To G
thank you for being there for us and we wish you the best
We are all going to miss you. thank you!

Love from
C xx & thank you

A ☺
thank you

A thanks G

D
Thank you.

Thank you so much x
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Foreword by the Chief Executive

These are exciting times to be part of the Family Justice system. The scale and speed of the Family Justice Reform programme has produced unprecedented demands on our service. The successful implementation of these changes would not have been possible without the determination and commitment of our staff, who must be commended for their engagement and willingness to embrace new ways of working. Pivotal also are the excellent relationships which exist between CAFCASS Cymru, the All Wales Heads of Children’s Services group and Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS). Our partnerships across Wales have been crucial to delivering the challenges of the reform programme.

Highlights during the year have included:

• Successful implementation of the Family Justice Reform programme which reduced the completion of public law cases from 56.7 weeks in 2011/12 to 27 weeks by March 2014

• Eradicating the backlog of cases and providing a service to over 9500 children

• Ensuring a more robust, evidence based and analytical approach to practice through the provision of a range of assessment tools and useful resources to support the work of our family court advisors

• Winning the Welsh Government Leadership and Management award

• Witnessing the energy and passion of our staff at the national staff conference in November 2013

• The finding in the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales report published February 2014 that “CAFCASS Cymru has undergone a transformational improvement since the last inspection, three years ago.”

These developments have all benefitted from the significant support of our Advisory Committee chaired by Catriona Williams, Chief Executive of Children in Wales. It has again proved invaluable to have our plans scrutinised by stakeholders and partner agencies.
CAFCASS Cymru has experienced relentless change over the past three years and the recognition by CSSIW that these changes are delivering tangible improvements in our service provision is deeply gratifying. We have been particularly encouraged by these comments:

“The leadership of change has been exceptional in the organisation with aspects of change management that are exemplary for other social care organisations.”

“Highly competent, ambitious and determined CAFCASS Cymru leadership champions the needs of children and young people with key stakeholders across Wales and affects improved performance in partner agencies.”

“CAFCASS Cymru is now a well regarded organisation that exerts an important influence on the social care sector and Family Justice System in Wales.”

The reform programme has not ended, the inspection report signposts further action we need to take and the year ahead will undoubtedly bring further challenge. I am confident, however, that the progress we have made to date and our desire to provide the very best possible service to the children and families that we work with, will enable us to progress our ambition to be the very best organisation we can be.

Gillian Baranski
Chief Executive
Service Improvements

Key service improvements during 2013-14 have included:

Family Justice Reform Changes

The President of the Family Division, Sir James Munby introduced changes to the way cases involving applications for care and supervision orders under S31 of the Children Act 1989 are dealt with by the Family Court. The proposed changes were introduced in draft form in May 2013, with a requirement that all Local Family Justice Board (LFJB) areas of Wales and England pilot the changes. The Gwent and South Wales LFJB area decided to pilot the revised changes from September 2013 with the remaining LFJB areas in Wales commencing the pilot from October 2013. This was a significantly tight timeframe for CAFCASS Cymru and other agencies to prepare for implementation.

We were successful in ensuring the changes were delivered on time, including training our staff in the new way of working. This included much welcomed joint training with local authority social workers across Wales.

The impact of the change is already being seen in the improved performance across Wales with a reduction in case completion time from 56.7 weeks in 2011/12 (the base line year) to 27 weeks by March 2014.

This pilot period, although demanding and challenging in terms of timescales, proved an invaluable opportunity for staff within the organisation to prepare for the full implementation of this new way of working from April 2014.

Backlog Eradicated

During 2013, we experienced a substantial increase in private law applications resulting in a significant backlog of Safeguarding Enquiry Reports (SERs) and a delay in their completion.

The successful implementation of an action plan, including the transfer of responsibility for writing reports to specialist First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointments (FHDRA) practitioners in local area offices, resulted in the backlog being eradicated by the end of November. The provision of SERs filed in court 3 days prior to the FHDRA also significantly improved: from 48% in July 2013 to 85.5% by March 2014.

Assessment Toolkit

In addition to the CAFCASS Cymru Child and Adolescent Welfare Assessment Checklist (CC-CAWAC), we have introduced a range of assessment tools to support practice
which is both analytical and evidence based. These specialist assessment tools, based on an award winning model recognised by the Care Council for Wales in 2011, support the work of family court advisors. Supplementary tools have also been created to support assessments of contact and to assist and engage children in expressing their wishes and feelings.

