a broad range of role-specific programmes:

- Assistant Account Level 3
- Learning & Development Practitioner Level 3
- Team Leader Level 3
- Business Administration Level 3 and 4
- Procurement and Supply Level 4
- Associate Project Manager Level 4
- Operations & Department Manager Level 5
- Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship Level 6
- Digital and Technology Solutions Professional Level 6
- Senior Leader Master's Degree Apprenticeship Level 7

Mandatory e-learning

In addition to the wide and varied learning and development programmes, staff are required to undertake e-learning in respect of a small number of key security and safeguarding topics. Certification levels are tracked by the organisation. The current focus is on improving certification rates across these topics and specifically for diversity and inclusion for practice staff.

There were 8,495 mandatory e-learning modules completed in the year.



4.4

A working environment for people and practice to thrive

New case management system

We have implemented a new electronic case management system over the past 12 months, largely without issue, which we believe is evidence of our ability to lead critical system change despite the constraints of workloads described elsewhere and the pandemic. Our case management system allows us to record and report on all family- and child-related information from a single place. The old system was popular and very successful but built on aging technology which will not be supported in the future and could pose a security risk. The new system is:

- **Easier.** We have adopted modern design principles and, working across the organisation, we have made the system easier to navigate and use, whilst retaining the same principles of the old system.
- **Faster.** The same design principles have enabled us to minimise the amount of effort (such as mouse clicks) to perform the same actions, allowing colleagues to spend less time using the system and more time with children.
- **Better.** Overall, the system is more usable, supportable, easier to make changes on and allows us to report on more sophisticated information.

We have released the system in stages, replacing parts of the old with the new over the last year. At no point have colleagues had to enter information into both systems. Our previous case management system is set to be fully replaced by mid-June 2021 and the final stage of the project will concentrate on new or enhanced features.

Remote working

Cafcass has for many years been capable of fully electronic working in any location, which has helped us to maintain and improve the quality of our work and the wellbeing of staff. At the start of lockdown in March 2020 all staff, whether practice, business services or corporate, were able to move to fully remote working immediately, with the exception of the team using the Police National Computer. We worked quickly with technology partners and the Home Office to put in place safe, secure ways of remote working for these staff within the first weeks to enable our whole organisation to work from home. We also worked with our suppliers to ensure that all technology support could be delivered to staff homes immediately. Since then we have continued our programme of planned improvements to services, including switching fully to Microsoft Teams from Skype, starting a laptop replacement programme and the new case management system described above.

Supporting health and wellbeing

Our suite of health and wellbeing support continues to provide staff with a range of services and resources to promote optimal health and to enable us to operate effectively by looking after our people. The need for staff wellbeing support has never been more important than in this year of the global pandemic.

Staff have had access to a range of key support services, aimed at providing tailored support. This includes accessing professional mental health support through the Employee Assistance Programme, a range of treatments and services through a dedicated health plan provided by Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund (BHSF), and the in-house 1:1 support service. In terms of engagement, in the 12 months from April 2020, a total of 77 staff members have been supported in respect of bereavement, stress, increasing personal resilience and COVID-19 related issues, through accessing the 1:1 service provided by the Cafcass health and wellbeing team.

Other resources include webinars, workshops, health drop-in sessions and guides. Through several different platforms and channels, including intranet pages, Cafcass Learning and Microsoft Teams, staff were able to access the resources when needed and without restriction, and in a way that suited their learning needs (including live workshops, tailored 1:1 support, or self-led learning).



Support has also been developed across a wide range of wellbeing topics. These include, for example, toolkits for coping with bereavement, managing stress and compassion fatigue, as well as guides for understanding and managing the menopause, positive relationships and dealing with financial difficulties. Furthermore, in addition to managers being offered guidance on supporting staff members who may be experiencing loss, work-related stress and poor mental health, a manager handbook for supporting the wellbeing of others was also created.

By the end of the year 86 wellbeing learning events were offered to the workforce, involving 1,566 staff members.

Organisational and virtual wellbeing days

As a way to recognise the challenges colleagues have faced since the start of the health pandemic, in December 2020 Cafcass introduced organisational wellbeing days. These provide the workforce with up to three days that they can dedicate to their wellbeing. The first of these was offered in December 2020. By the end of March 2021, 761 staff had taken at least one wellbeing day. Our staff intranet page dedicated to the wellbeing days, which contains relevant wellbeing-related resources, has been viewed 1,301 times, which is the most visited wellbeing page this year. A further two days will be planned before the end of March 2022.



Supporting health and wellbeing

Wellbeing days

March 2021
761 staff
had taken at least one wellbeing day

Our learning



5.1

Learning from children and families in our casework

Understanding how children and families experience our service is essential: they are the experts in what a good service looks and feels like. In addition to the learning we take from internal audits, which inform our improvement priorities, we obtain feedback from children and families directly to the family court adviser after meetings, via surveys and in less direct ways, for example through mystery shopper work at our call centre.

Through the mystery shopping exercise, we have identified and implemented some immediate learning such as the importance of using child-friendly and positive language and a focus on the immediate support we can offer young callers. The mystery shopping calls have also helped to inform the design of our new freephone number (our 'listening post') dedicated to hearing children's feedback, which is expected to launch in October 2021.

However, we want to do better at finding out how children and families feel we have 'done today' coordinating this feedback and acting on it. Holding a mirror up to ourselves is a vital part of targeting our improvements on what really matters.

Integrating family feedback into audit

During the last year we have made it an integral aspect of our audits that we routinely ask parents and children for their feedback. For example, as part of our work to inform our domestic abuse Learning and Improvement Plan, we audited records for 200 families who had experienced domestic abuse and received feedback from 81 people. Many reported they felt listened to and their circumstances were understood by Cafcass for example, "Thank you for putting my children's safety and

wishes at the heart of your report and for your empathy and kindness". But we also identified learning from their feedback, including the need for more explanation of the decisions made in our assessments, more consideration of all professional opinions and the need to keep an open mind about children's and parents' experiences throughout the assessment process.

Feedback from children

Family Justice Young People's Board members have consistently told us that they sometimes do not understand the proceedings that are about them, why we make the recommendations that we do or where their voices are in those proceedings. We have reflected on this when developing Together, our practice framework, and have made clear decision-making and analysis, which is explained to children and families, a central value and a commitment in practice.

"Thank you very much for your email and letters. I thank you for the lovely way you wrote to J and the wording you used. It is perfect and very kind of you, I will read it to him."

Children told us in the survey conducted in the summer of 2020 that they want to know more about what to expect before they meet us. In response to this, in January 2021 we introduced letters for children and families at the start of our work that explain our role and what will happen next. As we strive to make the most of the time we have with each child, it's vital they feel comfortable and in control, for example by having choices about things like where and when they will meet us.

Understanding the impact of delay

Children told us that delay is one of the most troubling aspects of being in family proceedings and that it can have far reaching negative impacts. As set out in section 2.2, a small-scale feedback survey was undertaken to understand the impact that the pandemic-related delay has had on children and their families in both public and private law proceedings. We asked families to tell us how it felt and what Cafcass could do differently.

A total of 43 interviews with parents were conducted. A third of parents in the survey felt they had received helpful explanations of delay: **“Cafcass communicated well, I was provided with telephone numbers and knew who to call.”** However, most of the parents

who had experienced public law proceedings were not aware of any pandemic-related delay, nor had this been explained to them. This echoed one of the key themes from the parents in private law proceedings, who felt that communication, from one point of contact who knew their circumstances, particularly during extended proceedings could be improved. There was also feedback about how emotionally and financially difficult proceedings can be, the importance of providing information about support services outside of court, and about preferences for in person meetings and hearings, rather than remote or virtual meetings. In response, the development of Together includes a focus on sharing case plans with family members, allowing discussion in advance about how meetings will take place and therefore equipping them for proceedings. Reducing delay and repeat hearings, which create emotional and financial challenges, are priorities for change in private law reform (see delivery priority 9, page 87). We also provided more information for parents on our website and on the co-parent hub, an online resource for separating parents.



Family Forum

We continued to establish our Family Forum during the year. The intention of this initiative is to work closely with families whose experiences of our work with them should have been better. We work with detailed accounts of our practice and the impact on those parents, carers and children. The two most important objectives in this work are to put right the mistakes we have made and to learn from that practice so that anyone receiving help and support from us receives a quality experience equivalent to the best we offer.

We appointed our Family Forum Facilitator in June 2020. Her role has involved reviewing feedback and complaints to identify families who may benefit from a deeper conversation with us to understand their experience. We worked collaboratively with our partners, including the Family Justice Young People's Board, to design our approach for engaging restoratively with families who have feedback for us. Over a series of four workshops they have helped us to create the format for the 'listen and learn' conversations with adults, and for the 'how was it for you' conversations undertaken by the FJYPB to gather feedback from children.

Our Family Forum Facilitator reviewed more than 250 complaints and child case files and identified 35 families for whom a further conversation may be appropriate. So far 11 listen and learn conversations have taken place with adults and three 'how was it for you?' conversations have taken place with children.

The main learning themes, which will inform the early priorities of the Forum, were:

- The need for much clearer and jargon-free information about what to expect, and what we can and can't do to help.
- To help shorten the overall process, including through earlier intervention and information about what other support might be available.
- For there to be more time to really understand the child in the context of the whole family, with an open mind.
- That we need to do more to improve the consistency of our approach, as some families had experienced more than one FCA or set of proceedings.

These conversations have enabled us to invite parents to join us on our journey to establishing the Family Forum, with the founding members being inducted in summer 2021.



Compliments, complaints and requests for information

We have a responsibility to listen to the families with whom we are working in order to know whether we have helped them and treated them with respect, even if they do not agree with the recommendations we have made to the court. We are open to all feedback as part of our commitment to hearing directly from families and learning from their experiences and we are working to be more proactive in seeking feedback from children and families. This feedback, including compliments and complaints, helps us to understand what we are doing well and where we need to improve.

Feedback from children and families this year was characterised by the impact of COVID-19 and our changing work practices as a result. At the height of the pandemic we received fewer complaints from parents and fewer enquiries from MPs, possibly because fewer court hearings were taking place and almost all of our work with families was undertaken remotely, leading to fewer 'direct connections' with families from which concerns could arise. To help us respond to queries specifically about the impact of the pandemic on family court proceedings we set up a dedicated COVID-19 'contact us' form on our website. This was used over 900 times in the first quarter of 2020/21 and the learning from this correspondence was shared with partners in the family justice system to help shape the information and advice made available to families.

In 2020/21 we began recording whether we had upheld a complaint investigation. We fully upheld 1% of the 1,401 complaints we investigated, partly upheld 13% and did not uphold 85%. One percent of complaint investigations were withdrawn by the complainant.

In the year we received:

- **1,377 compliments** about our work, 117 of which were received from children.
- **1,378 complaints**, 14 of which were received from children.
- We responded to **48 enquiries from the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman** and had one investigation proposed. We did not receive any final investigation reports from the Ombudsman and it has been more than four years since the Ombudsman fully upheld an investigation about a Cafcass complaint.
- We responded to **177 enquiries from MPs**. Common enquiries from MPs this year were about constituents who had concerns about parental alienation, who were dissatisfied with our investigation of their complaint, or who felt that domestic abuse had not been assessed thoroughly. Some MPs sought information from Cafcass on the steps we are taking to improve services for victims of domestic abuse.

What we learnt from complaints, and what we've changed as a result

This year saw a reduction in our volume of recorded feedback from children, possibly because fewer children were able to visit our offices, where feedback is sought using our 'feedback tree' cards.

We know from families and our partners who support them that people can find it difficult to raise concerns with us, particularly while we have an ongoing role with their family. A review of our complaints process is due to report in 2021/22 and from this we will look at how best to support families in sharing concerns with us and how best to assist those wishing to challenge a report within live proceedings.

Children, families and wider family members have shared concerns with us that domestic abuse is not taken seriously in the family courts and that children had no choice but to see a parent. Although there is no evidence from our audit that we require or insist children have contact at any cost or that they do not have a choice in the contact, our Learning and Improvement Board, set up in response to Ministry of Justice's Experts Harm Panel Report, was established because we have listened to this feedback and will leave no stone unturned in improving practice where that is necessary. The Learning and Improvement Board action plan has now been published and our training programme is underway.

The following example demonstrates the difference made to the children, families and our practice as a result of responding to a complaint via the 'listen and learn' process, which forms part of the Family Forum model we are establishing.

Following a complaint investigation, we held a 'listen and learn' conversation with a mother so that we could hear about and try to understand her experiences of our work together. The mother's first language is Spanish, as is her son's. During the interview between the mother and the FCA, the FCA arranged for an interpreter, but the FCA also attempted to speak to the child without an interpreter. Mum was unhappy that her son's views were not considered. The feedback from the 'listen and learn' conversation has resulted in the identification of a gap in practice guidance which confirms the requirements to offer interpreters for children as well as adults. This guidance will be shared with Family Forum members – and the mother from this conversation.

Similar conversations have resulted in important learning, for example, regarding contact with schools and General Practitioners (GPs) in respect of children with whom we work when they have additional knowledge about the issues impacting the children. We changed our safeguarding policy so that it is clear we must get a parent's consent to contact schools and any other professionals with a key responsibility in a child's life.



Summary of key learning from children and family feedback	Source of learning	Actions taken
<p>Do not use jargon</p> <p>Do use accessible language</p>	FJYPB	<p>Conversations with staff at live events</p> <p>FJYPB Top Tips on use of language</p> <p>Our Language Busting programme</p>
<p>Tell us more about what to expect before we meet with you and when proceedings end</p>	Summer 2020 children and family survey	<p>Introductory and outcome letters designed and implemented. Impact evaluation is underway</p> <p>Work with local authorities underway to explain what to expect in public law proceedings</p>
<p>Offer interpreters for children as well as adults</p>	Listen and learn conversation following a complaint investigation	<p>New guidance confirming this requirement</p> <p>Requirements for specialist interpreters for children are being reviewed</p>
<p>Communicate with me about any changes and provide information about where else I can find support</p>	Delay survey	Our strategic priority on the private law practice model has a key aim of improving the information and support available to families in family court proceedings
<p>Explain the reasons for your decisions</p> <p>Don't make your mind up in advance</p>	FJYPB Feedback into audits	The Together practice framework launching in July 2021 – explaining reasons for decisions is one of the five key elements of Together
<p>Gain my consent before you contact other professionals who know about my life</p>	Listen and learn conversation following a complaint investigation	The safeguarding policy has been updated to reflect this requirement

Freedom of information requests

The number of freedom of information (FOI) requests in 2020/21 fell by 16% compared to the previous year. FOI queries about Cafcass employees and the type of training attended or qualifications held is the most common type of query we receive. Cafcass only received two queries relating to COVID-19 during 2020/21. All FOI requests were responded to within the statutory time period of 20 days and the average response time was 14 days.

The Information Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Committee continue to review the data on FOI requests annually and this informs the decision about what additional data should be contained within the Cafcass website with the intention of providing information in advance without individuals needing to make FOI requests.

5.3

Learning from serious incidents

Cafcass operates an internal serious incident notification process which alerts senior leaders to incidents of all types, relating to families with whom we are currently working or have recently been involved, which may require immediate action and from which organisational learning and responsive action is derived. The types of incidents which require notification include the death of or serious harm to a child subject to proceedings, or the death of or serious harm to an adult involved in the family proceedings. Senior leaders are also alerted to cases where there is immediate risk of harm to a child in proceedings.

The serious incident response process involves notification within 24 hours of an incident followed, where necessary, by a case file review conducted by the National Improvement Service. Dependent on the circumstances an organisational learning review may be initiated, with immediate actions such as an all-staff alert. Learning is implemented into practice through dedicated learning events and bulletins, and the impact in practice of the learning is then tested through local and national audit.

During 2020/21 174 serious incidents were reported, of which 121 case reviews were conducted by the National Improvement Service. Case reviews are triggered when Cafcass' involvement was complex or open to challenge and when organisational learning is likely to be identified.

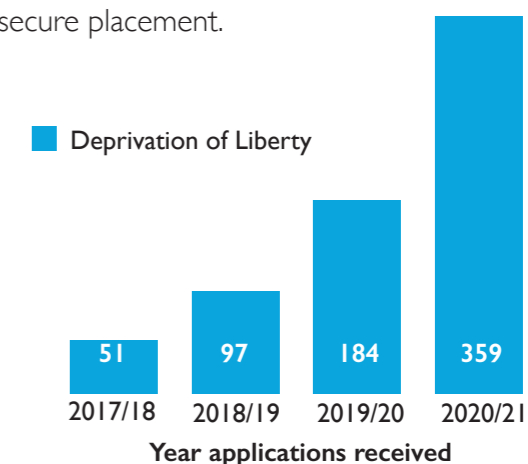
Key areas of learning identified are set out below by theme.

Lack of secure accommodation and the use of Deprivation of Liberty applications

There have been several judgments issued from the High Court setting out the dilemma of needing to try to keep a young person safe at the same time as recognising that there is a critical national shortage of appropriate placements. A guardian is in the position

of advising the court on best interests acknowledging that the decision needs to be made in less-than-ideal circumstances. A recent court judgment confirmed that the availability of a placement for a child could be a factor in the assessment of their best interests, but the absence of an alternative does not prevent the court from refusing to authorise a deprivation of liberty.

The lack of secure accommodation for children at risk is an ongoing and critical national issue, beyond Cafcass' remit, but which does place children's guardians in untenable positions regarding the recommendations they make to the court. This lack of provision has combined with a seven-fold increase in the number of Deprivation of Liberty applications made by local authorities over the last four years when they need to accommodate a child in a non-secure placement.



