

**Family Justice Board Meeting  
19 October 2021**

**Attendees**

*Members*

Will Quince MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Education) – **Co-Chair**

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice) – **Co-Chair**

Jenny Ballantyne (Department for Work and Pensions)

Nigel Brown (Chief Executive, Cafcass Cymru)

Albert Heaney (Deputy Director General - Social Services, Welsh Government)

Nicola Hwer (Director – Family and Criminal Justice Policy, Ministry of Justice)

Krish Kandiah (Chair, Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board)

Jason Latham (Head of Business Architecture, HM Courts and Tribunals Service)

Yvette Stanley (National Director for Social Care, Ofsted)

Jacky Tiotto (Chief Executive, Cafcass)

Isabelle Trowler (Chief Social Worker for Children and Families)

Katy Roberts (Department for Work and Pensions)

*Apologies*

Sophie Langdale (Director – Children’s Social Care, Department for Education)

Jake Morgan (ADSS Cymru)

Ian Walker (Director of Safeguarding and Early Help at Bolton Council, representing Association of Directors of Children’s Services)

*Observers*

Sir Andrew McFarlane (President of the Family Division)

Representative of the Family Justice Young People’s Board.

**Meeting**

**Co-Chairs’ Introduction and Opening Remarks**

1. Minister Quince (WQ) introduced himself and stated that he is looking forward to working with all members and supporting the recovery and

reform of the family justice system.

2. Lord Wolfson (LW) stated that he is aware of the nature and scale of challenge in the family justice system and emphasised that it is essential to work collaboratively around a clear plan of action.
3. WQ welcomed the young people's representative from the Family Justice Young People's Board (FJYPB), emphasising the importance of having the voice of the young person at these meetings.
4. WQ announced that, following feedback from the FJYPB, a DfE policy official will act as an advocate for the FJYPB moving forward.

### **Update from the Family Justice Young People's Board**

5. The FJYPB representative highlighted the FJYPB's 10-year celebration and their key priorities.
6. The FJYPB representative explained their work, including on 'jargon busting' with Cafcass. They also set out their three challenges for the Board.
7. LW thanked the FJYPB for their important work and for clearly setting out the challenges for members to consider.

### **Improving outcomes through analysing, sharing, and reacting to system performance data - presentation of the refreshed data pack on public and private law**

8. DfE policy provided an overview of the work undertaken to refresh the data pack which aims to help with understanding the causes of delays and the impact on children.
9. Data illustrating how the system is dealing with greater pressures in both public and private law was presented.
10. DfE policy presented information on the potential driving factors contributing to delays.

### **Driving recovery, reducing delays, and improving the family justice system: discussion**

11. WQ opened the discussion on what the data is telling us and asked members to share views.
12. Isabelle Trowler (IT) emphasised the need to understand trends in demand.
13. The PFD considered the timescales for evaluating the impact of current reforms to public law. On private law, the impact of reforms may be measurable next year, following the implementation of pilots.

14. Jacky Tiotto (JT) stressed that focus is needed on maximising internal capacity.
15. JT asked the group to agree on specific issues within the system that require further investigation.
16. Nigel Brown (NB) thanked everyone who worked on the refreshed data pack. He encouraged the board not to compromise on reform.
17. Krish Kandiah (KK) stated that he would be interested to know how children are leaving the system.
18. DfE's FJYPB advocate commented that the FJYPB appreciated the change in language used in the data pack and suggested that a glossary would be helpful.
19. Jason Latham (JL) commented that it would be helpful to focus future meetings on themes and forecasting trends.

#### **Update on the prioritisation protocol and Covid Recovery Group**

20. JT took the Board through the Covid Recovery Group operation and aims.
21. JT explained that the Group conducted a deep dive into public law and is currently conducting a deep dive on private law.
22. JT gave an overview of the Cafcass prioritisation protocol, emphasising the robust assessments and transparency of the protocol.
23. Following a request from the FJYPB representative, JT agreed to consult the Covid Recovery Group on whether FJYPB attendance at the Group would be useful.

#### **Update on Private Law Pilots**

24. MoJ policy gave an overview of the private law pilots and work being carried out by MoJ, HMCTS, Cafcass and the judiciary.

#### **Update on the Covid Regional Recovery Fund**

25. DfE policy provided an overview of the DfE Covid Regional Recovery Fund.

#### **Any other business**

26. DfE's FJYPB advocate asked whether any members could support the FJYPB's work on challenging the use of jargon in the family justice system. Yvette Stanley (YS) offered to discuss this with the FJYPB.