First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointments (FHDRA)
A joint project was set up in October 2012 between HMCTS and CAFCASS Cymru to introduce more clarity to the FHDRA process and to ensure that FHDRA service delivery provided by both organisations is standard and equitable across Wales. The outcomes from the project include ensuring that FHDRA is underpinned by clear child protection systems practice; with guidance for practitioners and managers in CAFCASS Cymru; production of a FHDRA court attendance pack for practitioners attending FHDRA; and skills development training for CAFCASS Cymru FHDRA practitioners.

Childrens’ champions – working with disabled children
We have developed a team advisor role to enhance our work with disabled children. These team advisors act as champions within their operational area, and are developing links with other local professionals who work with disabled children to ensure effective engagement. We have also developed a directory of internal resources and skills of staff within the organisation who possess communication and professional skills in this important area of work.

CSSIW reported in their inspection that “There were examples of outstanding work to communicate with children suffering from significant communication impairments.”

Section 7 Protocol and 16.4 Hotline Protocol
In close consultation with all Local Authority Heads of Children’s Services, HMCTS and the Judiciary, an agreed Section 7 protocol was launched in May 2013. This was a
significant development which for the first time in Wales outlined the circumstances when it would be more appropriate for the local authority to produce a Section 7 report in private law cases and the circumstances when it should be CAFCASS Cymru.

Building on the success of the development of the Section 7 Protocol, CAFCASS Cymru, HMCTS and the Judiciary also agreed a hotline protocol to support the consultation process with CAFCASS Cymru prior to the making of a Rule 16.4 Guardian appointment in private law cases. The protocol made available one telephone number in each operational area which the Court/Judiciary can use to speak with a “duty manager” to allow for a quicker and more effective process.

Leadership and Management Awards
Following the implementation of the LEAN review into administrative processes in 2012, operational teams have implemented the new processes adopting the principle of “Do it once, do it well”. The success of the project has been significant and was recognised by Welsh Government and the Institute for Continuous improvement in the Public Sector (ICiPS) with the Project winning two awards for Leadership and Change and Outstanding Leadership.

National Staff Conference 2013
A national staff conference was held in November 2013 and was opened by the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Gwenda Thomas AM. The conference gave the opportunity for staff to hear directly from Sir James Munby, President of the Family Division about his vision for the Family Justice System. Other speakers included Eleri Thomas, Chief Executive Officer for the Children’s Commissioner for Wales and David Sissling, Director General for Health and Social Services and Chief Executive, NHS Wales. During the day, staff attended a variety of workshop sessions including “Participation with Young People” which was expertly led by the Merthyr Tydfil Borough-wide Youth Forum.

CSSIW Inspection
During November 2013, the CSSIW undertook their second inspection of CAFCASS Cymru. CSSIW judged CAFCASS Cymru to be “good” in terms of its overall effectiveness and capacity to improve – finding improvement since the 2010 inspection as “transformational”. Key improvements were identified in leadership and management; direct work with children and families; assessments of children who have witnessed domestic abuse and direct work with disabled children. Notable improvements were also cited in terms of the management of complaints, performance management and quality assurance.
CSSIW identified that “Quality and performance management is outstanding” and “Effective and innovative use is made of the information for internal evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and to improve service performance.” Further, the report adds that “Management information is used very effectively to deliver continuous improvement and to sustain high quality services across nearly all aspects of service.”

Key Performance Indicators
There are two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) used to measure and assess how well CAFCASS Cymru is performing:

- KPI 1: Section 31 cases allocated within 2 days – Target = 70%
- KPI 2: Private workload unallocated less than 10 weeks – Target = No more than 4%.

Figure 1 shows CAFCASS Cymru’s performance against KPI 1. CAFCASS Cymru achieved this target with an overall KPI achievement of 93.8% for 2013-14. Despite the pressures facing the organisation in meeting the Section 31 demand, this represents a 14% improvement compared with the previous financial year.

Figure 1: KPI 1 Section 31 Applications allocated within 2 days – Target = 70%
Figure 2 shows CAFCASS Cymru’s performance against KPI 2. The organisation continually achieved this target throughout the year, with an overall KPI achievement of 2.2%.

**Figure 2: KPI 2 Private Law workload unallocated less than 10 weeks before filing – Target = No more than 4%**

![Graph showing KPI 2 performance](image)

**Complaints**
The following numbers of complaints were received during the year:

- 101 Complaints from adult service users and 57 queries and early resolution complaints were received during the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014. This is a slight increase from the figures recorded in 2012-13.