In response, we have amended our process for escalating concerns and have agreed a clear and reasoned approach for children's guardians to consider in their recommendations. We have produced guidance on Deprivation of Liberty applications following a number of high-profile judgments and appointed a peer practice specialist to support FCAs advising the court. We are also producing new resources for young people who are subject to these applications explaining what they mean. There is a version for young people, and an accessible version for children with disabilities.

Seeing children in person early and at key points in proceedings

Analysis of serious incident learning showed that we do not always clearly record on the child's file the reasons for not seeing the child at critical points during the court proceedings. Seeing and engaging with children is a key practice priority and in response we published a new policy setting out the requirements for all FCAs in engaging and meeting with children as part of their work.

We record 'child seen' data on our case management system and regularly review this data in order to investigate and improve where recordings are not clear. We have undertaken interactive learning events across the country supporting FCAs to think about the implications of the policy in their practice.

Rapid reviews taking place without Cafcass being notified or involved

A rapid review enables agencies working with a family to gather the facts about a serious incident and make decisions on any immediate or longer-term action that may be necessary to support the family. On repeated occasions reviews have taken place without Cafcass' input and as a result the Chief Executive has asked all local authorities to invite Cafcass to rapid reviews given our role in proceedings

for children who are injured or who die where abuse or neglect is suspected. Locally, assistant directors have communicated with the safeguarding partnership concerned, and the heads of practice attend the safeguarding review meetings.

Management oversight

A theme across a small number of incidents is the need to focus management oversight and/or supervision on specific changes for the child during proceedings. This includes when the local authority plan to remove a child is not supported by the children's guardian and where there are difficulties in seeing children. Cafcass' management oversight guidance has been updated and provides greater clarity on the points where management oversight or supervision should take place. We have taken action through our work on prioritisation to try to protect and restore management capacity for supervision and oversight. The review of our oversight is expected to take place in the autumn of 2021 and will increase the transparency in respect of the impact of leaders of practice and therefore decisions made in respect of children and their families.

Learning with safeguarding partners

Cafcass has contributed to:

- 52 rapid reviews
- 11 local children's safeguarding practice reviews
- 1 domestic homicide review
- 1 adult safeguarding review
- local learning reviews

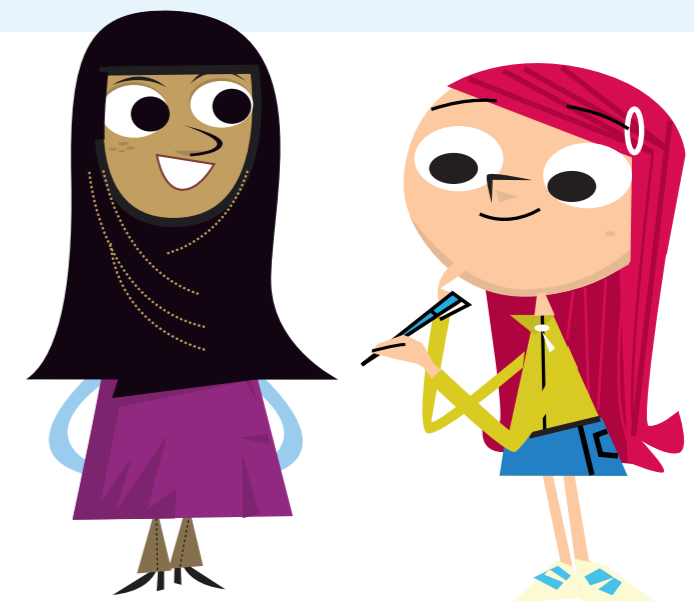
One specific recommendation for Cafcass arising from these reviews is to ensure staff always access records of previous work before concluding on the level of risk and that risks to any child are notified appropriately to children's social care services. These actions, which are clear in policy, have been emphasised in training and the quarterly serious incident learning bulletin.

5.4

Learning from audits

Learning from specific audits is referenced in other parts of this report (quality of practice; our domestic abuse audit; and children's experiences of remote working during the pandemic). Our programme of improvement through audit for any practice identified as less than 'good' will remain in focus for the next 12-18 months with regular review by the Operational Management Team, Principal Social Worker and Corporate Management Team. Areas for improvement include:

- 1 **Getting better at understanding how a child's faith, culture, background, gender identity, disability and other characteristics impact their vulnerability and resilience.**
- 2 **Continued emphasis on communicating our thinking and decision-making to children; and helping families to understand what the end of our work means for them, what their next steps will be and who will provide further help.**
- 3 **Creating a culture of learning from feedback at different points in the child's journey through proceedings.**



5.5

Our performance and accountability framework

Based on the learning from family feedback, audits, our focused inspection and our performance data we have established a National Improvement Plan with 10 practice and eight leadership priority actions to embed improvement.

Each improvement priority is specifically aimed at making a positive difference to the life of a child and their family.

A new performance and accountability framework is the mechanism through which we will hold ourselves to account as an organisation for the commitments we have made in the National Improvement Plan.

The accountability framework involves each of the eight Cafcass regions holding a Performance Board and a Practice and Leadership Review within a 12-month cycle.

The Performance and Quality Committee, a sub-committee of the main Cafcass Board, will scrutinise spotlight report evidence of progress towards improvement three times per year and the Cafcass Board will receive an annual improvement progress report against the National and Regional Improvement Plans.

As a way of focusing on our implementation of learning and sharing of knowledge and skills in relation to practice improvement, going forward each year there will be a:

- national practice learning conference
- practice week – in 2021 there will be 'Together in Practice' week in September
- regional practice learning conferences.

Ofsted inspection

In accordance with the newly published Cafcass inspection framework, Ofsted undertook a focused visit in April this year. The headline purpose was to seek assurance that we had continued to operation an effective service for children and families in the context of COVID-19.

The Cafcass Board, Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team have paid tribute to every single member of staff, each of whom has a hand in the finding that we had, despite the exceptional challenges of the pandemic, *'sustained and further improved our track record of placing children, their welfare and safety at the centre of our work.'*

"There is a passionate culture centred around doing the right thing for children. Leaders self – assess their services accurately and with a good level of reflection."

Ofsted



Inspectors found that we had worked collaboratively in the family justice system to support reform and recovery and that our systems to oversee record levels of work, were secure, mature and effective.

The inspection outcome provides a reassuring baseline for our planned improvement programme referred to above. The priorities for improvement delineate our practice and our leadership intentions in the year ahead.

"Tailored, child centred solutions are being implemented to manage the relentless high demand. Given these immense challenges, it is laudable that staff at all levels continue to provide effective and high-quality services."

Ofsted

Our national improvement priorities include:

- Using our new practice framework to help strengthen our social work analysis so that we clearly set out our reasoning for recommendations to the family court;
- strengthening our reports so that children's experiences, wishes and feeling are always central and that their feedback on our recommendations is also included;
- develop and implement our new assessment and case planning material to assist in our analysis and recommendations about children's futures;
- revising our supervision and management oversight arrangements so that there are consistent opportunities to explore complex casework and to reflect appropriately on the decisions we are making;
- developing an annual 'impact' narrative on the difference our practitioners and managers make to the lives of children and their families;
- developing clear practice guidance on how to understand and explain the impact of delayed proceedings on children's lives and futures;
- providing a robust analysis to the family court on the positive opportunities and risks associated with contact between children and non – resident parents;
- improved analysis in reports about the uniqueness of children and the impact of their special characteristics on our recommendations;
- strengthened understanding and exposition in reports of the risks to children who have or currently live with domestic abuse, including explaining our thinking to children, parents and carers and using their feedback to improve and change our practice;
- implementing the full range of priorities in our learning and improvement plan for domestic abuse;
- continuing to focus on seeing children, the quality of those engagements and maintaining a range of effective ways to work with them;
- implementing practice quality standards in respect of our public law work and our commitments to the President's public law working group recommendations.

Section 6

Our ambition and progress against our strategic plan



6.1

Our strategic priorities

We published our strategy for 2019–2023 in September 2019, knowing that the supporting delivery plan would need to take in new priorities with the arrival of a new Chief Executive, new operational directors, a new Cafcass Board Chair and new Board members. We started in earnest on delivery in the early summer of 2020 and have made good progress on our year one delivery plan which is available on our website. With some delay caused by the pandemic, we subsequently published our revised strategic delivery priorities for the full period of the strategy in March 2021.

The spotlight areas of practice, people and partners remain the central spine for our strategic priorities and these were revised back to the most important for delivery in the first year, given the continuing capacity that remains dedicated to our COVID-19 response. However, the main delivery priorities identified and developed in collaboration with the Family Justice Young People's Board and partners pre-COVID-19 remain not only relevant but more important than ever in our response to the pandemic. The priorities have provided strong foundations, helping Cafcass to confront critical issues such as the current delays in the family courts, and the impact that this is having on children, families and colleagues across the family justice system.

These priorities confirm our commitment to continuing the strong grip and oversight already in place, enhanced by a key practice development programme; deeper interest in the impact of our work with children and the difference we make in their lives; leadership of practice at the frontline; a closer interest in seeking and using feedback and the leadership with partners of system reform in the medium and longer term. The



strategic delivery priorities provide a more detailed view of the work Cafcass is currently prioritising to develop and improve its service for children, their families, and its services to the courts.

Oversight of our Strategic Plan is orchestrated through reports to our strategic Corporate Management Team meeting every six weeks, with the work under practice, people and partners led by our Directors of Operations, Director of Resources and Director of Strategy respectively. The Cafcass Board also receive regular reports on progress against the strategy, reviewing priorities to ensure they remain relevant.

Practice

We are proud that we were able to sustain excellence and improve our practice in line with the Strategic Plan despite the impact of the pandemic on capacity across the organisation and the family justice system.

The practice pillar of the Strategic Plan is underpinned by three delivery priorities: being **practice-led** and involving our experienced practitioners in sustained quality improvement work; being **feedback-informed** so that our practice is influenced by families and children; and demonstrating our organisational commitment to constantly **learn and improve** our practice. Highlights from the core programmes we delivered to improve our **practice** include:

Delivery Priority 1: Practice led

- The development of a **new framework for practice:** Together with children and families encourages a more curious, relationship-based approach focused on reasons for recommendations that are both clear and recorded in children's files. Together was informed by feedback from families and children and based on a restorative model of practice. A series of learning and development days were held on the principles of relation-based working and restorative practice across and a series of tools for applying the Together principles in our casework were piloted and evaluated in 13 social work teams.
- We introduced new **introductory letters for children** to explain more about who we are and how we will engage with them throughout our work. These letters also give children an opportunity to tell us more about who they are and what we need to know about them to work with them effectively.

Delivery Priority 2: Feedback informed

- We commenced a review of complaints to learn where we don't get things right and how we can adapt in response. The review will be completed in year two with the receipt and implementation of recommendations.
- As a complement to the complaints review we reviewed more than 250 complaints and child case files where we identified potential learning. We used these to identify adults and children who may benefit from a restorative 'listen and learn' conversation (for adults) or 'how was it for you' conversations (for children). These conversations have been one way in which we have recruited inaugural members of our Family Forum and have also helped identify some of the themes that Forum will work on when it gets going in year two. We are delighted that the FJYPB has helped facilitate the 'how was it for you' conversations with children and that these have proved to be an effective route for identifying new FJYPB members.
- We developed and tested a methodology for the eliciting feedback from the children and families in our audit process and tested this in the audit of 200 case records which featured allegations of domestic abuse. This was used to inform our Domestic Abuse Practice Improvement Plan.

Delivery Priority 3: Learn and improve

As described in Section 5 of this report,

- We delivered our self-evaluation to Ofsted in advance of our annual monitoring visit which took place in April 2021.
- Our self-evaluation drew on a deeper understanding of regional delivery and performance, developed through the introduction of areas-based performance boards. These enable the leadership team to understand the operating context, strengths and challenges of each area, and to identify good practice to share as well as issues that might need a national solution.
- We used our self-assessment and regional performance board to develop our National Improvement Plan and made minor adjustments to the plan in the light of feedback from Ofsted.
- We set up a Learning and Improvement Board to oversee our change programme in response to the Ministry of Justice's Expert Panel on Harm in the Family Courts.

People

Our people are our greatest strength and this year has highlighted in particular the dedication and commitment of staff across the organisation. We have had to be even more creative than usual to ensure our staff continue to have the right leadership, oversight and working environment to help them do their best work and improve outcomes for children. The three delivery priorities which sit underneath the people pillar are: focusing on **reward, recognition, recruitment and retention**; developing **efficient and effective systems and resources**; and having **clear lines of sight** throughout Cafcass.

Delivery Priority 4: Reward, recognition, recruitment and retention

- Our focus was on improving staff engagement during the pandemic, through leadership live events, enhanced leadership communications.
- We launched our **social work academy**, secured placements with our local authority partners and recruited the initial cohort.
- We developed our new **workforce strategy**, prioritising first the work we needed to do to bring in additional social workers to help cope with the additional caseload that built up during the pandemic. The strategy will be published in year two.
- We built the foundations for our new **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy**. We appointed a new Equalities Lead, commissioned a baseline audit of our compliance with the public sector equality duty, and improved our analysis of the protected characteristics of the children we work with and of our employees. We worked with our staff diversity networks, our practice diversity champions, and our extended leadership team to identify the four areas we will prioritise in our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which will now be published in year two.

Delivery Priority 5: Efficient and effective systems and resources

- We continued to build our **people first work environment**: major IT projects were delivered, including our new case management system which enhances children's voices and improves case planning and performance information, and our new intranet, Connect, which provides a more intuitive platform for staff to access information. Our work on equality, diversity and inclusion is much more prominent on Connect than before and ensures that key events to celebrate diversity and learning from practice are accessed more readily.
- We strengthened and adapted our wellbeing offer, including throughout the pandemic and remote working.
- We have now completed 30 of the 32 recommendations in our Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) action plan and the ICO reviewed and were satisfied with our progress. The remaining projects are longer term (training related) and will continue into years two and three.

Delivery Priority 6: Clear lines of sight

- We strengthened connection between our leadership and the organisation through our more regular briefings, our Leadership Live events, and our regional Performance Boards. We also introduced 'practice think-ins' to engage and problem solve with front line staff working with children and families or in corporate roles.
- We developed our new standards for leadership and management and will be launching them across Cafcass in year two alongside Together with children and families, our new practice framework which emphasises relationships at the heart of our culture, values and how we work with each other and with children and families.
- Our success framework is still in development and is being taken forward in year two.

Partners

The challenges facing the family justice system can only be addressed through partnership working across the system to ensure that change is radical but delivered at a manageable pace to achieve sustainable change. The key delivery priorities which underpin the Partners pillar are: maintaining a focus on **managing demand**; ensuring system partners are sharing knowledge and being **accountable for outcomes**; and developing **family justice reform**.

Delivery Priority 7: Manage demand

- We introduced an internal demand reduction programme to help tackle increasing practitioner caseloads. This programme included establishing a centralised team to provide additional section 7 welfare assessments in service areas at peak capacity; working with courts to reduce duplicate cases, reduce orders for updated assessments and ensure closure of cases where no further work from Cafcass was needed; and streamlining our initial safeguarding letters where a fuller section 7 welfare assessment would be needed. By the end of the year the growth in the number of open cases had started to stabilise.
- We worked with the Ministry of Justice, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service and the senior judiciary to collate more meaningful data about pressure in public and private law for each Designated Family Judge to assist local leadership conversations about how to amend ways of working to reduce delay and make best use of limited resource. This included working with the judiciary to develop and test a range of options for amending the private law Child Arrangements Programme to streamline case management. This will include coordinated work with the courts to ensure work ordered from Cafcass will make a material difference to court decisions.

Delivery Priority 8: Accountable for outcomes

- As part of our work to ensure family justice system focus on the impact of delay for children, we worked with the Association for Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) to conduct a snapshot survey of local authorities to capture information about children experiencing delay in public proceedings and to assess the impact of delay on the child.
- We improved our recording and analysis of diversity characteristics as a first step towards working with partners on better understanding of the diversity of children and families in the family justice system, and to assess whether there are differential outcomes.
- We published our new research governance framework, which sets out when and how researchers can apply to access information held by Cafcass for research purposes. We established our new Research Advisory Committee which includes advisers drawn from academia, independent research organisations and the Family Justice Young People's Board. The committee provides independent advice and scrutiny to our decisions to allow research access; and shares intelligence about current and forthcoming research which is relevant to Cafcass practice.

Delivery Priority 9: Family justice reform

- Cafcass was instrumental in establishing the Family Justice Reform Implementation Group which is taking forward the priority reforms in private and public law agreed through the Family Justice Board.
- The Director of Strategy is a member of the private law pilots steering group which is overseeing the design and delivery of private law reform building on the design of the investigative approach recommended by the Expert Panel on Harm in the Family Courts. We will test the new approach in the Dorset pathfinder in the coming year.
- Cafcass played an active role in the launch of the Public Law Working Group report and commenced work on new practice standards for Cafcass guardians to implement the changes.

In developing our programme for year two we have identified four projects which will together set us on the path to the transformed service we want to see for children and families. These are longer term projects which will extend beyond the end of the current strategy period in 2023, but we need to start them now so that we build firm foundations for the future. These transformation projects have been catalysed by the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic. The projects are:

1. Together with children and families:

a new practice framework to hold children and families at the heart of our practice and to promote strengths-based practice, respectful relationships, clear analysis and decision-making in all we do. This framework will reinforce and bring alive the new values and culture we want all those we work with to experience.

2. Workforce Matters:

a strategy to maintain our focus on **attracting** and **retaining** brilliant people while at the same time thinking carefully about the **shape of the organisation**, and the roles and responsibilities within it as well as the spans of control. This will help us develop clear plans about how many people we need and in what roles and with what **skill sets**.

3. DigiCafcass:

a new digital strategy to **extend the range of activities** we conduct with

children, their families, amongst staff and also with our partners in a **digital form** (whether alongside or instead of physical or manual services).

