



Cafcass Workforce Development Strategy 2014-16

Executive Summary

The workforce strategy builds upon the firm foundations laid down during 2010-12 and the continuation of a range of workforce development initiatives during 2013. Significant improvements have already been made to attendance with resulting increases in capacity, achieved in tandem with a more proportionate and analytical model of social work practice, enabling Cafcass to meet the rising demand for services at a time when budgets are reducing.

Emphasis has been placed on improving the health and wellbeing of the workforce, providing a range of support for practitioners to become more resilient and promoting self-efficacy whilst simultaneously maintaining a strong focus on improving performance and developing individual skills. This will continue to be a central feature of our work through until 2016 and beyond.

Talent Management for all staff will continue to be embedded through individual supervision, self-directed learning and resources such as corporate membership of The College of Social Work and Strengthscope[®] as well as the provision of development programmes for emerging talent and senior leadership.

Our roles will continue to be developed in line with the Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Workers, creating clear paths for career progression and the ability to grow our own future managers and leaders. Where we do need to recruit externally we will utilise a strong employee brand to attract high quality candidates and a robust and detailed selection process to select those candidates who will be able to deliver effective performance in role, as well as make a contribution to the continuing development and improvement of the service.

Strategic and operational workforce planning will be fully supported by a suite of detailed HR management information reports, and individuals will also be provided with real-time measures of their performance, enabling effective self-regulation.

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Section 1 – Where We Have Come From

1.1 The Story So far: 2010-13

Since 2010, demand for both public law services rose significantly, though has stabilised in 2013/14 so far. Private law demand has risen in the last twelve months, partly as a result of legal aid changes.

During the same period, the size of the Cafcass workforce has reduced with the loss of headcount being achieved through reductions in the number of managers and other non-frontline roles. FCA roles were prioritised in order to ensure that operational capacity was not compromised.

Between April 2009 and December 2013 more than 140 management roles were deleted, of which the biggest reduction in headcount was 63 Service Managers. The number of Corporate Directors and Heads of Service were both reduced by more than half with other reductions coming from Office Managers and management roles within National Office functions. By contrast the number of FCAs has remained stable or increased.

In line with the overall reduction of permanent staff there has also been a managed reduction in spending on the flexible workforce comprising agency staff and self-employed or sessional workers. The flexible workforce have continued to help meet demand where permanent recruitment is difficult and has helped us to meet variations in demand for our services.

Demand for Service vs Workforce Capacity

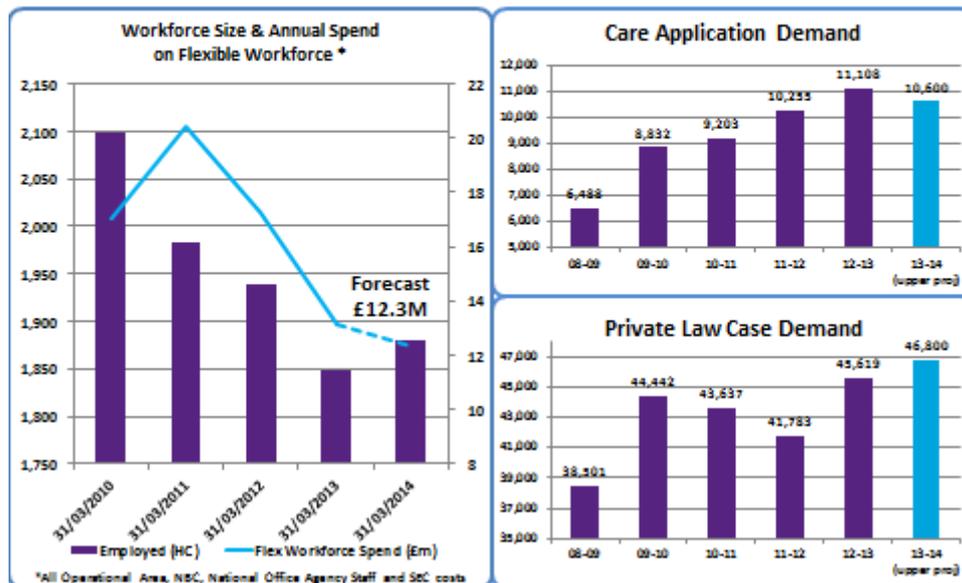


Figure 1. Demand for services against headcount reduction 2010-14

Historically sickness absence in Cafcass was high. Whilst this was largely in line with sector averages, it represented a significant loss of capacity at a time when demand for service had never been higher. However, since 2010 a more robust early intervention model has been applied to managing attendance. Combined with detailed reporting of absences and proactive management of cases this has led to a significant reduction in the level of sickness absence. This has generated a substantial amount of additional capacity.