The CSSIW inspection rated our complaints process as good, a significant improvement from the previous inspection in 2010. The report commented that “There is a good structure and system for managing complaints and ensuring they are dealt with in a timely manner, characterised by good communication.” All complaints seen “had been well managed and arrived at resolutions.”
“You have been very patient and understanding throughout all of this and I really can’t thank you enough. Your office staff were very patient with me and you must let them all know they are very good listeners. Thank you again and hopefully no more courts forever.”
~ a mother

Compliments
CAFCASS Cymru practitioners become involved with families during stressful and emotional periods in their lives. Our practitioners frequently make recommendations to the Court with which not all parties agree. This makes the positive feedback and compliments from service users and members of the judiciary particularly welcome and greatly appreciated. During the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 we received 56 compliments.

CAFCASS Cymru received 14 requests for information:

- 7 were processed under the Data Protection Act 1998
- 7 were processed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

All requests were responded to within the statutory timescales.
Service Demand

We were encouraged that CSSIW recognised that “particularly outstanding is the use of management information to manage demand upon the services of CAFCASS Cymru, and improve the performance of partner organisations.”

The Number of Children with whom we have worked
• 9,573 Children and young people. Most of the children we work with (82%) are aged ten years and under.
• Increase of 10.6% compared with 2012-13 (8,657).

CAFCASS Cymru’s work is mainly split into two areas: public and private law. The demand placed on each area of work varies significantly and the following information provides an overview of the level of service provision that is requested.

Public Law
The number of referrals has increased by 21% over the past year from 1,090 in 2012-13 to 1,314 in 2013-14. Public law referrals account for 20.3% of all referrals received in 2013-14. Figure 3 shows the public law referrals over the last three years by month.

Figure 3: Public Law referrals by year
Care and Supervision Orders - Section 31
This is where the Local Authority Social Services department deem that a threshold of significant harm has been reached regarding a child. The local authority makes an application to the Court in order to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare.

- 660 applications made
- Decrease of 8% in comparison to 2012-13 (721).

Figure 4 shows the total monthly requests for Section 31 applications for the period April 2011 to March 2014.

Figure 4: Comparison of Section 31 Referrals by month over last 3 years

Adoption Proceedings
- 69 referrals received
- 5% increase compared to 66 cases in 2012-13.
Private Law

The private law workload referred to below and in Figure 5 includes the Work to First Hearing (WTFH) Schedule 2 Letter – Safeguarding Enquiries Reports.

Figure 5 provides a monthly overview of private law workload received during the last three year period up to March 2014. CAFCASS Cymru responded to a total of 5,156 referrals in 2013-14, compared with 5,005 in 2012-13 and 4,419 in 2011-12. The growth in private law referrals over the last three years, equates to 16.7%. Private law referrals accounted for 79.7% of all referrals received in 2013-14.

Figure 5: Private Law referrals by year (Including WTFH cases)

Work to First Hearing

The Work to First Hearing (WTFH) process began in October 2010, with the implementation of the revised private law programme (rPLP).

- 3,294 WTFH applications were received in 2013-14

- The number of WTFH applications continues to increase, with the average monthly applications increasing from 209 per month for 2011-12, to 264 per month for 2012-13, and 275 per month for 2013-14. This is a 32% increase since the first full year of WTFH.
Rule 16.4 Orders and Family Assistance Orders

A Rule 16.4 case is considered if a child is involved in a complex private law case. The court has the power to make the child a party to the proceedings by appointing a guardian for the child who then also benefits from legal representation by a solicitor. This is a provision made under Rule 16.4 of the Family Procedure Rules 2010.

Rule 16.4 cases have decreased year on year, with a 1% decrease from 82 in 2012-13 to 81 in 2013-14.

A Family Assistance Order (FAO) is an order of the court to assist, advise and support families experiencing difficulties in family court proceedings, concerning arrangements for their children. The number of FAOs has also decreased over a three year period to the extent of 82%.

Figure 6 shows the annual requests in regard to 16.4 and FAO cases during the last three years.

Figure 6: Rule 16.4 Orders and Family Assistance Orders (FAO)
How we are Funded

The total amount of money spent during 2013-14 was £10,112,943, of which £9,737,019 was spent on running costs (e.g. salaries) and £375,924 was spent on programme funded costs (e.g. funding for contact services; Children and Adoption Act 2006 contact activity provision and the costs associated with the development and implementation of our electronic case management system.)

The chart below highlights how the total spend for the year was broken down.

I just wanted to say thank you very much for your help and support throughout this difficult time. I really have appreciated your advice and professionalism along the way and I just pray that whatever happens in the future is what’s best for my daughter and that she has the life that she so deserves.

~ a mother
How we are Developing and Improving

CSSIW Inspection
CSSIW returned in 2013 to undertake a second inspection of CAFCASS Cymru.

The findings from the inspection of 2010 found that overall the organisation was “satisfactory” and recommended that improvements were needed in complaints, user engagement, performance management, direct practice with children who are disabled, and where domestic violence is an issue.