4. A new private law model:

We need to work towards a revised operating model for delivering Cafcass private law that will support the private law reform programme, incorporating an investigate approach to better serve families experiencing domestic abuse and other forms of harm. We will play a key role in the private law pathfinders to test a revised Child Arrangements Programme in private law, and to deliver a more efficient, effective and tailored service in the work up to a first hearing. This will include improved information gathering, earlier direct work with children where needed, greater continuity in the allocated Family Court Adviser, and earlier access to programmes like the Separated Parents Information Programme and Cafcass Positive Co-Parenting Programme.

Together these transformation projects and the other projects in our year two delivery plan will enable us to: invest in more collaborative relationships with children and families, colleagues, and partners; creating an environment where Cafcass colleagues can exercise professional judgement and are accountable for the difference made; and building on our strengths through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Signed: Jacky Tiotto
 Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
 Date: 18 October 2021




Accountability Report



7.1

Corporate governance report

This section reviews and evaluates the governance, risk and control arrangements in place in Cafcass. It also sets out how we are organised and who is responsible for managing and running Cafcass, including, our Chair of the Board, members of the Board, our Chief Executive and our Corporate and Operational Management Teams. It comprises:

- the Directors' report
- the statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities
- our governance statement

The Directors' report

The Directors present their annual report, together with the financial statements and auditor's report.

The Chair of the Cafcass Board is Sally Cheshire CBE who was appointed by the Secretary of State on 16 December 2019 on an interim basis, and then substantively as Chair from 1 April 2021, following the resignation of Edward Timpson CBE.

The Board is made up of non-executive members, listed below, who have been appointed in accordance with the Membership, Committee and Procedure Regulations 2005.

Cafcass Board membership:

- Sally Cheshire CBE**, Chair
- Professor Eileen Munro CBE**, Deputy Chair
- Helen Jones** (Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee)
- Caroline Corby** (resigned 25 January 2021)
- Deep Sagar** (until 31 March 2021)
- Paul Grant** (Chair of the Performance and Quality Committee)

Catherine Doran (Chair of the People Committee)

Mandy Jones

Joanna Nicolas, Co-opted Board member

Sophie Humphreys OBE, Co-opted Board member

Register of interests

Board members have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest; a register of interests can be found on our website.

Information assurance

Cafcass agrees that no unauthorised disclosure of personal data is acceptable but acknowledges that the risk cannot be entirely eliminated. There is a commitment from Cafcass, the Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to continue the work to focus on mitigation and there are improvements in place to seek to lower the number of data breaches.

In 2020/21, Cafcass recorded 424 data incidents of which 251 were classified as personal data breaches. Nine of these personal data breaches fell within the legal requirement for reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office which represents 2.1% of all breaches and 0.39% of all cases. These represent a substantial reduction compared with 2019/2020. The reduction is primarily the result of the move to remote working and digital-only correspondence which was accelerated by the pandemic. It is also the consequence of the improvement activity taken forward following an audit of records management and data security by the ICO in August 2019.

Table 1 – Incidents and breaches for 2020/21 and 2019/20

	2020/21	2019/2020
Total number of data incidents investigated	424 (50% reduction from last year)	855
Confirmed breaches	251	415
Reported to ICO	9 ⁷	29

The statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, the Secretary of State has directed Cafcass to prepare for each financial year a Statement of Accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of Cafcass and of its net resource outturn, application of resources, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Secretary of State, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

The Principal Accounting Officer of the Ministry of Justice has appointed the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer of Cafcass. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding Cafcass' assets, are set out in 'Managing Public Money' published by the HM Treasury.

As far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which Cafcass' auditors are unaware. She has taken all steps possible to make herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that Cafcass' auditors are aware of that information.

The Accounting Officer confirms that the annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable. She takes personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgments required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The governance statement

Cafcass is an executive non-departmental public body for which I, Jacky Tiotto, am the Chief Executive and the Accounting Officer. I am personally responsible and accountable to Parliament for the organisation and quality of the work carried out by Cafcass, including its use of public money and the stewardship of its assets.

There have been no material changes in our governance framework during the financial year, other than retaining the weekly COVID-19 Programme Board through which we continue to lead our impact and recovery work. Our governance arrangements satisfy the requirements of the main principles of the code 'Corporate governance in central government departments: Code of Good Practice' that are relevant to Cafcass. I consider our Governance Framework to be effective.

The Ministry of Justice

As a non-departmental public body Cafcass is accountable to our sponsoring department, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). We work within the strategic objectives agreed with MoJ. We agree an annual Delivery Plan with MoJ which reflects our statutory duties, our contribution to MoJ targets, and our plans to deliver efficiency targets. In 2020/21 regular meetings have been held between Cafcass these requirements has been scrutinised. We work closely with MoJ on policy development and we contribute in agreed, defined ways to MoJ policy objectives for the family justice system. The frequency of both formal and ad-hoc engagement with the MoJ has inevitably increased as a result of the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

The Cafcass Board

The Board use their expertise and experience to establish the organisation's strategic aims and objectives. Their work has previously been supported by two committees, and in 2021/22 will be strengthened again with a new People Committee.

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee: provides assurance to the Board and Accounting Officer on audit, risk and control issues.
- Performance and Quality Committee: supports the Board in overseeing the performance of services, the quality of casework and the impact of that work on children and families, Cafcass and the courts.
- People Committee: provides assurance to the Board over the policy and strategy frameworks for the recruitment, retention, reward and development of people.

The Board and its existing two sub-committees formally met on a quarterly basis during the year.

⁷ ICO concluded 'no further action' in all 9

The People Committee held its first meeting in June 2021. The formal meetings of the Board were supplemented by Board Briefings by the Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team to ensure the Board were kept fully abreast of ongoing and emerging challenges posed by the pandemic.

There is also a Remuneration Committee which is convened as and when needed.

The Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB) works across the family justice system to promote the voice of the child in family court proceedings and is integral to the family justice reform process. A representative of the FJYPB attends each Cafcass Board meeting, providing an update about their work and scrutinising and challenging the work of the Board in the best interests of the children and families we serve.

Meetings attended per member out of those eligible to attend

Board member	Board meeting	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Performance and Quality Committee
Sally Cheshire CBE	3 of 3	n/a	n/a
Caroline Corby*	3 of 3	4 of 5	3 of 4
Deep Sagar	3 of 3	4 of 5	4 of 4
Paul Grant	3 of 3	n/a	4 of 4
Catherine Doran	3 of 3	4 of 5	n/a
Mandy Jones	3 of 3	1 of 1	3 of 4
Joanna Nicolas	3 of 3	n/a	4 of 4
Sophie Humphreys OBE	3 of 3	n/a	1 of 1
Helen Jones	3 of 3	5 of 5	n/a
Rohan Sivanandan	3 of 3	3 of 3	n/a
Professor Eileen Munro CBE	3 of 3	n/a	2 of 2

*Caroline Corby resigned from the Board in January 2021

- The Board and its existing two sub-committees formally met on a quarterly basis during the year. Three Board meetings were held with a fourth in early April 2021. Two of the 2020/21 Boards were open to stakeholders and members of the public to observe.
- Six Board briefings were also held during the year. These are informal meetings between the Board and the Corporate Management Team and are used for keeping the Board sighted on ongoing and emerging challenges in-between formal meetings.

Internal management structure

The Chief Executive was supported during the year by five directors and together they make up the Corporate Management Team (CMT): the Director of Strategy, the Director of Resources and the Operational Service Directors for the North and South. The former National Service Director retired in October in 2020. At the time of writing, this structure is under review.

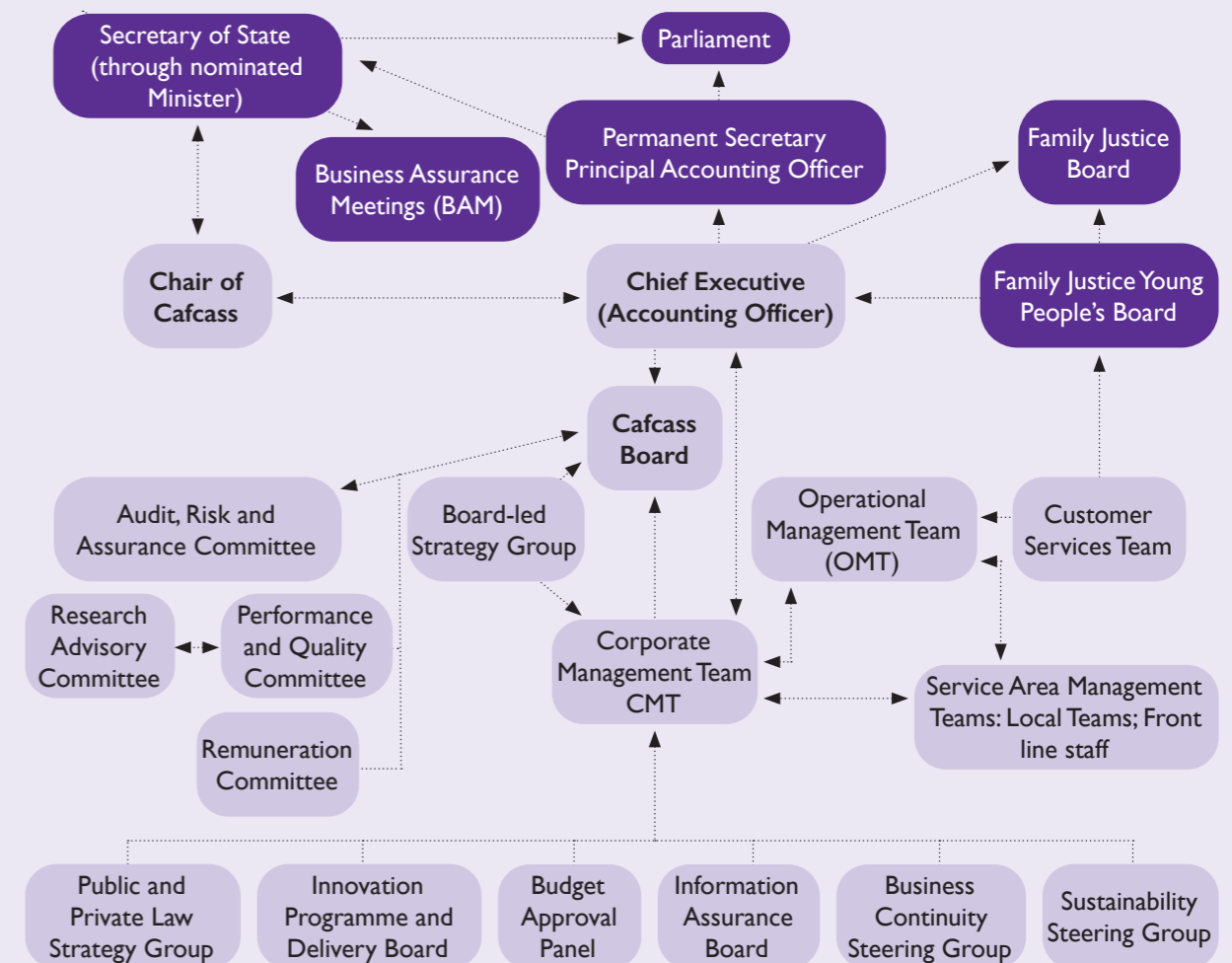
CMT meets weekly following a clear governance and decision-making cycle which allows discussion in themed meetings and includes a range of senior managers across the organisation in attendance.

The Operational Management Team (OMT) is led by the Operational Service Directors. Its membership is made up of the assistant directors, operational heads of practice, and representatives from teams that directly support operational services including Finance, Human Resources and Business Analysis. OMT meets monthly to manage performance across the country. The Directors of Strategy and Resources meet regularly with their managers to review performance across their respective portfolios.

Service Area Meetings take place locally every month in each service area to lead and implement corporate and operational decisions into local actions. Local team meetings complete this cascade structure and process, which includes the learning both

from things we could have done better and from best practice. Periodic meetings within the specialist functional teams also take place for the same purposes.

We have internal boards and groups which are managed by members of the CMT to ensure that we keep abreast of regulations and requirements in line with good governance principles: Operational Management Team, Information Assurance Board, Research Advisory Committee, Innovation and Programme Delivery Board, Business Continuity Steering Group and Budget Approval Panel. Delivery Boards were introduced during 2020/21 to govern the delivery of the Strategic Plan priorities (one Delivery Board for each pillar).



The Board's performance

The Chair of the Cafcass Board is Sally Cheshire CBE who was appointed by the Secretary of State on 16 December 2019 on an interim basis following the resignation of Edward Timpson CBE and then substantively as Chair from 1 April 2021.

During 2020/21 the Board continued to govern and perform its role effectively and Board members continue to work closely with members of the CMT to provide strong leadership to achieve our priorities.

I am confident that the quality of the data used by the Board is robust. All reports prior to submission to the Board are subject to rigorous quality assurance processes by senior managers. The effectiveness of the systems that generate the financial and performance data contained within the reports is evidenced through positive internal audit and inspection results.

We aim to keep reports clear, concise and focused on the purpose of the Board's reviewing. An example of this is our Performance Report, which provides an overall high-level position and assessment of our performance against our strategic objectives and risks and is aligned with the corporate work programme which drives the actions needed to meet our objectives.

Assurance arrangements

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) has oversight of the organisation's governance, risk and internal control frameworks. It receives reports on matters of assurance and oversees the preparation and publication of the financial statements each year.

ARAC has oversight of the organisation's governance, risk and internal control frameworks. It receives reports on matters of assurance and oversees the preparation of the financial statements.

ARAC oversees the internal audit programme work and delivery arrangements. The Head of Internal Audit role and internal audit programme are provided through the Government Internal Audit Agency.

In line with our Assurance Framework, we report annually on assurance to the Accounting Officer and ARAC. The annual assurance report identifies the internal controls mapped against the three lines of defence (i.e. operational controls, management monitoring, and independent assurance) and how they are performing. This process is supported by an internal steering group which is Chaired by the Director of Resources. The 2020/21 Assurance Report confirmed that the control environment was adequate and supported the Governance Framework. This report also provides a mechanism for identifying areas to be included in the Government Internal Audit Agency audit programme for further scrutiny of the performance of controls.

Internal audit

The planned programme of audit work was met during the year which included three audit reports and an advisory review. Cafcass was given an overall assurance of Substantial.

Rating – Substantial

- Strategic Prioritisation
- Workforce Allocation

Rating - Limited

- IR35

Strategic and business plans

Our Strategic Plan was launched in September 2019 and sets the direction for Cafcass over the next four years until 2023. The plan was developed over several months and informed by the views of staff and partners. Setting out a collective vision and values, the strategy looks outwards, with the aspiration of working more closely with partners and families to improve the

experiences and outcomes for children and parents involved within the family justice system. The strategy sets out three broad strategic goals:

1. To deliver the best quality social work and support service in every case, to help make things better for children and their families, wherever they live.
 2. For our staff to have the support, resources and working environment that enables them to sustain excellence in challenging times.
 3. To share knowledge, learn from others and use our collective influence to improve the family justice system and wider family policy.
- The delivery of the strategic plan is monitored by the CMT and substantive bi-annual reporting to the Cafcass Board.

Business continuity planning

Business continuity planning creates resilience within our processes and tools (such as IT systems) so that we can continue to deliver our service effectively during unexpected disruptive events. Each Cafcass site has a continuity plan in place. Our Business Continuity Steering Group and Incident Management Team support this work.

How we manage risk

Our risk management policy sets out our approach to risk management and outlines our responsibilities in the management of risk throughout the organisational structure, including how risk is escalated.

This includes the responsibility of CMT members (executive directors) who are senior risk owners of strategic risks and responsible for reporting and ensuring changes to strategic risks and emerging risks are reported to CMT, ARAC and the Board.

The risk management function is managed and delivered within the Resources Directorate and the risk management policy is reviewed annually.

Following a review of the risk reporting process a new Strategic and Organisational Risk Report was introduced. This captures strategic risks and above tolerance organisational risks and mitigation actions being taken. The report is reviewed quarterly by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Board. The Performance and Quality Committee and People Committee will receive the report at each Committee meeting to consider practice and people related risks.

Internal controls that help manage and reduce risk are monitored through our Assurance Framework and categorised using a three-line of defence model: operational controls, management monitoring, and independent assurance. We also conduct a separate risk assessment of the wider environment in which we work, to provide more transparency around our understanding and management of risks outside the organisation, which do or could impact on our work.

Our strategic risk profile saw some increase in risk which related to issues associated with the pandemic including pressure of rising demand and delays in concluding cases in court resulting in growing caseloads.

Noteworthy risks around case management and safeguarding include not seeing children, either as a result of sickness or pandemic restrictions, which means that there is an inadequate understanding of the child's lived experience, wishes and feelings. Our mitigation includes an operational action plan aiming to have 100% of records where a child is expected to be seen, in line with our policies; the plan is monitored through OMT spotlight reports which are then scrutinised by CMT.

Another operational risk is maintaining the quality of casework in times of pressure, including the risk that records of domestic abuse, equality, diversity and inclusion and/or our case plans are not routinely

recorded in a timely way, potentially resulting in a lack of awareness of the individual needs of the child, delay in reaching an outcome and a hindrance in effectively peer reviewing cases. An OMT action plan is also in place, with areas showing a lower level of recording being investigated by the local assistant director who produces an analysis of the reasons identified. Any actions to improve the identification and recording of domestic abuse or other pertinent matters would then be taken; actions are also reported via the OMT Spotlight Report and through this rigorous risk management process, the quality of our work was maintained.

Our Remit Budget risk continued to be assessed as high and additional funding was agreed through MoJ to help tackle demand. This coupled with the constant vigilance of budget managers and their management of the tension between workforce capacity and the ability to allocate incoming work with the resources available, allowed the funding situation to be managed.