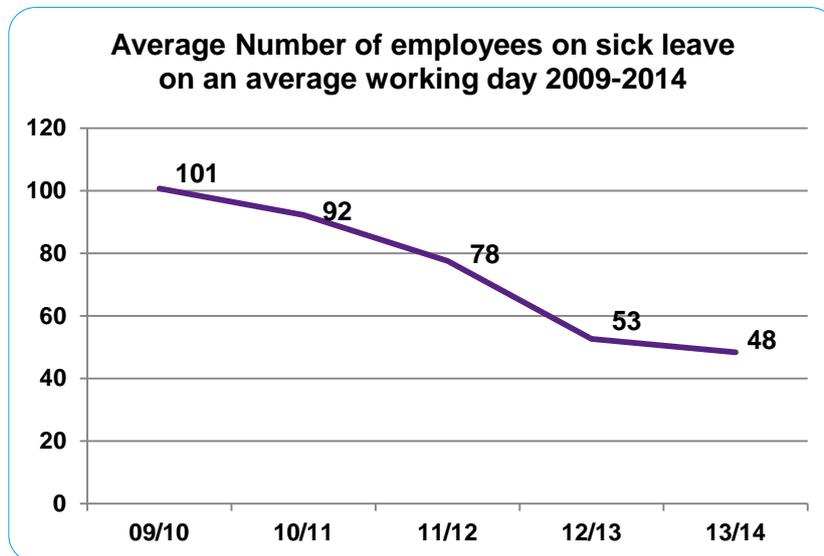


Figure 2. Reduction in daily sickness absence

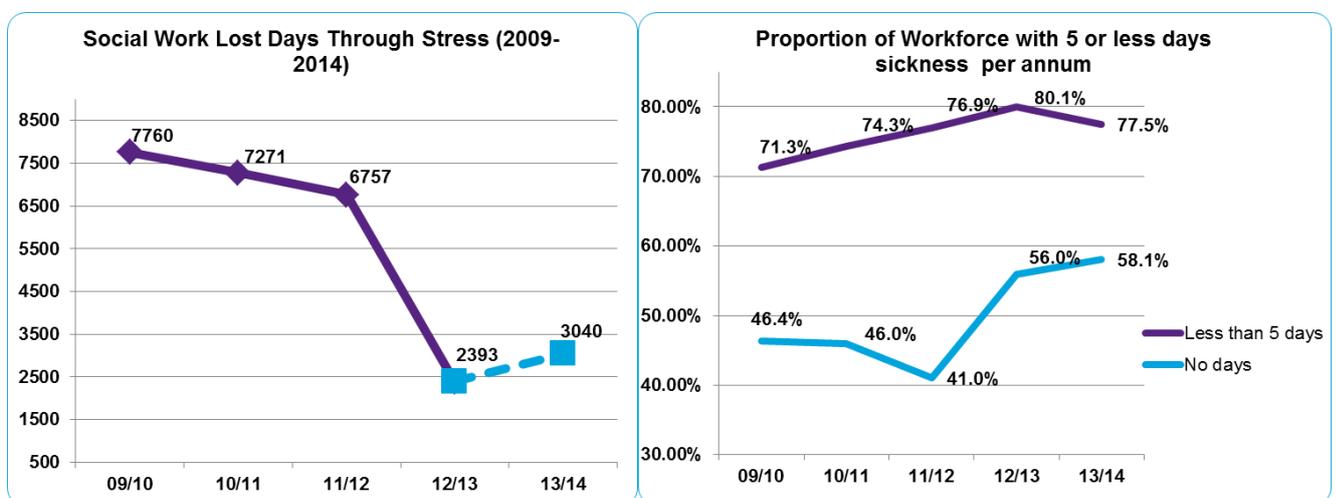


Figure 3. Reduction in working days lost to stress (left) and improvements to the number of staff with low overall annual sickness absence

The reduction in the number of long-term absences has also resulted in less work needing to be re-allocated, less internal disruption and pressure to pick up work from absent colleagues, and therefore an improved service to children.

In line with this general reduction in the levels of sickness absence there has been a marked decrease in days lost specifically to stress, and an increase in the proportion of the workforce with low levels of sickness absence (less than 5 days) or with no absence at all. The annual reduction in stress absence alone between 2011/12 and 2012/13 contributed the

equivalent of almost 20 additional full-time FCAs. Taken together these trends demonstrate tangible improvement in the health and wellbeing of the workforce and a measurable increase in capacity.

During 2010-12 steps had been taken to introduce elements of career progression with entry level positions established for Family Support Workers (FSWs) and Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS). The role of Enhanced Practitioner was created and, in some service areas, Senior Service Manager roles have also been introduced. A framework for a structured social work career path, which was broadly in line with the Social Work Professional Capabilities Framework, was in place by the end of 2012.

A restructure of Business Support provision in 2010 aimed to deliver a flexible model of administrative support to frontline practice whilst rationalising existing posts in the structure. The functions undertaken by Business Support have also continued to evolve in response to improved systems, new IT and the centralisation of queries via the National Business Centre.

The demographic profile and ethnic make-up of our workforce has demonstrated evidence of rebalancing during the period 2010-13. It remains slightly at variance with the wider sector when compared against the national data set for social workers (NMDS-SC) and age data from HCPC¹. However it is noted through our research that a single complete equalities data set for social workers is currently lacking. Equalities data held by HCPC as the registering body is only partial.