In their latest inspection in 2013, CSSIW found that CAFCASS Cymru has improved in all these areas with an overall improvement from “satisfactory” to “good”. The 2013 inspection found that there has been significant improvement in the way CAFCASS Cymru manages complaints, performance management and quality assurance.

CSSIW found that the leadership of change has been exceptional with aspects of change management that serve as exemplars for other social care organisations. The most marked improvement is in the relationships with key stakeholders.

Imelda Richardson, Chief Inspector of CSSIW, said: “Decisive action by CAFCASS Cymru in response to the findings and recommendations of the last CSSIW inspection report has resulted in significant improvements being made in the quality of the service they provide.”

“The key strategic direction and vision for the organisation has been clearly articulated by the leadership, and it is evident that CAFCASS Cymru has the ability to continue to improve in the future.”

“However, CAFCASS Cymru faces significant challenges in the near future, with a projected increase in demand for their service and changes to both public and private law. This will require the organisation to remain focused on its continued improvement journey.”

Improving the Skills and Knowledge of Staff
Training and development for all staff has remained a key priority. In the annual Welsh Government staff survey, of the CAFCASS Cymru staff who responded:

- 98% said that they had the skills they need to do their job
- 51% said they were able to access the right learning and development opportunities when they need to
- 63% said that learning and development activities they had completed in the past 12 months had helped to improve their performance.
A 2-day induction programme was held in January 2014 for all new staff to provide an overview of role and remit CAFCASS Cymru as an organisation, within Welsh Government.

During the year, a 2-day induction programme was developed for newly appointed practitioners for roll out during 2014-15. The bespoke programme will form part of the learning and development plan on an annual basis.

A welcome pack setting out a programme of induction was developed and implemented during the year. This ensures all new staff have a smooth transition into the organisation and their respective roles.

A Family Justice Review training programme, commissioned by the Care Council for Wales was delivered jointly to representatives of all Local Authority Children’s Services in Wales and CAFCASS Cymru staff during the period October 2013 – March 2014. This training enabled practitioners to better understand the impact of implementation of Family Justice Reform in Wales and the social work values that underpin the revised Public Law Outline.

A management development programme for practice managers was delivered during the period May-September 2013 to further equip them in their roles as managers of teams of family court advisors and family court social workers. As the year progressed and due to changes to public and private law processes and the impact on the role of the practice manager role, it was recognised that an extension was required to the development programme. This programme began in March 2014. On completion, each practice manager is expected to acquire the Chartered Management Institute level 5 Certificate in Management and Leadership.

As a result of the success of the practice managers development programme a similar programme for business support managers has been commissioned to commence in 2014-15.
Strengthening Stakeholder Links

CAFCASS Cymru’s determination to improve relationships with partners and stakeholders was recognised in the CSSIW report which commented that “the most marked improvement is in the relationships with key stakeholders”. To secure this we have developed relationships at national, regional and local level. These include:

- Quarterly meetings with the Family Division Liaison Judge for Wales
- Quarterly meetings held between Heads of Children’s Services, HMCTS and CAFCASS Cymru. This has been established as a sub-group of the Family Justice Network
- Effective participation in the three Local Family Justice Boards.

Participation Programme

During 2013/14 CAFCASS Cymru began the development of a children and young people’s participation plan which will be implemented as a three year programme of interrelated projects. The plan is specifically aimed at improving services for children and young people who come into contact with CAFCASS Cymru. To begin this work, we have established a network of contacts with third sector colleagues and others with an interest in participation and the work of CAFCASS Cymru, and held meetings with key partners and service providers to give an overview of the approach CAFCASS Cymru will be taking. This work will be given significant priority in future years.

“The only constant in this matter has been the attention paid by my family court advisor who has, throughout, been available to contact and, whilst not immediately contactable due to her commitments, she always responded to requests to return a call where her input was valued. I have thanked her personally for her attention, and I would like your office to recognise her professionalism through what has been an extremely stressful time for my family.”

~ a father
Advisory Committee
The CAFCASS Cymru Advisory Committee, set up in January 2006, supports the CAFCASS Cymru senior management team in the development of the service and advises them on relevant stakeholder issues.

The purpose of the committee includes:

- Representing stakeholders’ interests and providing suggestions to CAFCASS Cymru on a range of practice issues
- Acting as an external consultative reference point in relation to the development of policies
- Considering the impact of new legislation and developments in the Family Justice system in relation to the development of the service in Wales.

The Committee met three times during 2013-14 and is chaired by the Chief Executive of Children in Wales, Catriona Williams.
A Special thank You!

To B

Thank you 4 helping me through some sad & upsetting times that i couldn't sort out myself once again

Thanx A