The assessment of residual risk relating to workforce and demand continued to be assessed as high to acknowledge the continued rising demand in private law together with high levels of open work in the system, creating pressure on capacity. This is now being treated as a key issue for Cafcass and short-term mitigation includes implementation of the prioritisation protocol.

We continue to monitor organisational and strategic risk through the new reporting process which includes identification of emerging risks, and this is supported by regular assessment of environment risk. There were no noteworthy emerging strategic risks at the end of the financial year.

The assessment of risk relating to COVID-19 continued to be monitored as a strategic risk and the response is described elsewhere in this report.

Information assurance

Our position statement on Cafcass' information assurance arrangements is as follows:

The Director of Strategy is the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) for Cafcass and is supported in this role by the Governance team, the Head of IT who is our Chief Information Officer (CIO) and the Information Assurance manager, who also holds the statutory role of Data Protection Officer (DPO). The DPO role is independent of senior management and is therefore managed by the head of the legal team. Information assurance remains a priority within Cafcass and regular reports to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee include information on compliance with Cafcass' duties under the Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The SIRO chairs the Information Assurance Board (IAB), which meets quarterly and is attended by the Information Asset Owners who monitor and assess any information management associated risks. The IAB reviews the log of data breaches and monitors any changes in the trends, nature and volume of breaches. A data breach report is presented to ARAC twice yearly for further scrutiny and oversight before being presented at Board. We continue to self-assess at a high level of assurance.

Cafcass retains a focus on information security and continues to promote best practice and ensure that staff are alert to the risks at the same time as developing strategies to avoid breaches.

- Cafcass continues to ensure that information is stored and processed securely: storage is compliant with recommended government security levels and all electronic devices are encrypted.

- ⁸ It is Cafcass policy for all email communication to be sent by default via Egress which is a secure environment reducing the risk of data being accessible to third parties.
- Cafcass has IT, Information Assurance, and Case Recording and Retention policies which are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they reflect best practice.
- We have developed a Cafcass-specific training module 'Protecting Information in Cafcass' which is mandatory for all staff and was updated during 2020/21. The expectation is that this training will be repeated every three years but sooner if learning is identified following a data breach. In 2020/21 completion rates of the training was 93%.
- Cafcass has continued its Information Assurance Campaign to staff through Cafcass' intranet with monthly updates of information, news and good practice. The objective of the campaign is to ensure staff are aware of key messages on important data protection issues and the importance of keeping information secure is emphasised.
- Data protection and data breaches are expected to be an item on the agenda of every team meeting for those who are based at the National Business Centre and Early Intervention Teams across the organisation.
- As part of the actions arising from the Information Commissioner's Officer (ICO) audit, Cafcass will be reviewing its training programme across the organisation and incorporating data protection training into other core training for staff.

- Security incident returns are submitted quarterly to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). We report our position annually in relation to the Security Policy Framework and planned future work to the Cabinet Office via MoJ.

Following the ICO voluntary audit in August 2019 the Governance team continue to progress those ongoing ICO actions.

In order to ensure that only incidents which meet the threshold are notified to the ICO, the Governance team will continue to process those considered potentially serious breaches through the SIRI (Serious Incidents Requiring Investigation) grid in order to thoroughly and accurately assess incidents which are likely to be reportable to the ICO. The Governance team continue to progress those ongoing actions from the 2019 ICO audit.

Overall conclusions from the Accounting Officer

I consider that our governance framework has continued to operate effectively with the additional measures outlined elsewhere, necessary to manage the impact of COVID-19. We have more than ever continued to prioritise our efforts and resources into supporting the frontline service. Our experience of rising demand, the complexity of the work and the record levels of work staying open longer creates the prospects of continuing significant challenges ahead. These challenges are not only in how to maintain the quality of our work with children but also, equally importantly, how we can continue to sustain and ensure the resilience of the health and wellbeing of our staff. In this context, while the governance framework in place is working for now, we will continue to keep this under review.

⁸ Further information can be found in the Cafcass recording and retention policy <https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/about-cafcass/policies/>

7.2

Remuneration and staff report

The purpose of this section is to set out the pay and benefits received by Cafcass Board members and directors, our pay and pensions' policies, details of staff numbers and costs, and our policies to support staff including equality and diversity commitments.

Remuneration policy

Cafcass Board members are appointed by the MoJ according to the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Membership, Committee and Procedure) Regulations 2005, which sets out all terms of appointment except remuneration, which is determined by the Secretary of State. Board members are statutory office holders and, as such, do not hold a contract of employment. Cafcass Board members are appointed on one, two, three or four-year terms.

The remuneration of Cafcass directors is recommended for approval by the Chief Executive to the Remuneration Committee, made up of the Chairs of the Cafcass Board and each of its committees. The MoJ determines the salary of the Chief Executive. Cafcass salaries are established by considering factors such as relevant external comparator pay levels, internal benchmarks, affordability, recruitment and retention risks, and political sensitivity. There was no change to this policy for the 2020/21 financial year.

Service contracts

Cafcass' appointments of directors are made in accordance with the Cafcass Recruitment and Retention Policy. This policy recognises that in order to provide a high-quality service

to the children and families that we serve, it is vital that we recruit and retain people through fair and open competition who share our aims and values and have the requisite skills and abilities to perform to a consistently high standard.

Unless otherwise stated, staff covered by this report hold appointments that are open-ended. Members of Cafcass' Corporate Management Team (CMT) are required to provide four or six months' notice to terminate their contract. Early termination by Cafcass, other than for gross misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation by way of payment in lieu of notice, as set out in the individual contract of employment. No such payments were made to senior executives during the year.

Remuneration of Cafcass Board members and senior management

Remuneration includes gross salary, benefits-in-kind, and pension benefits (employer's pension contributions). More detail on these is set out below in the remuneration tables.

Single total remuneration figures for Cafcass Board members^{9/10}

Board members	Salary (£000)		Bonus payments (£000)		Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)		Pension benefits (£000)		Total (£000)	
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
Francis Plowden (until 31st March 20)	-	10-15	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	10-15
Fay Selvan (until 31st March 20)	-	10-15	-	-	2800	3000	-	-	0-5	10-15
Stuart Smith (until 31st March 20)	-	10-15	-	-	2200	2200	-	-	0-5	10-15
Caroline Corby (until 25th Jan 21)	5-10 (10-15 annualised)	10-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	5-10 (10-15 annualised)	10-15
Paul Grant	10-15	10-15	-	-	400	300	-	-	10-15	10-15
Deep Sagar (until 31st March 21)	10-15	10-15	-	-	400	300	-	-	10-15	10-15
Joanna Nicolas	10-15	10-15	-	-	300	-	-	-	10-15	10-15
Sally Cheshire CBE	30-35	15-20	-	-	5200	7400	-	-	35-40	20-25
Catherine Doran	10-15	10-15	-	-	500	500	-	-	10-15	10-15
Sophie Humphreys OBE	10-15	10-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	10-15	10-15
Mandy Jones	10-15	10-15	-	-	800	800	-	-	10-15	10-15
Edward Timpson CBE (Until 16th December 19)	-	5-10 (10-15 annualised)	-	-	1500	1200	-	-	0-5	5-10 (10-15 annualised)
Rohan Sivanandan (from 1st April 20)	10-15	10-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	10-15	-
Professor Eileen Munro CBE (from 1st April 20)	10-15	10-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	10-15	-
Helen Jones (from 1st April 20)	10-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10-15	-

⁹This information has been audited

¹⁰ In line with the HM Revenue & Customs travel and subsistence policy, amounts for 2020/21 were paid to Board members to reimburse them for the additional tax payments which were made in the previous financial year.

Single total remuneration figures for Cafcass Directors¹¹

Directors	Salary (£000)		Bonus payments (£000)		Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)		Pension benefits (£000)		Total (£000)	
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
Jacky Tiotto, Chief Executive	170-175	95-100 (Annualised 165-170)	-	-	100	-	29	14	200-205	110-115 (Annualised 180-185)
Julie Brown, Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive	135-140	135-140	-	10-15	100	100	39	49	175-180	195-200
Christine Banim, National Service Director (to 27th October 20)	65-70 (115-120 Annualised)	115-120	10-15	5-10	-	100	-	-	75-80 (125-130 Annualised)	120-125
Teresa Williams, Director of Strategy	125-130	120-125	-	-	100	100	38	36	165-170	155-160
Anji Owens, Director of Operational Performance	115-120	25-30 (115-120 Annualised)	-	-	100	-	102	8	220-225	35-40 (Annualised 120-125)
Kevin Gibbs, Director of Operational Performance	115-120	25-30 (115-120 Annualised)	-	-	100	-	53	8	170-175	35-40 (Annualised 120-125)
Jack Cordery, Operational Director (from 5th March 20)	5-10 (120-125 Annualised)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5-10 (120-125 Annualised)	-

¹¹ This information has been audited

Salary

'Salary' includes: basic salary, London weighting, honorarium, overtime, market supplement (discretionary payment for some posts to aid retention and recruitment), buy-back of untaken annual leave, and Pay in lieu of Notice (PILON).

Bonus Payments (Performance Related Pay)

Performance related pay (PRP) is based on performance in the year. Targets are set annually and based on overall performance towards the achievements of the business plan objectives (stated below). Threshold performance would result in a PRP payment of no more than 10% of basic salary. Performance below threshold would result in no payment being paid.

PRP awards for Cafcass staff are determined by the Chief Executive and must be endorsed by the Remuneration Committee. PRP for

the Chief Executive is determined by the Remuneration Committee and the MoJ. The strategic objectives that are relevant for PRP consideration are to:

- Show continuous improvement in our performance and in the quality of our work;
- Innovate and reform in public and private law, to use our resources to best effect;
- Develop an evidence base that analyses the diversity related needs of children and families and in turn briefs and trains our staff to respond to these changes;
- Continue delivering savings packages required by innovating throughout all front and back-office functions and across organisational boundaries;
- Use our unique position and insight to generate high impact and timely research to inform our own practice and influence that across the family justice system.

Payments to former directors¹²

No payments were made to any person who was not a director at the time but had been a director of Cafcass previously. Any previous payments to former directors are included in prior years reports.

- Remuneration for Board Members
- Remuneration for directors
- Fair Pay Disclosure
- Pensions Costs additional cash contribution of £1.0500m for 2020/21.
- Any exit packages (nil)

¹² This information has been audited

Benefits in Kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any non-cash benefits provided by Cafcass and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument. Board members' travel costs to the Cafcass National Office are reimbursed to them via Payroll/PAYE, which acts as a benefit in kind.

Pension entitlements for directors

Pension benefits are provided by the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF), to which Cafcass makes employer's contributions. Further information on the Cafcass pension schemes can be found on page 128, and in Note 1 and Note 22 of the Annual Accounts.

The accrued pension at retirement age is the pension earned that the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over pension age.

Cash equivalent transfer value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme (or arrangement) when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. CETVs are calculated within the guidelines and framework prescribed by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that individuals have accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figure includes the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the pension provider and for which the pension provider has received a transfer payment commensurate to the additional pension liabilities being assumed. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing of additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost.

The real increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer excludes increases due to inflation and contributions paid by the Director (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement). It uses common market valuation factors for the start and the end of the period.

	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at retirement age (£2,500 bands) (£000)	Total accrued pension at retirement age at 31st March 2021 and related lump sum (£5,000 bands) (£000)	CETV at 31st March 2020 (£000)	CETV at 31st March 2021 (£000)	Real increase in CETV after adjustment for inflation and changes in market investment factors (nearest £000)
Jacky Tiotto, Chief Executive	0-2.5 plus 0-2.5 lump sum	15-20 plus 0-5 lump sum	186	223	32
Julie Brown, Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive	2.5-5 plus 0-2.5 lump sum	30-35 plus 0-5 lump sum	397	448	49
Christine Banim, National Service Director (to 27/10/20)	-	-	-	-	-
Teresa Williams Director of Strategy	2.5-5 plus 0-2.5 lump sum	5-10 plus 0-5 lump sum	63	100	36
Anji Owens, Director of Operational Performance	5-7.5 plus 5-7.5 lump sum	40-45 plus 50-55 lump sum	565	668	100
Kevin Gibbs, Director for Operational Service Delivery	2.5-5 plus 0-2.5 lump sum	20-25 plus 0-5 lump sum	297	360	61
Jack Cordery, Operational Director (from 05/03/21)	-	-	-	-	-

¹³This information has been audited

Compensation on early retirement or for loss of office¹⁴

No senior managers received compensatory payments in 2020/21.

¹⁴This information has been audited

Fair pay disclosure¹⁵

This shows the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid director in the organisation and the median remuneration of the organisation's workforce. This is based on full-time equivalent salaries.

	2020/21	2019/20
Highest earner's total banded remuneration (£000)	170-175	165-170
Median total remuneration	£43,525	£42,669
Ratio	1:3.96	1:3.91

¹⁵This information has been audited

In 2020/21 nil employees received remuneration in excess of the highest paid director (2019/20 also nil). Remuneration ranged from £13,000 to £175,000 (2019/20, £10,000 - £175,000).

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

Staff Report

Number of senior civil service equivalent staff

Cafcass has 20 staff who are the equivalent of senior civil servants (SCS): 13 members of the Operational Management Team and 7 senior managers in corporate teams (this excludes directors, whose remuneration has been set out above).

Salary band	Number of SCS equivalent within band as at 31 March 2021
£70,000-£80,000	3
£80,000-£90,000	1
£90,000-£100,000	11
£100,000-£110,000	5
Total	20

Staff numbers and costs

Cafcass staff members are subject to levels of remuneration and terms and conditions of service (including superannuation) within the general pay structure approved by MoJ.

An analysis of staff numbers and costs is set out below, distinguishing between staff with permanent contracts, and staff who are

flexible, agency, and self-employed contractors. All staff numbers are presented on an actual basis¹⁶ as at the reporting date (31 March 2021) and reflect head count; staff costs are presented on total cost during the reporting period (April 2020 – March 2021).¹⁷

Staff numbers (31 March 2021)¹⁸

	Social worker	Other	Total
Cafcass Board members	-	10	10
Corporate staff	-	150	150
Operational staff	1,564	348	1,912
Employed flexible staff (bank/sessional)	69	3	72
Total employees	1,633	501	2,134
Agency staff	112	42	154
Cafcass Associates (active)	109	-	109
Total flexible workforce	221	42	263
Grand total	1,854	543	2,397

¹⁸This information has been audited

¹⁶ The figures show staff numbers based on headcount, not full-time equivalent (FTE)

¹⁷ Staff costs information is audited. Spend based on full International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) stated cost, further information on which is set out in Section 10 Accounts.

Cafcass pay framework

Cafcass staff are employed on the Cafcass pay scale bands 1-10. Each band has a commencement point and a target point with progression based on an assessment of performance after 18 months in post.

The pay scale is underpinned by the Cafcass job evaluation framework. Senior management roles (not including directors) are appointed to spot salaries which are subject to internal and external benchmarking. The Cafcass pay framework does not align and is not linked to civil service pay grades.

Staff composition¹⁹

	Female	Male	Black, Asian, mixed or other minority ethnic group	Disability
Directors ²⁰	4	2	0	1
Senior civil service equivalent (excluding directors) ²¹	15 (75.0%)	15 (25.0%)	2 (10.0%)	0 (0%)
Other Cafcass staff	1,788 (84.8%)	320 (15.2%)	309 (14.7%)	177 (8.4%)
Total staff	1,807 (84.7%)	327 (15.3%)	311 (14.6%)	178 (8.3%)

Staff costs²²

2020/21	Cafcass Board Members	Corporate national office staff	Regional staff	Total
Salaries and wages	130,000	7,993,000	70,746,000	78,869,000
Apprentice levy	-	39,000	341,000	380,000
Social security costs	5,000	818,000	7,566,000	8,389,000
Current service cost	-	2,624,000	23,194,000	25,818,000
Other pension costs	-	8,000	1,000	9,000
Past pension service cost / (gain)	-	-	-	-
Total payroll costs	135,000	11,482,000	101,848,000	113,465,000
Agency social worker costs	-	44,000	3,982,000	4,026,000
Other agency staff costs	-	139,000	632,000	771,000
Self-employed contractors	-	-	2,233,000	2,233,000
Inward secondee costs	-	-	-	-
Total staff costs	135,000	11,665,000	108,695,000	120,495,000

²²This information has been audited

¹⁹ These figures are as self-reported by employed staff only; figures are not held for all employed staff as they may choose not to disclose the information.

²⁰ During 2020/21 six individuals held director roles at Cafcass and are shown in the table above. For the majority of the year there were five directors in post.

²¹ 13 members of the Operational Management Team and 7 senior managers in corporate teams.

Sickness absence data²³

	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Social workers average working days lost (excluding leavers)	8.7 (7.5)	9.6 (7.7)	9.9 (8.3)	8.7 (7.5)	10.6 (9.0)	7.6 (6.7)
Corporate and professional average working days lost (excluding leavers)	8.3 (7.3)	10.9 (9.1)	8.8 (8.0)	8.7 (8.1)	8.1 (7.1)	7.1 (6.2)
Overall average working days lost (excluding leavers)	8.6 (7.5)	9.9 (8.0)	9.6 (8.2)	8.7 (7.7)	10.0 (8.6)	7.5 (6.6)

11.2% of our workforce have had some level of absence due to COVID-19. Of these 8.8% of staff had a period of sickness absence and 2.7% of staff had absences which were due to caring responsibilities.

Expenditure on consultancy

There has been no expenditure on consultancy during 2020/21.

Off-payroll engagements

Cafcass conforms to relevant regulations in respect of tax arrangements for all off-payroll appointments and this includes an assessment of employment status as required under IR35. Where workers are engaged through an intermediary Cafcass undertakes an assessment of employment status for tax purposes and issues the required status determination statement. Where relevant Cafcass instructs that required deductions for income tax and national insurance are made. Cafcass has liaised closely on these matters during 2020/21 with the Ministry of Justice and the Government Tax Centre of Excellence in readiness for the changes to IR35 which took effect from April 2021. There have been no identified instances of non-tax compliant off-payroll engagements as at 31 March 2021.

Off payroll engagements within Cafcass includes agency workers and Cafcass

Associates and these are reported in the table on page 105. Of those there were 40 engagements during the reporting period that were deemed to be 'high paid'. Cafcass provides annual reporting to meet the PES requirement through the Ministry of Justice.

Turnover

Turnover for social work roles was 9% which is a slight reduction from the previous reporting period (9.7%). Turnover for corporate and professional roles was 8.7% which was a notable reduction from the previous reporting period (12%).

	Starters	Leavers	% Turnover
Corporate and professional	65	42	8.7%
Social workers	217	139	9%

²³ Some staff are double accounted: 11.2% of our workforce have had some level of absence due to COVID-19. Of these 8.8% of staff had a period of sickness absence and 2.7% of staff had absences which were due to caring responsibilities. 0.3% of staff had time off for both reasons.

Exit packages²⁴

There have been no paid exit packages during 2020/21 or previously during 2019/20. A summary of paid exit packages is set out below.

Exit package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages by cost band	
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
Less than £10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
£10,000 - £25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
£25,000 - £50,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
£50,000 - £100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
£100,000 - £150,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
£150,000 - £200,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of exit packages by type	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total resource cost (£000)	0	0	0	0	0	0

²⁴ This information has been audited

Cafcass policy on disabled staff

Cafcass does not operate a specific policy for staff with disabilities, however all of our policies are designed to ensure that issues related to or arising from disability are handled appropriately and do not place staff with underlying conditions at a disadvantage. Particular provisions are included within policies for employee relations, managing attendance and recruitment and retention including the requirement to make reasonable adjustments. In addition, the Cafcass IT policy makes specific provision for additional IT hardware, peripherals or software in cases where a particular need arises.

We currently hold 'Disability Confident Leader' (Level 3) status which is the highest level within the accreditation framework. This confirms that our arrangements to support the recruitment retention and progression of disabled people have been independently validated. The framework now incorporates a specific focus on the arrangements that

organisations have in place to support staff who experience challenges in relation to mental health and wellbeing. This provides further confirmation of the work we have undertaken in this area.

Our range of staff diversity networks includes 'Ability Matters' – our network supporting staff with disabilities and a further network supporting staff who experience challenges in relation to mental health and wellbeing. Both networks provide peer support to members as well as providing the organisation with their knowledge, insight and suggestions to help ensure we provide a safe and inclusive working environment for our staff.

Trade Union Recognition and Industrial Relations

Cafcass formally recognises and has a partnership agreement with Napo and Unison, with National Partnership Meetings taking place quarterly. During the reporting period this had been supplemented with more regular

meetings to discuss and consult on Cafcass' response to COVID-19 and the impacts this has had on the workforce. These discussions have been positive and constructive.

Pension costs

Cafcass participates in the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) scheme and the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). The WYPF scheme is a multi-employer defined benefit scheme in which Cafcass' share of the underlying assets and liabilities are identified.

The employer contribution rate for 2020/21 is 19.4%. Aon Hewitt Limited is the currently appointed fund actuaries. The contribution rate is based on a combination of future service and the effects of past service

deficits and ill health retirements. Employer's contributions to the scheme for the year to March 2021 amounted to £15.802m (costs relating to the voluntary early retirement programme were nil) with 2,173 employees participating in the scheme (2019/20: employer's contributions £14.723m, voluntary early retirement costs were nil, participating employees 2,093).

The last independent actuarial valuation of the WYPF scheme was published on 31 March 2020 and revealed that the scheme was 100.1% funded in relation to past service. The valuation is based on assets and liabilities at 31 March 2019. Following the actuarial valuation, the revised employer contribution rates for Cafcass have been set as follows:

²⁵

	Contribution rate %	Additional cash contribution
2018/19	16.2%	£3.2284m
2019/20	16.2%	£3.3333m
2020/21	19.4%	£1.0500m

²⁵ This information has been audited

The PCSPS is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme for which Cafcass is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The scheme's actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. A full actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2016 and revised contribution rates applied from 1 April 2019. Full details can be found at www.civilservice.gov.uk/pensions.

For 2020/21, employer's contributions of £0.0275m (2019/20: £0.038m) were payable to the PCSPS at 27.1% to 27.9% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands (band 2 and band 3 of PCSPS contribution rates). The contribution rates reflect benefits as they are accrued, not when the costs are actually incurred and reflect past experience of the scheme.

Staff redeployment

As an arm's-length body we do not engage in civil service interdepartmental loans but have had a small number of staff on secondment internally and externally.

2020/21 internal and external secondments - headcount				
Grade	Internal secondment	External secondment	Externally seconded to Cafcass	Total
Business services	11			11
Family court adviser	9	1		10
Service manager	6			6
Specialist staff	9		3	12
Total	35	1	3	39

2020/21 internal and external secondments - average duration in weeks				
Grade	Internal secondment	External secondment	Externally seconded to Cafcass	Total
Business services	19.4			19.4
Family court adviser	9.0	5.0		8.6
Service manager	18.5			18.5
Specialist staff	28.0		17.9	25.5
Total	74.9	5.0	17.9	72

Trade union facility time²⁶

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	Full-time equivalent employee number
13	9.77
Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	0
1 - 50%	13
51 - 99%	0
100%	0
Summary	Figures
Total Cost of Facility Time	£120,552.41
Total Pay Bill	£103,450,282
% of Pay Bill Spent on Facility Time	0.12%

²⁶ This information has been audited

No trade union representatives have more than 50% of their time allocated for union duties. The Proportion of the pay bill spent on facility time is unchanged from the previous year.

Workforce and organisational development

Cafcass has continued to develop its workforce including programmes for Emerging Talent, Cafcass Apprenticeships, Newly Qualified Social Worker Programme and the recently launched Cafcass Social Work Academy. In addition support for continuous professional development and strengths based coaching is available to all staff.

Staff policies

Cafcass has a full range of policies which support managers and staff effectively on issues. All our policies and procedures underpin our strategic plan and are in place to ensure the needs of our staff are properly supported.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

During 2020/21, Cafcass made significant progress in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. Several key events influenced the equality, diversity and inclusion landscape including the murder of George Floyd in America, the Black Lives Matter movement and the increased risk of COVID-19 to people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

We took an important opportunity to review our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, reaffirm our commitment to providing the best possible service to the diverse range of children and families we work with and the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce at all levels of our organisation.

- **Family Justice Young People's Board:** During 2021/21, we continued to strengthen our partnership with the Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB). We worked closely with FJYPB members to understand the impact of the murder of George Floyd on young people. As a result of focused engagement, we were able to identify a

number of key actions. These included the introduction of a specific requirement for family court advisers to find out what is unique and special about each child they work with and incorporate this into their reports, improvements in our recording of diversity data to enhance our understanding of the characteristics of the children and families with whom we work and the development of inclusive and accessible welcome letters at the start of our work with children and their families.

Our partnership has been enhanced by the appointment of five FJYPB members with a lead on equality, diversity and inclusion. FJYPB members have also contributed blogs, vlogs and intranet articles reflecting on Black Lives Matter, LGBT+ History Month and a focused 'Live Event' for our staff – all of which have promoted valuable discussion and learning across teams.

- **Benchmarking our performance:** We commissioned an independent benchmarking assessment of our performance against the public sector equality duty and a review of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2017/20. The findings and recommendations are being used to develop specific organisational equality objectives which will be contained within our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-24. Our governance framework is also under review to ensure that we have the most effective arrangements in place to drive our progress.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead:** We established the new role of equality, diversity and inclusion lead and appointed a post holder who joined the organisation in January 2021. The role is based within our human resources and organisational development team and holds strategic responsibility for progressing our next Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

- Staff diversity networks:** Our six staff diversity networks have continued to develop over the past 12 months: Ability Matters, Carers Network, Faith Network, Kaleidoscope (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Network), Mental Health Network and Pride (LGBTQ+ Network). Staff network chairs meet regularly to share experiences and provide a strong collective voice for their members. Staff network chairs have been represented on our COVID-19 Board and provided the organisation with important insight into some of the additional challenges the pandemic has posed to under-represented groups and appropriate support.

- Diversity champions:** Every Cafcass area has a named diversity champion who is responsible for the development and delivery of an equality, diversity and inclusion plan. The plan is aimed at strengthening the knowledge and skills of colleagues and promoting discussion of key issues. During 2020/21 the extensive range of activities co-ordinated by our diversity champions has included the development of newsletters and the delivery of workshops and engagement events.

- Equality Charter Marks:** As an organisation we have continued to demonstrate the priority we place on equality, diversity and inclusion through our charter marks. Cafcass is currently a member of the Department for Work and Pensions Disability Confident scheme. We hold the status of 'Disability Confident Leader' which is the highest accreditation within the scheme. This highlights our proactive approach to recruiting, retaining and developing staff with disabilities and encouraging other organisations to do the same. We are also members of the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme which promotes our commitment to embedding LGBTQ+ inclusion into our workplace and our practice.

- Peer practice specialists:** Our network of 'peer practice specialists' has continued to develop. Peer practice specialists are

practitioners who have built considerable knowledge and insight in relation to specific areas of practice that often contain an equality, diversity and inclusion element. They are able to provide colleagues with guidance in relation to their specialist topic and signpost them to relevant resources and services to support case work. In this way, the breadth of expertise that exists among our staff is cascaded throughout the organisation.

- Calendar:** This year we have developed an equality, diversity and inclusion calendar which appears on the front page of our staff intranet site. The calendar highlights key events with an equality diversity and inclusion focus and provides our staff with access to further information about the history and significance of events. Staff networks and diversity champions have also facilitated programmes of activities during the year, to mark events such as Black History Month and LGBTQ+ History Month.

Employee consultation and participation

Consultation on organisational change is conducted in line with the Cafcass Management of Organisational Change Policy including collective and individual consultation as appropriate. In addition, Cafcass engages with its workforce through staff surveys and during the reporting period this included feedback and input to the impact of COVID-19. Cafcass also operates a number of staff groups and networks covering matters such as diversity, working carers and health and wellbeing. Through these various channels all Cafcass staff have opportunity to share their knowledge, contribute their ideas and participate in organisational and workforce development.

Employee diversity data summary

The following tables provide summary information about the protected characteristics of our 2,134 employees, to complement the information provided for social workers and corporate and professional staff in the Workforce Report at Section 4.

Gender

The workforce is predominantly female (84.7%) compared to male (15.3%).

All employees		
Gender	Headcount	% Headcount
Female	1,807	84.7%
Male	327	15.3%

We recognise the need to allow our staff to identify as non-binary, transgender or intersex and will be developing our approach to this in the coming year. Three employees have self-declared that they have undergone gender reassignment.

Age

In 2021 the majority of staff were in the age range 30 to 49 (56.5%). Younger employees aged 18 to 29 made up 6.4% of the workforce with 11.5% aged 60 or over.

All employees		
Age group	Headcount	% Headcount
18 - 29	136	6.4%
30 - 39	604	28.3%
40 - 49	601	28.2%
50 - 59	548	25.7%
60+	245	11.5%

Ethnicity

14.6% of Cafcass employees identify as belonging to a minority ethnic group.²⁷

All employees		
Ethnicity	Headcount	% Headcount
Asian	111	5.2%
Black	150	7.0%
Chinese	4	0.2%
Mixed/multiple	78	3.7%
Other	8	0.4%
Not declared	141	6.6%
White	1,642	76.9%

Disability

8.3% of Cafcass employees have a declared disability. A further 9.7% did not declare a disability and the remaining 82% said they had no disability.

Sexual orientation

2.6% of Cafcass employees identified as lesbian, 1.3% identified as gay and 1% identified as bisexual. A further 25.7% did not declare their sexuality, and the remaining 69.4% identified as heterosexual.

²⁷ Some of the 3.7% of staff who identify as 'mixed', identify as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, others do not, therefore there is some disparity in the total percentage.

Whistleblowing

Cafcass believes effective whistleblowing is a key component in our strategy to challenge inappropriate behaviour at all levels in the organisation. It is both an instrument in support of good governance and a manifestation of a more healthy and ethical organisational culture.

Our whistleblowing policy and procedure is accessible to all staff via our intranet. It provides advice and guidance on the process for raising a complaint and advise on the protection afforded to whistleblowers who raise concerns. The policy explains how these concerns can be raised with relevant senior managers and this includes the ability to raise concerns directly with a nominated board member. Although there have been no instances of whistleblowing during the reporting period upon which to assess the effectiveness of our whistleblowing arrangements, the policy and procedure are kept under regular review.

Conflict of interest

Our Conflict of Interest Policy sets out how we manage conflicts of interest as they arise both in terms of case work and any independent work carried out by Cafcass employees. The policy sets out arrangements to avoid such conflicts including the responsibility of staff to raise these and for managers to consider and any action to mitigate and conflict. This applies to all staff. Board members are also required to declare and actual or potential conflicts of interest.

Anti-bribery and corruption

Further detail on our anti-bribery and corruption measures can be found on our website.

Management of health and safety

All health and safety issues are overseen and directed by the work of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group which includes representation from our recognised trade unions. Health and safety incidents are reported quarterly to the Operational Management Team including a bi-annual report on any instances of violence toward staff. All incidents and accidents are recorded via an online system which is accessible to all staff. Information on health and safety is available to all staff via Cafcass intranet and through regular communication to all staff. A key focus of health and safety activity during 2020/21 has been a suite of risk assessments and associated protocols to support Cafcass staff throughout our response to COVID-19. In addition to managing personal risks this has involved an extensive programme of work within Cafcass offices to implement and maintain COVID-safe working environments.

Signed: Jacky Tiotto

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Date: 18 October 2021



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Financial commentary

In 2020/21, Cafcass received grant funding of £131.282m from Central Government, plus £0.184m for depreciation and amortisation. Grant funding received included an additional £3.400m for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also drew down from our sponsor separate additional funding of £0.901m for child contact intervention services, which are commissioned and managed by Cafcass.

A summary of how we spent our budget is shown below and further details are provided within our 2020/21 Annual Accounts in Section 10.

Total spend reported (£000) ²⁸		
Staff costs	114,236	77.6%
Self-employed contractors	2,233	1.5%
Agency staff	4,026	2.8%
Other charges net of income	25,159	17.1%
Depreciation and amortisation	184	0.1%
Partnerships costs	1,347	0.9%
	147,185	100.0%

²⁸ This information has been audited

The Cafcass Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2021 shows net liabilities of £319.417m, including the pension liability of £316.967m. This reflects the inclusion of liabilities falling due in future years which, to the extent that they are not to be met from Cafcass' other sources of income, may only be met by future grants or grants-in-aid from Cafcass' sponsoring department. This is because, under the normal conventions applying to Parliamentary control over income and expenditure, such grants may not be issued in advance of need.

The pension deficit as at 31 March 2021 has increased compared with 31 March 2020 due principally to a net loss on the fair value of pension liabilities associated with changes in financial assumptions.

The total of trade payables as at 31 March 2021 is £0.308m (£0.562m as at 31 March 2020).

Interest and late payment charges of £nil has been paid or claimed by creditors under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Act (£nil in 2019/20).

The FReM requires us to prepare our Financial Statements on a going concern basis, unless there are indications that the services we provide will be discontinued. We are not aware of any such indications.

Parliament has voted Grant-in-Aid to Cafcass for the 12 months following the Statement of Financial Position date. Therefore, despite the Statement of Financial Position of net liabilities, Cafcass operates as a going concern.

Parliamentary accountability and audit report

This information shows how we have spent the money provided to us by Parliament. It also shows that our annual accounts have been audited.

Our accounts

The Statement of Accounts of Cafcass for the year ending 31 March 2021 has been prepared in a form directed by the Secretary of State with consent of the Treasury, in accordance with the Accounts Direction dated 12 April 2002 given under Schedule 2, paragraph (13)2 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

The Accounts are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General, who is appointed by statute. The audit fee is £80,000. There have been no non-audit services during 2020/21.

Treatment of pension liabilities

Employees of Cafcass are members of the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF), which is funded on a pay as-you-go basis.

A small number of Cafcass staff retained membership of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) by virtue of their earlier employment with one of Cafcass' predecessor organisations.

The amount charged to the staff costs for the PCSPS represents the contributions payable to the scheme in respect of current employees in the accounting period. Contributions are charged on a year-by-year basis in accordance with the requirements of the scheme administrators.

The assets of the WYPF, which is a defined benefit scheme, are held separately from those of Cafcass. The scheme assets are measured at realisable value. Scheme liabilities are measured using a projected unit method and discounted at the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liability.

The pension scheme surplus (to the extent that it is considered recoverable) or deficit is recognised in full on the face of the Statement of Financial Position. The movement in the scheme surplus/deficit is split between operating charges (within staff costs) and reserves in the case of actuarial gains and losses. Net interest receivable on pension scheme assets is shown in operating cash flows.

Long-term liabilities

- There have been no significant changes in the organisation's long-term liabilities.

Long-term expenditure trends

- There have been no significant changes in the organisation's long-term expenditure trends.

Remote contingent liabilities²⁹

- There are no remote contingent liabilities.

²⁹ Subject to audit

Losses and special payments³⁰

	2020/21		2019/20 restated	
	£000	Number of cases	£000	Number of cases
Losses statement				
Administrative write-offs	0	0	0	0
Fruitless payments	0	0	0	0
Total value of losses	0	0	0	0
Special payments				
Compensation payments	49	22	141	17
Total special payments	49	22	141	17
Total losses and special payments	49	22	141	17

³⁰ This information has been audited

There were £0.049m of losses and special payments charged to the Accounts as at 31 March 2021 (2019/20: £0.141m). The actual cash amount paid in the period was £0.047m (2019/20: £0.145m).

These payments were made in accordance with HM Treasury guidance.

Signed: Jacky Tiotto

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Date: 18 October 2021



Audit certificate

THE CERTIFICATE OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service ('Cafcass') for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000. The financial statements comprise: Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including the significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and International Accounting Standards as interpreted by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual.

I have also audited the information in the Accountability Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of Cafcass's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the Cafcass's net expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 and Secretary of State directions issued thereunder

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2019. I have also elected to apply the ethical standards relevant to listed entities. I am independent of Cafcass in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that Cafcass's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Cafcass's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Board and the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

The going concern basis of accounting for Cafcass is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

Other Information

The other information comprises information included in the annual report, but does not include the parts of the Accountability Report described in that report as having been audited, the financial statements and my auditor's certificate thereon. The Board and the Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000; and
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of Cafcass and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the performance and accountability report. I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Board and Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Board and the Accounting Officer, is responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- internal controls as the Board and the Accounting Officer determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statement to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

- assessing Cafcass's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Board and the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by Cafcass will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to examine, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Inquiring of management, the head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Cafcass's policies and procedures relating to:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including Cafcass's controls relating to the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, and Managing Public Money;
- discussing among the engagement team and involving relevant internal and external specialists, including actuarial experts regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, posting of unusual journals and the valuation of the defined benefit pension liability;
- obtaining an understanding of Cafcass's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that Cafcass operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of Cafcass. The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, Managing Public Money, Employment Law, tax legislation

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Audit Committee and in-house legal counsel concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making

accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business;

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members including internal specialists and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the income and expenditure reported in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Report

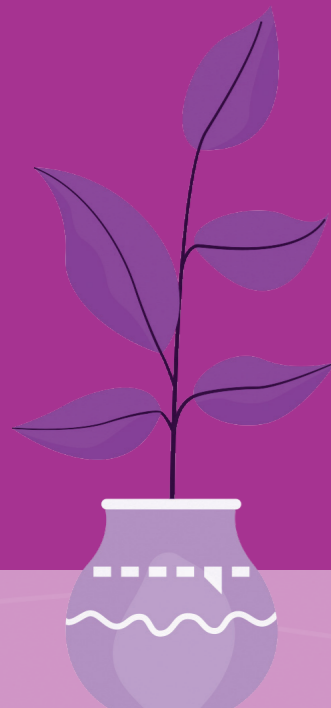
I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Gareth Davies
Comptroller and Auditor General

National Audit Office
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
Victoria
London
SW1W 9SP

Date: 22 October 2021

2020/21 Annual Accounts



10.1

Financial statements

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	2020/21		2019/20	
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure					
Staff costs		114,236		107,879	
Past pension service cost	4/22	0		3,003	
Total staff costs	4	114,236		110,882	
Self-Employed Contractors and agency staff	20	6,259		4,917	
Depreciation and amortisation	7/8	184		372	
Partnerships	21	1,347		2,445	
Other expenditure	5	19,381		14,962	
			141,407		133,578
Income					
Income from activities	3/6	(77)		(54)	
			(77)		(54)
Net expenditure			141,330		133,524
Net interest cost	22	5,855		5,354	
Net expenditure after interest	3	147,185		138,878	
Other comprehensive expenditure					
Net gain on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	7		(59)		(40)
Net gain on revaluation of intangible assets	8		(2)		(2)
Loss on re-measurement of pension benefits	22	38,686		12,570	
Total comprehensive net expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021			185,810		151,406

The Notes on pages 127 to 150 form part of these Accounts.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2021

	Note	31 March 2021		31 March 2020	
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Non-current assets					
Property, plant and equipment	7	655		1,248	
Intangible assets	8	57		74	
Total non-current assets	3		712		1,322
Current assets					
Trade and other receivables	11	3,787		2,545	
Other current assets					
Cash and cash equivalents	12	602		210	
Total current assets			4,389		2,755
Total assets			5,101		4,077
Current liabilities					
Trade and other payables	13	(4,793)		(4,163)	
Total current liabilities			(4,793)		(4,163)
Non-current assets less net current liabilities			308		(86)
Non-current liabilities					
Provisions	14	(2,758)		(2,442)	
Pension liabilities	22	(316,967)		(262,411)	
Total non-current liabilities			(319,725)		(264,853)
Assets less liabilities			(319,417)		(264,939)
Taxpayers' equity					
General reserve			(320,239)		(265,876)
Revaluation reserve			822		937
			(319,417)		(264,939)

The Financial Statements on pages 123 to 150 were approved by the Board on 14 October 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

Signed: Jacky Tiotto
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
Date: 18 October 2021



Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	2020/21	2019/20
		£000	£000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net expenditure after interest	3	(147,185)	(138,878)
Depreciation and amortisation	7/8	184	372
(Increase) / decrease in trade and other receivables	11	(1,242)	1,465
Increase / (decrease) in trade payables	13	630	(993)
In-year additional pension cost	22	15,870	19,460
Increase / (decrease) in provisions	14	316	(5,446)
Impairments	7/10	261	0
Release of revaluation reserve due to impairments	10	(176)	0
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(131,342)	(124,020)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	7	(449)	0
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(449)	0
Cash flows from financing activities			
Grant-in-Aid from parent department for resource expenditure		131,282	121,902
Other grant funding received		901	1,866
Net cash inflow from financing activities		132,183	123,768
Total cash and cash equivalents			
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	12	210	462
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	12	602	210
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		392	(252)

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity as at 31 March 2021

	Note	General reserve £000	Revaluation reserve £000	Total £000
Balance at 1 April 2020		(265,876)	937	(264,939)
Changes in taxpayers' equity				
Net gain on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	7	0	59	59
Net gain on revaluation of intangible assets	8	0	2	2
Release of revaluation reserve to SoCNE due to impairments	10	0	(176)	(176)
Release of revaluation reserve to general reserve due to disposals		0	0	0
Decrease in reserves due to transferred out assets	7	(675)	0	(675)
Net expenditure after interest	3	(147,185)	0	(147,185)
Pension fund actuarial loss	22	(38,686)	0	(38,686)
Total comprehensive expenditure		(186,546)	(115)	(186,661)
Grant-in-Aid from parent department for resource expenditure		131,282	0	131,282
Grant-in-Aid from parent department for capital expenditure		0	0	0
Other grant funding received		901	0	901
Balance at 31 March 2021		(320,239)	822	(319,417)

Balance at 1 April 2019		(238,250)	949	(237,301)
Changes in taxpayers' equity				
Net gain on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	7	0	40	40
Net gain on revaluation of intangible assets	8	0	2	2
Release of revaluation reserve to SoCNE due to impairments	10	0	0	0
Release of revaluation reserve to general reserve due to disposals		54	(54)	0
Decrease in reserves due to transferred out assets	7	0	0	0
Net expenditure after interest	3	(138,878)	0	(138,878)
Pension fund actuarial loss	22	(12,570)	0	(12,570)
Total comprehensive expenditure		(151,394)	(12)	(151,406)
Grant-in-Aid from parent department for resource expenditure		121,902	0	121,902
Grant-in-Aid from parent department for capital expenditure		0	0	0
Other grant funding received		1,866	0	1,866
Balance at 31 March 2020		(265,876)	937	(264,939)

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021

I. Accounting policies

These Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2020/21 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM) issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FRoM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector.

Where the FRoM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the circumstances of Cafcass to give a true and fair view has been selected.

The policies adopted by Cafcass for 2020/21 are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the Accounts.

Please also reference "The statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities" contained within the Accountability report.

a) Accounting convention

The Accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include assets at their value to the business by reference to current costs. Without limiting the information given, the Accounts meet the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and accounting standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board insofar as those requirements are relevant. The Accounts are also fully consistent with IFRS.

b) Going concern

The FRoM requires us to prepare our Financial Statements on a going concern basis, unless there are indications that the services we provide will be discontinued. We are not aware of any such indications.

Parliament has voted Grant-in-Aid to Cafcass for 12 months following the Statement of Financial Position date. Cafcass has evaluated its financial position in relation to Covid-19 and is of the opinion that it is currently not materially affected. Therefore, despite the Statement of Financial Position of net liabilities, Cafcass operates as a going concern.

c) Property, plant and equipment

Ownership of Cafcass' freehold properties was transferred to the Government Property Agency (GPA) on 31 March 2021 (note 7).

Other property, plant and equipment, except for leasehold property, have been stated at their value to the business using appropriate indices published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Revaluations above the depreciated historic cost of these assets are credited to a revaluation reserve. Any downward revaluation of property, plant and equipment below the asset's depreciated historic cost is recognised when it occurs through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

Property, plant and equipment include those assets costing £2,500 or more. Assets valued at less than the threshold are capitalised if they constitute integral parts of a composite asset that is in total valued at more than the threshold. Furniture and fittings are not capitalised but fully expensed in the year of acquisition.

d) Intangible fixed assets

Intangible assets consist of software and website and intranet costs. These have been stated at their value to the business using appropriate indices published by the ONS.

Revaluations above the amortised historic cost of these assets are credited to a revaluation reserve. Any downward revaluation of intangible assets below the asset's amortised historic cost is recognised when it occurs through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

Intangible assets include those assets costing £2,500 or more. Assets valued at less than the threshold are capitalised if they constitute integral parts of a composite asset that is in total valued at more than the threshold.

Intangible assets are periodically reviewed to ensure that they have been accurately stated at their value to the business.

e) Depreciation and amortisation

Freehold land is not depreciated.

Depreciation is provided to write-off property, plant and equipment and amortisation to write-off intangible assets by instalments, on a straight-line basis, over their expected useful lives or for leased assets, over the life of the lease.

Expected useful lives are as follows:

Freehold buildings	Up to 60 years.
Leasehold improvements	Lease term.
Office equipment	Seven years.
Information technology	Five years.
Telecoms	Five years.

f) Pensions

Employees of Cafcass are members of the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) which is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). It is a funded defined benefit pension scheme. A small number of Cafcass staff retained membership of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) due to their earlier employment with one of Cafcass' predecessor organisations.

Contributions are charged on a year-by-year basis in accordance with the requirements of the scheme administrators.

The assets of the WYPF are held separately from those of Cafcass.

The scheme assets are measured at realisable value. Scheme liabilities are measured using a projected unit method and discounted at the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liability. The net pension liability is the present value of the defined benefit liabilities less the fair value of the assets. All estimates are performed by Aon Hewitt Ltd, the independent actuary for WYPF and in accordance with International Accounting Standard 19 – Employee Benefits (IAS 19).

The pension scheme surplus (to the extent that it is considered recoverable) or deficit is recognised in full on the face of the Statement of Financial Position. The movement in the scheme surplus / deficit is split between operating charges (within staff costs) and reserves in the case of actuarial gains and losses.

Net interest receivable on pension scheme assets is shown in operating cash flows.

g) Funding

Grant-in-Aid, used to finance activities and expenditure that supports the statutory and other objectives of Cafcass, is treated as financing and credited to the general reserve, because it is regarded as contributions from a controlling party.

Other grant funding (Contact Services funding) is used to provide grants to Child Contact Centres and is also treated as financing and credited to the general reserve.

h) Income from activities

Income from activities is generated from training, student placements and one-off receipts in the year. Income is recognised on the issuing of an invoice. All income is stated net of VAT.

i) Insurance

Except for comprehensive insurance on contract lease and hire vehicles, Cafcass does not insure but carries its own risks for fire, accidental damage and similar accidents and claims at common law.

j) Operating leases

Rentals under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

k) Accounting for Value Added Tax

Cafcass is registered for VAT. It is unable to recover most of the VAT incurred on expenditure, although a small amount of VAT can be recovered where it is related to the costs recovered in court cases. Expenditure is therefore stated inclusive of any irrecoverable VAT.

l) Financial instruments

Cafcass does not hold any complex financial instruments. The only financial instruments included in the Accounts are receivables, cash, and payables (notes 11, 12 and 13).

Financial assets comprise trade receivable and other receivables. Receivables are recognised at carrying value, reduced by appropriate allowances for estimated irrecoverable amounts.

Trade creditors are short term and are stated at carrying value in recognition that these liabilities fall due within one year.

m) Provisions

A provision is recognised in the Statement of Financial Position when Cafcass has a present legal or constructive obligation arising from past events, and it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation.

2. Change of accounting policy

New standards, amendments and interpretations issued but not effective for the financial year beginning 1 April 2020 and not early adopted.

IFRS 16 Capital lease accounting

Cafcass has assessed the estimated impact that the initial application of IFRS 16 will have on its financial statements, as described below.

IFRS 16 provides a single lessee accounting model, requiring lessees to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases unless the lease term is 12 months or less, or the underlying asset is of low value. The assets, to be described as “right of use” assets, will be presented under Property, Plant and Equipment. Under the FReM, the standard is effective from 1 April 2022, with the option to early adopt. The department will early adopt IFRS 16 for the financial year commencing 1 April 2021.

IFRS 16 will be implemented using the cumulative catch-up method; as a result, comparatives will not be restated. On the date of transition to IFRS 16, Cafcass will recognise a lease liability and a right-of-use asset.

The lease liability will be measured at the value of the remaining lease payments, discounted either by the interest rate implicit in the lease, or where this is not readily determinable, the incremental rate of borrowing advised by HM Treasury. Where the lease includes extension or termination options, the lease payments will be for the non-cancellable period together with any extension options that are reasonably certain to be exercised, and any termination options that are reasonably certain not to be exercised.

The right-of-use asset will initially be measured at the value of the lease liability, adjusted for: any lease payments made before the commencement date; any lease incentives received; any incremental costs of obtaining the lease; and any costs of removing the asset and restoring the site at the end of the lease. As a practical expedient for existing operating leases recognised on transition, the latter two elements will not be included in the asset value.

Where the lease requires nil or nominal consideration (usually referred to as a ‘peppercorn’ lease), the asset will instead be measured at its existing use value, with the difference between the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset and lease liability treated as notional income (or on transition, a credit to the General Fund).

Those leases currently recognised as operating leases will be converted to right of use assets and liabilities on transition to IFRS 16.

For the material arrangements within the scope of IFRS 16, the impact of implementation is currently considered to be an increase in assets and liabilities of approximately £5.320m and £5.250m respectively. This value is higher than the value of minimum operating lease commitments under IAS 17 due to changes in the lease term assumptions under IFRS 16, taking into account the expected exercise of extension options.

The standard is expected to increase total expenditure in 2021/22 by approximately £0.010m, comprising an increase of £1.550m in depreciation and interest costs, offset by a reduction of £1.540m in operating lease rental expenses.

Cafcass currently occupies 10 properties that are out of lease. As such and under the terms of IFRS 16, we have not recognised these properties as right-of-use assets or for purposes of lease liability.

IFRS 17 Insurance contracts

IFRS 17 was issued by the International Accounting Standards Board in May 2017. It will replace IFRS 4 on accounting for insurance contracts, with an effective date of 1 January 2023. Its impact on Cafcass will be evaluated in due course but is currently not expected to be material.

There were no other significant changes to the accounting policies, as described in Cafcass’ 2019/20 Annual Report and Accounts.

3. Analysis of net expenditure by segment

	Operational service areas	Other	Total
	£000	£000	£000
2020/21			
Gross expenditure	90,579	56,683	147,262
Income	0	(77)	(77)
Net expenditure	90,579	56,606	147,185
Non-current assets	0	712	712
2019/20			
Gross expenditure	84,284	54,648	138,932
Income	0	(54)	(54)
Net expenditure	84,284	54,594	138,878
Non-current assets	903	419	1,322

‘Operational service areas’ and ‘Other’ reflect the structure of the standard monthly management information provided to Cafcass’ chief operating decision makers.

4. Staff costs

	Note	Cafcass Board members £000	Corporate National Office staff £000	Regional staff £000	Total £000
2020/21					
Salaries and wages		130	7,993	70,746	78,869
Apprentice levy		0	39	341	380
Social security costs		5	818	7,566	8,389
Current service cost	22	0	2,624	23,194	25,818
Other pension costs		0	8	1	9
Past pension service cost	22	0	0	0	0
Total payroll costs		135	11,482	101,848	113,465
Temporary staff costs		0	139	632	771
Total staff costs		135	11,621	102,480	114,236
2019/20					
Salaries and wages		132	7,078	66,119	73,329
Apprentice levy		0	34	320	354
Social security costs		4	781	7,038	7,823
Current service cost	22	0	2,512	23,332	25,844
Other pension costs		0	16	(19)	(3)
Past pension service cost	22	0	290	2,713	3,003
Total payroll costs		136	10,711	99,503	110,350
Temporary staff costs		0	83	449	532
Total staff costs		136	10,794	99,952	110,882

Please also reference the "Remuneration and staff report" contained within the Accountability report.

5. Other expenditure

	Note	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Outsourced finance and ITC services		7,389	6,691
Accommodation costs		5,901	5,241
Office supplies, printing and stationery		1,008	897
Telecommunications and postage		1,005	1,580
Travel and subsistence		558	3,197
Staff related costs		487	448
Legal costs		377	292
Interpreters and translators		315	384
Recruitment costs		188	146
Fuel and utilities		175	225
External audit costs		87	73
Vehicle costs		81	115
Training costs		70	236
Internal audit costs		61	62
Other		1,217	821
Total cash		18,919	20,408
Annual leave amount	14	961	622
Accommodation costs	14	74	91
Legal costs	14	186	147
Provisions no longer required	14	(844)	(6,306)
Impairments	10	85	0
Total non-cash		462	(5,446)
		19,381	14,962

External audit costs comprise the external audit fee of £0.080m plus an additional £0.007m 2019/20 external audit costs charged (2019/20: £0.073m plus £nil).

6 Income

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Training	77	54
	77	54

7. Property, plant and equipment

	Land and buildings excluding dwellings	Leasehold improvements	Information technology and telecoms	Office equipment	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
2020/21 Cost or valuation					
As at 01/04/20	1,080	328	2,026	22	3,456
Additions	0	0	449	0	449
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
Revaluations	46	0	13	0	59
Impairments	(261)	0	0	0	(261)
Assets transferred out	(865)	0	0	0	(865)
As at 31/03/21	0	328	2,488	22	2,838
Depreciation					
As at 01/04/20	176	328	1,682	22	2,208
Charged in year	14	0	151	0	165
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0
Assets transferred out	(190)	0	0	0	(190)
As at 31/03/21	0	328	1,833	22	2,183
NBV as at 31/03/21	0	0	655	0	655
NBV as at 31/03/20	904	0	344	0	1,248
Asset financing					
Owned	0	0	655	0	655
NBV as at 31/03/21	0	0	655	0	655
2019/20 Cost or valuation					
As at 01/04/19	1,050	350	2,016	22	3,438
Additions	0	0	0	0	0
Disposals	0	(22)	0	0	(22)
Revaluations	30	0	10	0	40
Impairments	0	0	0	0	0
Assets transferred out	0	0	0	0	0
As at 31/03/20	1,080	328	2,026	22	3,456
Depreciation					
As at 01/04/19	163	350	1,563	22	2,098
Charged in year	13	0	119	0	132
Disposals	0	(22)	0	0	(22)
Assets transferred out	0	0	0	0	0
As at 31/03/20	176	328	1,682	22	2,208
NBV as at 31/03/20	904	0	344	0	1,248
NBV as at 31/03/19	887	0	453	0	1,340
Asset financing					
Owned	904	0	344	0	1,248
NBV as at 31/03/20	904	0	344	0	1,248

Transfer of Freehold Assets

On 31 March 2021, Cafcass entered into agreement with the Government Property Agency (GPA), an executive agency of the Cabinet Office, to transfer the following freehold property assets owned by Cafcass, including all revaluation reserve balances associated with the assets shown below.

This transfer includes a transfer of legal ownership of land, buildings and any associated components that are a result of subsequent enhancement since recognition of the original asset.

Asset detail	Purchase date	NBV as at 31/03/21
		£000
Land and building Peterborough	2001/02	160
Land and building Plymouth	2001/02	150
Land and building Reading	2001/02	365

The assets were transferred to GPA on 31 March 2021 at nil consideration and in accordance with IAS 20 Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance, they were transferred at fair value resulting in a capital grant in kind expense of the same amount.

Cafcass will begin to pay rent per the terms set out in the lease that was signed on 18 December 2020 between us and the GPA, commencing 01 April 2021.

All freehold assets were subject to a professional valuation by Montagu Evans as of 31 March 2021, the date of the transfer and the reporting date. Any movements in book value as a result of this revaluation were adjusted prior to the transfer to GPA.

8. Intangible assets

	Information technology	Software licences	Websites that deliver services	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
2020/21				
Cost or valuation				
As at 01/04/20	2,142	0	89	2,231
Additions	0	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0	0
Revaluations	2	0	0	2
As at 31/03/21	2,144	0	89	2,233
Amortisation				
As at 01/04/20	2,068	0	89	2,157
Charged in year	19	0	0	19
Disposals	0	0	0	0
As at 31/03/21	2,087	0	89	2,176
NBV as at 31/03/21	57	0	0	57
NBV as at 31/03/20	74	0	0	74

2019/20				
Cost or valuation				
As at 01/04/19	2,185	183	89	2,457
Additions	0	0	0	0
Disposals	(45)	(183)	0	(228)
Revaluations	2	0	0	2
As at 31/03/20	2,142	0	89	2,231
Amortisation				
As at 01/04/19	1,873	183	89	2,145
Charged in year	240	0	0	240
Disposals	(45)	(183)	0	(228)
As at 31/03/20	2,068	0	89	2,157
NBV as at 31/03/20	74	0	0	74
NBV as at 31/03/19	312	0	0	312

9. Financial instruments

As the cash requirements of Cafcass are met through the Estimates process, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body.

Most of Cafcass' financial instruments are consistent with the expected purchase and usage requirements of a non-departmental public body and relate to contracts to buy non-financial items. As such, Cafcass is exposed to minimal credit, liquidity, and market risks.

10. Impairments

	Net cost charged to the SoCNE	Release of revaluation reserve to the SoCNE	Net impact in the SoCNE
	£000	£000	£000
2020/21			
Land and buildings	261	(176)	85
	261	(176)	85
2019/20			
Land and buildings	0	0	0
	0	0	0

11. Trade receivables and other current assets

	2020/21	2019/20
	£000	£000
Amounts falling due within one year		
Other receivables	1,902	1,042
Provision for bad debts	(10)	(10)
Prepayments	1,893	1,511
Travel advances	2	2
	3,787	2,545

12. Cash and cash equivalents

	Cash £000	Bank £000	Total £000
2020/21			
Balance at 1 April 2020	4	206	210
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balance	0	392	392
Balance at 31 March 2021	4	598	602
The following balances were held at:			
Government Banking Service and cash in hand	4	598	602
Balance at 31 March 2021	4	598	602
2019/20			
Balance at 1 April 2019	4	458	462
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balance	0	(252)	(252)
Balance at 31 March 2020	4	206	210
The following balances were held at:			
Government Banking Service and cash in hand	4	206	210
Balance at 31 March 2020	4	206	210

13. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade payables	308	562
Other payables	1,258	750
Accruals and deferred income	3,227	2,851
	4,793	4,163

Accruals and deferred income comprise £3.227m accruals plus £nil deferred income (2019/20: £2.851m plus £nil).

14. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	Employment claims £000	Annual leave amount £000	McCloud judgment £000	Dilapidations £000	Total £000
2020/21					
Balance at 1 April 2020	243	622	0	1,577	2,442
Provided in the year	186	961	0	74	1,221
Provision not required written back	(141)	(622)	0	(81)	(844)
Provision utilised in the year	0	0	0	(61)	(61)
Balance at 31 March 2021	288	961	0	1,509	2,758

Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows					
Not later than one year	288	0	0	1,411	1,699
Later than one year and not later than five years	0	961	0	95	1,056
Later than five years	0	0	0	3	3
	288	961	0	1,509	2,758

2019/20					
Balance at 1 April 2019	150	88	5,967	1,683	7,888
Provided in the year	147	622	0	91	860
Provision not required written back	(54)	(88)	(5,967)	(197)	(6,306)
Provision utilised in the year	0	0	0	0	0
Balance at 31 March 2020	243	622	0	1,577	2,442

Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows					
Not later than one year	243	0	0	1,427	1,670
Later than one year and not later than five years	0	622	0	135	757
Later than five years	0	0	0	15	15
	243	622	0	1,577	2,442

IAS 37 requires the recognition of a provision (a liability that is of uncertain timing or amount) when it exists at the Statement of Financial Position date. It must therefore fulfil the criteria of being a present obligation arising from a previous event, where it is probable there will be a transfer of economic benefits to settle the obligation and where a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. Cafcass makes provisions for legal or constructive obligations (liabilities), which are of uncertain timing or amount at the Statement of Financial Position date, based on the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation.

Employment claims

Employment claims relate to employment tribunal cases that are likely to be brought against Cafcass, which may or may not result in court attendance.

Annual leave amount

The annual leave amount is the monetised value of holiday entitlement approved by management for carry over to the new financial year. It is the liability that Cafcass would have to settle, should it cease to exist as a going concern and accumulated staff leave be crystallised into actual payments.

Dilapidations

Cafcass operates from a number of leasehold properties which include provision for the payment of dilapidations on exit from the premises.

Cafcass considers it appropriate to recognise these liabilities through the creation of a provision whilst premises are in active use, and to accrue for these liabilities once settlement has been agreed.

Provisions have been maintained for these using actual information and industry information on the most likely costs for dilapidations per square metre.

15. Capital commitments

There were no material contracted capital commitments as at 31 March 2021 (2019/20: £nil).

16. Commitments under leases

Operating leases commitments

Total future minimum lease payments under operating leases are given in the table below for each of the following periods.

	2020/21	2019/20
	£000	£000
Obligations under operating leases comprise:		
Buildings		
Not later than one year	2,730	2,647
Later than one year and not later than five years	3,090	1,810
Later than five years	1,363	438
	7,183	4,895
Other		
Not later than one year	50	46
Later than one year and not later than five years	14	17
Later than five years	0	0
	64	63

Finance leases

There were no finance leases as at 31 March 2021 (2019/20: £nil).

17. Other financial commitments

	2020/21	2019/20
	£000	£000
Not later than one year	2,453	2,724
Later than one year and not later than five years	2,808	166
Later than five years	0	0
	5,261	2,890

Cafcass signed a three-year contract with Littlefish, commencing May 2018, to provide an integrated information and communication technology service across the organisation. The contract's extension option was exercised in 2020/21 and the contract extended for a further two years until May 2023.

18. Related party transactions

Cafcass is an executive non-departmental public body that is sponsored by the Department. The Department as such is regarded as a related party. During 2020/21, Cafcass had various material transactions with the Department, including the receipt of £132.183m grant and additional funding from the Department (2019/20: £123.768m).

Transactions with the Department not related to Grant-in-Aid or other funding are considered not to be material and totalled £0.171m (2019/20: £0.061m).

Cafcass does have occasional small transactions with other Central Government bodies and Local Authorities that are considered not to be material.

All payments made to senior managerial staff are disclosed in the Remuneration Report. A register of interest is held for all Board Members and there were no material related party transactions with Board Members or the Corporate Management Team during the year other than those associated with remuneration for normal duties.

19. Events after Statement of Financial Position date

In accordance with the requirements of IAS 10 'Events After the Reporting Period', post Statement of Financial Position events are considered up to the date on which the Accounts are authorised for issue. This is interpreted as the same date as the date of the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

20. Self-Employed Contractors

In 2020/21 we contracted the services of 124 Self-Employed Contractors (2019/20: 134), to whom payments made amounted to £2.233m in the year (2019/20: £2.396m).

As Self-Employed Contractors, they are ordinarily responsible for meeting travel, office and all other expenses related to their work, as well as related tax and national insurance liabilities.

Further to this, agency staff costs amounted to £4.026m in the year (2019/20: £2.521m).

21. Partnership costs

Partnership costs of £1.347m (2019/20: £2.445m) represent the cost of services provided by Cafcass through third party organisations such as contact centres and mediation centres.

Expenditure on partnerships' Court ordered contact activities are shown net of expenditure claimed back and received from the Department.

In addition to Cafcass' baseline partnership budget, in 2020/21 Cafcass received additional funding of £0.901m from the Department (2019/20: £1.866m).

22. Pension liabilities

Under the requirements of IAS 19, WYPF's actuary, Aon Hewitt Limited, carried out an accounting valuation for Cafcass as at 31 March 2021, based on a roll forward from the last actuarial funding valuation in 2019. The accounting valuation aims to measure the assets and liabilities of the pension scheme on a best estimate basis in terms of the calculation approach and data used at the end of the accounting period whilst the actuarial funding valuation which is carried out every three year determines the scheme's funding position and the cash contribution by employers in future years.

The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of Cafcass and are invested in funds managed externally to Cafcass.

Cafcass accounts for scheme liabilities in accordance with IAS 19 – Employee benefits. The in-year current service cost has been reflected in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

Cafcass considers and follows the recommendations from the actuary for significant estimates and judgements, with the exception of future increases in pay levels, believing the recommended estimate exceeds likely future settlements in the long term.

In addition to the disclosures contained in the Financial Statements, the following disclosures are also in accordance with IAS 19.

Introduction

The disclosures below relate to the funded liabilities within the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (the "Fund") which is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (the "LGPS").

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit plan with benefits earned up to 31 March 2014 being linked to final salary. Benefits after 31 March 2014 are based on a Career Average Revalued Earnings scheme. Details of the benefits earned over the period covered by this disclosure are set out in 'The LGPS Regulations 2013' (as amended) and 'The LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014' (as amended).

Funding / governance arrangements of the LGPS

The funded nature of the LGPS requires participating employers and their employees to pay contributions into the Fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets. Information on the framework for calculating contributions to be paid is set out in 'The LGPS Regulations 2013' and the Fund's Funding Strategy Statement. The last actuarial valuation was at 31 March 2019 and the contributions to be paid until 31 March 2023 resulting from that valuation are set out in the Fund's Rates and Adjustment Certificate.

An entitlement of staff to membership of the West Yorkshire Pension Scheme forms part of the constitution of Cafcass. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme and forms a significant financial staff benefit within the Cafcass reward strategy. Decisions on the collection of employer contributions are taken to provide predictability and stability to future budget requirements. The overall performance of the scheme is reported and reviewed annually by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, informed by the work and findings of both the Government Actuary's

Department and the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board. Cafcass continues to engage with the scheme administrators to seek assurance on their management of risk.

The Fund Administering Authority, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, is responsible for the governance of the Fund.

Assets

The assets allocated to the Employer in the Fund are notional and are assumed to be invested in line with the investments of the Fund for the purposes of calculating the return over the accounting period. The Fund holds a significant proportion of its assets in liquid investments. As a consequence there will be no significant restriction on realising assets if a large payment is required to be paid from the Fund in relation to an employer's liabilities. The assets are invested in a diversified spread of investments and the approximate split of assets for the Fund as a whole (based on data supplied by the Fund Administering Authority) is shown in the disclosures. The valuation methodology for unquoted investments is fully disclosed in the Fund's published Annual Report and Accounts.

The Fund Administering Authority may invest a small proportion of the Fund's investments in the assets of some of the employers participating in the Fund if it forms part of their balanced investment strategy which is accessible here [Investment Strategy Statement \(wypf.org.uk\)](http://wypf.org.uk).

Risks associated with the Fund in relation to accounting

Asset volatility

The liabilities used for accounting purposes are calculated using a discount rate set with reference to corporate bond yields at the accounting date. If assets underperform this yield this will create a deficit in the accounts. The Fund holds a significant proportion of growth assets which, while expected to outperform corporate bonds in the long term, creates volatility and risk in the short term in relation to the accounting figures.

Changes in bond yield

A decrease in corporate bond yields will increase the value placed on the liabilities for accounting purposes although this will be marginally offset by the increase in the assets as a result (to the extent the Fund invests in corporate bonds).

Inflation risk

The majority of the pension liabilities are linked to either pay or price inflation. Higher inflation expectations will lead to a higher liability value. The assets are not perfectly correlated with inflation meaning that an increase in inflation will increase the deficit.

Life expectancy

The majority of the Fund's obligations are to provide benefits for the life of the member following retirement, so increases in life expectancy will result in an increase in the liabilities.

Exiting employers

Employers which leave the Fund (or their guarantor) may have to make an exit payment to meet any shortfall in assets against their pension liabilities. If the Employer (or guarantor) is not able to meet this exit payment the liability may in certain circumstances fall on other employers in the Fund. Further the assets at exit in respect of 'orphan liabilities' may, in retrospect, not

be sufficient to meet the liabilities. This risk may fall on other employers. 'Orphan liabilities' are currently a small proportion of the overall liabilities in the Fund.

Changes in accounting estimates

This year we have recommended a change to the approach to setting the discount rate and CPI Inflation rate assumptions. Auditors may consider these changes to be accounted for as a change in accounting estimate and charged to the pension expense. Further information on the broad impact of those changes in method is included within the Assumptions Advice.

This year, the actuary recommended a change to the approach to setting the discount rate and CPI Inflation rate assumptions. The discount rate is now based on the Aon Single Agency AA Curve which includes all bonds rated AA by one of the main ratings agencies whereas the discount rate used in the year ending 31 March 2020 was based on the Aon Select AA Curve which included all AA rated bonds from two or more main ratings agencies. This change helps improve the curve fitting process and in line with general marketing practice. The CPI assumption is set with reference to the RPI assumption and there has been further change in the margin between the RPI assumption and the CPI assumption. Following the 2020 budget, a consultation around the future of the RPI was issued and following this the actuary has adjusted the gap between the RPI and CPI assumptions to make the CPI assumption more accurate as a result of these future changes in RPI. The new methodology is adopted by the actuary in response to developments in the market and the economy to make sure the recommended assumptions are the best estimate for more accurate calculation of the pension liabilities. These changes are applied across the actuary's portfolio of LGPS clients.

Duration of liabilities

The duration of the liabilities is the average period between the calculation date and the date at which benefit payments fall due. The duration calculated based on the output of the most recent valuation exercise in 2019 is 19 years.

Impact of McCloud judgement

The December 2018 McCloud judgment found that transitional protection arrangements put in place during the reform of firefighters and judges pension schemes was discriminatory on grounds of age. The government launched a consultation on proposed amendments to underpin in July 2020 and a response to the consultation was published in February 2021. The impact of the McCloud judgement was accounted for in the 2019/20 Cafcass's Annual Accounts under IAS19 covering a McCloud 'underpin' liability within the current service cost and an allowance for the service since the scheme reforms in the balance sheet. The method for valuing the McCloud remedy is closely aligned with the method proposed by the government in its consultation. In the 2020/21 Cafcass's Annual Reports we continue to adopt the same approach as last year and include the McCloud 'underpin' liability in the current service cost with no additional impact on the balance sheet.

Impact of COVID-19

The outbreak of COVID-19, declared by the World Health Organisation as a "Global Pandemic" on the 11 March 2020, has materially impacted on the valuation of assets. Asset values are less certain as a result of increased volatility, changing consumption levels, and markets trending more favourably in the direction of digital, virtual and contactless business activities.

COVID-19 has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of transactions in the market up to 31 March 2021, and consequently the relevant observable data available upon which valuation judgements are based. With regards to pooled property funds, a material valuation uncertainty clause has been included in a number of valuation reports from fund managers, due to the possible impact of COVID-19.

As disclosed in the "Asset allocation" table on page 147, 12.2% of Cafcass' share of pension fund assets at 31 March 2021 are held as unquoted equity and property assets, and these are therefore subject to greater material valuation uncertainty and a higher degree of caution than would otherwise be the case.

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Position are as follows:

	2021	2020
	£000	£000
Present value of funded obligations	(930,080)	(762,931)
Fair value of plan assets	613,113	501,070
Fair value of plan assets – re-measurement of assets adjustment	0	(550)
Net liability	(316,967)	(262,411)

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure are as follows:

	2021	2020
	£000	£000
Current service cost	25,818	25,844
Past service cost	0	3,003
Service cost	25,818	28,847
Interest on obligation	17,343	18,281
Interest income on plan assets	(11,488)	(12,927)
Net interest cost	5,855	5,354
Expense recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	31,673	34,201

Changes in the present value of the defined benefit obligation are as follows:

	2021	2020
	£000	£000
Opening defined benefit obligation	762,931	767,980
Current service cost	25,818	25,844
Interest on obligation	17,343	18,281
Member contributions	5,356	4,927
Past service cost	0	3,003
Actuarial loss / (gain) due to changes in financial assumptions	151,275	(24,064)
Actuarial gain due to changes in demographic assumptions	0	(26,366)
Actuarial (gain) / loss due to liability experience	(9,053)	11,219
Benefits / transfers paid	(23,590)	(17,893)
Closing defined benefit obligation	930,080	762,931

Changes in the fair value of plan assets are as follows:

	2021	2020
	£000	£000
Opening fair value of plan assets	500,520	537,599
Interest income on plan assets	11,488	12,927
Re-measurement gain / (loss) on assets	103,536	(51,231)
Re-measurement of assets adjustment – prior year reversal	0	0
Re-measurement of assets adjustment – current year	0	(550)
Contributions by employer	15,803	14,741
Member contributions	5,356	4,927
Benefits / transfers paid	(23,590)	(17,893)
613,113	500,520	

Asset allocation:

	Quoted value at 31 March 2021	Unquoted value at 31 March 2021	Total at 31 March 2021	Total at 31 March 2020
Equities	69.7%	10.0%	79.7%	77.5%
Property	1.6%	2.2%	3.8%	4.5%
Government bonds	8.3%	0.0%	8.3%	9.6%
Corporate bonds	4.6%	0.0%	4.6%	5.1%
Cash	0.0%	2.0%	2.0%	1.9%
Other	0.0%	1.6%	1.6%	1.4%
	84.2%	15.8%	100.0%	100.0%

Actual return on assets:

	2020/21	2019/20
	£000	£000
Interest income on plan assets	11,488	12,927
Re-measurement gain / (loss) on assets	103,536	(51,231)
Re-measurement of assets adjustment	0	(550)
	115,024	(38,854)

The major financial assumptions used in the valuation were:

	2020/21	2019/20
Pension accounts revaluation rate	2.70%	2.00%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.50%	2.60%
Rate of increase in pensions	2.70%	2.00%
Nominal discount rate	2.10%	2.30%

Estimated pension expense in future periods

Analysis of amount charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure on the provision of services next year:

	Year ending 31 March 2022	Year ending 31 March 2021
	£000	£000
Current service cost	36,664	24,444
Interest on net defined benefit liability	6,490	5,863
Interest on net defined benefit liability – re-measurement of assets adjustment	0	0
Total estimated pension expense	43,154	30,307
Allowance for administration expense included in current service cost	236	217
Estimated pensionable payroll over the period	78,708	72,248

Reconciliation of re-measurement of pension benefits in the Statement of Financial Position

	2020/21	2019/20
	£000	£000
Pension liabilities as at 31 March current year	316,967	261,861
Less: Pension liabilities as at 31 March prior year	(262,411)	(230,381)
Less: Expense recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	(31,673)	(34,201)
Plus: Contributions by employer	15,803	14,741
Plus: Re-measurement of assets adjustment	0	550
Loss on re-measurement of pension benefits	38,686	12,570

Reconciliation of in-year additional pension cost in the Statement of Cash Flows

	2020/21	2019/20
	£000	£000
Expense recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	31,673	34,201
Less: Contributions by employer	(15,803)	(14,741)
In-year additional pension cost	15,870	19,460

Sensitivity analysis

The approximate impact of changing the key assumptions on the present value of the funded defined benefit obligation as at 31 March 2021 and the projected service cost for the period ending 31 March 2022 is set out below.

Discount rate assumption:

Adjustment to discount rate	+0.1% p.a.	Base figure	-0.1% p.a.
	£000	£000	£000
Present value of total obligation	912,408	930,080	947,752
% change in present value of total obligation	(1.9%)		1.9%
Projected service cost	35,417	36,664	37,947
Approximate % change in projected service cost	(3.4%)		3.5%

Rate of general increase in salaries:

Adjustment to salary increase rate	+0.1% p.a.	Base figure	-0.1% p.a.
	£000	£000	£000
Present value of total obligation	931,840	930,080	928,220
% change in present value of total obligation	0.2%		(0.2%)
Projected service cost	36,664	36,664	36,664
Approximate % change in projected service cost	0.0%		0.0%

Rate of increase to pensions in payment, deferred pensions increase assumption and rate of revaluation of pension accounts assumption:

Adjustment to pension increase rate	+0.1% p.a.	Base figure	-0.1% p.a.
	£000	£000	£000
Present value of total obligation	945,891	930,080	914,269
% change in present value of total obligation	1.7%		(1.7%)
Projected service cost	37,947	36,664	35,417
Approximate % change in projected service cost	3.5%		(3.4%)

Post retirement mortality assumption:

*Adjustment to mortality age rating assumption	-1 year	Base figure	+1 year
	£000	£000	£000
Present value of total obligation	964,493	930,080	896,597
% change in present value of total obligation	3.7%		(3.6%)
Projected service cost	38,204	36,664	35,124
Approximate % change in projected service cost	4.3%		(4.2%)

*A rating of +1 year means that members are assumed to follow the mortality pattern of the base table for an individual that is 1 year older than them.

Mortality assumption:

The mortality assumptions at the accounting date are based on actual mortality experience of members within the Fund based on analysis carried out as part of the 2019 Actuarial Valuation, and allow for expected future mortality improvements. Sample life expectancies at age 65 in normal health resulting from these mortality assumptions are shown below.

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
Males		
Pensioner member aged 65 at accounting date	21.9	21.8
Active member aged 45 at accounting date	22.6	22.5
Females		
Pensioner member aged 65 at accounting date	24.7	24.6
Active member aged 45 at accounting date	25.8	25.7

23. Contingent liabilities

Cost Management Process in Local Government Pension Schemes

HM Treasury (HMT) and the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) are legally required to undertake periodic reviews of the cost of Local Government Pension Schemes (LGPS), to ensure that such schemes remain sustainable and affordable. These reviews are referred to as the 'Cost Management Process'.

Following the McCloud judgement in the Court of Appeal, both HMT and the SAB had paused their reviews. However, HMT Directions are expected to be made in 2021/22, which will allow the HMT and SAB reviews to proceed.

As at 31 March 2021, the outcome of the Cost Management Process reviews remains unknown, and it is therefore not possible to determine whether they will impact on the LGPS, nor to determine the materiality or costs of their impact on the LGPS. As such, an allowance cannot be made in the Accounts for any potential costs incurred under the Cost Management Process.

24. Contingent assets

There were no qualifying contingent assets as at 31 March 2021 (2019/20: £nil).

APPENDIX

Glossary

Cafcass and the Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB) have together created a glossary of the more commonly used terms and words in family proceedings. We thank the FJYPB and other colleagues for co-ordinating this, enabling readers to understand some of the terminology used in our Annual Report.

Adjournment – A decision made by the family court to hold the court hearing at another time because things are not ready or people need more time to do something.

Adoption Order – A type of order made by the family court which transfers parental responsibility to new, adoptive parents and means that a child or young person is no longer legally the child of their birth parents. It allows them to start a new family.

Agency staff/workers – Social workers who do not normally work for Cafcass but will sometimes do work for Cafcass during busy periods.

Area Quality Review (AQR) – A way of measuring how well an area is working. People involved include the Assistant Director/heads of service in that area. The AQR findings help form the action and development plans for that area.

Application – This is how a person asks the family court to help them.

Barrister – A legally trained person who advises people going through the family court and speaks for them in court hearings.

Bank workers – Social workers who do not normally work for Cafcass but will sometimes do work for Cafcass during busy periods. These workers do not come through an agency.

C100 form – This is the form used to apply to the courts for a contact or child arrangements order.

Cafcass worker – Depending on what the family court has ordered Cafcass to do, the Cafcass worker (sometimes known as a practitioner or officer) can be known as a family court adviser or a children's guardian (for more detail, look for their descriptions).

Care order – An order made by the family court when the local authority can prove that a child or young person living in their area is not being looked after properly.

Care and Supervision (section 31) application duration – Average duration of all Care and Supervision (section 31) applications completed in defined period. The duration is defined by the number of calendar weeks between the application being received and the application being completed. Where the application does not have a completion date on Cafcass' system, the closure date of the case is used.

Case file audits – Internal audits which are completed by Cafcass managers to ensure consistency and best practice.

Case Management Conference – This is a hearing where the major issues for a child or young person are talked about and the judge sets out how the family court case is going to proceed.

Child Contact Intervention (CCI) – CCIs are short-term interventions of supervised contact. They are designed to help adults and children establish safe and beneficial contact when this is difficult to do on their own.

Child contact centre – This is a safe place where children and young people can see a parent who they do not live with. Usually, this allows for direct contact, supervised contact or supported contact.

Child arrangements order – When people can't agree on where a child might live or who they should see, the family court might be asked to decide. The judge will look at what is best for the child or young person and make a decision setting out what people must do.

Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) – This is an organisation which works with children and young people and their families, and then advises the family court on what it considers to be in the best interests of each child.

ChildFirst – Cafcass Electronic Case Management System which stores Cafcass' case-related information including feedback and complaints.

Children's guardian – Sometimes when the problems within a family are really difficult then the family court will ask for a children's guardian to help them. The children's guardian is an independent person who is there to keep the court focused on what is best for the child or young person. They will also appoint a solicitor to act for the young person in court.

Consent order – Made by the court where all parties in the case have agreed to what it says.

Direct contact – When a child or young person spends time with someone that they do not live with.

Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP) – A structured course that aims to help people who have been abusive towards their partners or ex-partners to change their behaviour and develop respectful, non-abusive relationships.

Early intervention teams (EIT) – EIT operate in service areas, with Cafcass workers carrying out safeguarding checks to inform the safeguarding letter we provide at the First Hearing.

Family assistance order – An order which the family court can make to provide short term (usually six months) support to a family who agree to it. This can be from a Cafcass worker or a social worker from the local authority.

Family court – This is where important decisions are made about children, young people and their families. It is different to criminal courts where people go when they might have done something wrong. Decisions in the family court are made by judges or magistrates when people can't agree about what is best for a child or young person.

Family Court Adviser (FCA) – Sometimes the family court may ask an FCA to meet with a child or young people to talk about their wishes and feelings and to make sure the family court hears what they have to say. The FCA also gives their view to the court about what is best for the child. FCAs do not need to meet all children and young people because sometimes families can agree themselves on what is best.

Family Group Conference – All of the important people in a child's life get together to check that they are safe. It means that everyone knows what is happening and keeps them safe.

Final order – This is the last order made by the family court. The court expects all the people named in the order to keep to it and do as it says and can punish adults if they don't.

Foster carer – People who give a home to children and young people who need a safe place to live. They may have children of their own, or other foster children living with them, in which case you would all live in the same house together.

Guardian's report – The family court will ask the children's guardian to write a report to help it make decisions about a child or young person. The report will include information on their wishes and feelings and a recommendation from the children's guardian on what they think is best for the child. The report will also include information from the other people involved such as the parents and any other individuals such as experts.

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) – IROs help to make sure the best decisions are made for children looked after by the local authority. Their main focus is to make sure that the care planning process for each child or young person is meeting their needs, and to ensure that their current wishes and feelings are given full consideration.

Indirect contact – A child or young person can use forms of contact such as letters, cards or gifts to communicate with a parent where the court considers it is safe and beneficial for them to do so.

Interim care order – This means that the local authority makes decisions about a child rather than their own parents for the short term, before the family court makes a final order. The child will get a social worker to make the decisions day to day.

Issues Resolution Hearing (IRH) – This is a special hearing where the family court decides which issues need to be sorted out and hears arguments about which is a true version of events.

Judge – Sometimes families have problems which they might find too hard to sort out by themselves. A judge works in a family court, listens to everybody and then decides what is best for the child or young person involved in the case. They have the final say and will make the decision about that child or young person's life.

Level 1 check – A Police Criminal Record Check which is completed by Cafcass' Police National Computer (PNC) team.

Legal Adviser – A legally qualified person who helps magistrates in the family court apply the law. They do not play any part in the decision-making process but are there to advise.

Litigants in person – A party in a case who is self-representing i.e. they don't have legal representation/lawyer.

Local authority (also known as children's social care or social services) – This organisation is responsible for making sure all children and young people in their local area are kept safe by the people who care for them.

Magistrate – This person is a member of the community who volunteers to make decisions that affect families, children and young people. They are similar to a judge but are not legally qualified. They are advised on the law by their legal adviser.

Mediation – When people can't agree, they go to another person to help them sort it out (a mediator). The mediator talks to everyone and tries to help them find an outcome that they are all happy with. This might mean that they don't have to go to the family court.

Non-molestation order – This is a type of order the family court uses to keep adults, children and young people safe from someone who has been abusive toward them.

Parental order – An order which transfers legal parenthood from a surrogate to the intended parents.

Parental responsibility – Parental responsibility means all the rights, duties, and responsibilities that a parent has to a child or young person. A person or the people with parental responsibility can make decisions about a child such as who they will live with and what school they will attend.

Placement order – An order which allows the local authority to place a child with suitable adopters following care proceedings (even if the parents do not agree).

Pre-proceedings – Work that is carried out by the local authority (sometimes involving Cafcass) before a decision on making a care application is made.

Private law – These cases are brought to the family court by private individuals, generally in connection with divorce or parents' separation. The family court may make a child arrangements order, prohibited steps order or a specific issues order or no order at all.

Prohibited steps order – A parent can be prevented by the family court from doing something the other parent does not want them to do. The most common type is where one parent is stopped from moving abroad with the child or young person.

Public law – Public law cases are brought to the family court by local authorities where they are worried that a child or young person is not being looked after safely. The family court may make a care order, a supervision order, or no order at all.

Relinquished babies and children – term used to describe where parents feel that adoption may be the best option for providing a permanent, safe future for their child (the child is 'relinquished').

Rule 16.4 cases – These are particularly difficult or complicated family court cases where the judge decides to make the child a party to the case under rule 16.4 of the Family Procedure Rules 2010. A Cafcass guardian will be appointed to represent the child in the case.

Safeguarding letter – This is a letter that a Cafcass worker will write and send to the family court. They will speak to the parties (usually the parents) and ask about the child or young person's safety and any worries that they might have.

Section 37 report – S37 is the power by which a judge can order a local authority to investigate a child's circumstances and report back to the court within 8 weeks explaining whether or not the local authority considers it necessary to initiate proceedings that would place the child in local authority care. If the local authority decide this is not necessary they must set out the basis on which they have reached their decision.

Section 7 report – This report is ordered by the family court and makes either Cafcass or the local authority investigate all the circumstances of the family, often including the wishes and feelings of a child or young person, and send a report to the court.

Section 8 – the court can make 4 different orders (i) Child Arrangements orders (ii) prohibited steps orders (iii) Specific Issue orders (iv) orders under the Inherent jurisdiction (a special power exercised only in the High Court).

Section 16A risk assessment – a duty held by Cafcass officers to undertake a risk assessment whenever they have cause to suspect that the child concerned is at risk of harm.

Self-employed contractor – social work staff who are offered work on a case by case basis to assist in providing additional capacity and have a contract for services for each individual case.

Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP) – A course which helps parents to understand how to put their child first while they are separating, even if they are in dispute with their former partner.

Sessional workers – former Cafcass staff who stay to complete case work which occurs after their departure from the organisation, for example by attending a final hearing and/or closing an existing case rather than having to reallocate that case to a new worker.

Social worker – These specially trained people help to make sure children and young people are safe and properly looked after. They will work with families to help make it possible for children to stay safely with them. If the family court decides that it is not possible, they will help to make sure there is somewhere else that is safe where a child can live.

Solicitor – A legally trained person who provides advice to people going through the family court and can speak for them in court.

Special guardianship order – This family court order allows another person to become a child's 'special guardian'. It is for children who cannot live with their birth parents and gives parental responsibility to the special guardian so that they can make decisions alone about the child's life.

Specific issue order – This order is made by the family court when there is an important issue to be resolved but parents can't agree on it. For example, which school a child should go to.

Supervised contact – This is a type of direct contact which requires a supervisor to make sure that the child is safe with the other person. This may be done in a contact centre.

Supervision order – A supervision order makes the local authority take responsibility for advising, assisting and befriending a young person, and ensuring that the child or young person is kept safe in the care of their parents.

Supported contact – This is direct contact whereby a child contact centre worker gives some support to the adults so that they can meet the needs of their child.

Webinar – Webinars are interactive seminars or other presentations taking place online to support staff learning and engagement. They are open to all Cafcass staff and focus on family justice and social work practice topics. They give staff a forum to have a two-way discussion about their ideas, experiences, challenges, best practice and innovation in a creative and informal environment.

GENERAL

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