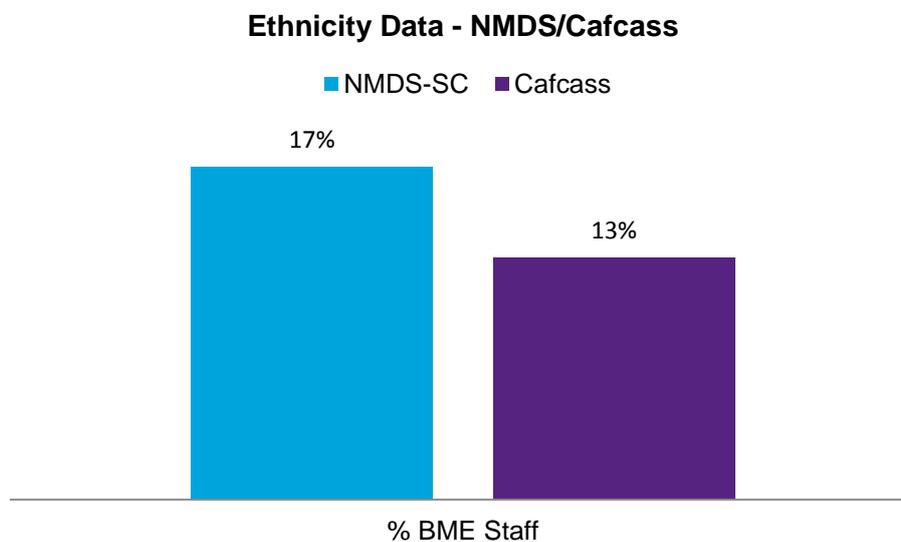


Figure 4. Workforce Ethnicity makeup – NMDS-SC, Cafcass

The proportion of Cafcass BME staff is slightly lower than the national minimum data set when compared to other children’s social work roles. However the Cafcass BME measure is gradually increasing as demonstrated by an increase in the proportion of BME staff to 13% from a previous figure of 11% in 2010/11.

¹ Age data was provided by HCPC in response to a FoI request (March 2014), but were unable to provide meaningful data in relation to ethnicity.

Staff aged 55+ - Civil Service/Cafcass/HPC

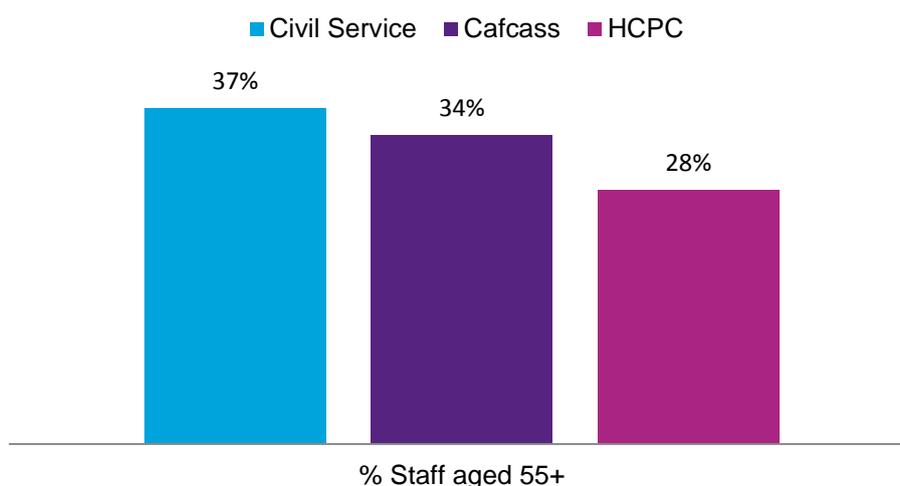


Figure 5. Workforce aged over 55 – Civil Service (ONS), Cafcass and HCPC

On this evidence Cafcass frontline workforce is slightly older than the general population of registered social workers in England, although it should be noted that HCPC data does not provide comparator data for those engaged specifically in children’s social work roles. The HCPC data will also include recent social work graduates who tend to be younger, and who do not have the relevant experience to undertake Cafcass roles. During the period 2010/11 to 2013/14 there has been a reduction of 6.7% for the proportion of the workforce aged 50 plus and this is balanced by an increase of 5.2% of staff in the range 30-49 and a 1.6% increase in staff under 30. The rebalancing of the age profile has largely occurred through staff turnover, which has remained relatively stable for Family Court Advisers at around 13% per annum.

At service area level there are considerable differences between workforce profiles across all measures of diversity. For example in South Yorkshire and Humberside staff aged 50 or more account for 64% of the workforce as compared to 32% in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Similar variations exist within workforce ethnicity with 37% BME in Birmingham and the Black Country whereas in Dorset, Cornwall, Devon and Somerset the figure is 2%. Whilst to some degree the figures for ethnicity may reflect the local populations, when considered alongside other measures of workforce diversity, they serve to demonstrate the heterogeneity of our workforce and also to highlight the differing challenges for local workforce planning.

In April 2012 Cafcass implemented a new Operating Framework in response to the emerging changes within the family justice system. The framework emphasised a need to move towards a model of self-regulated practice and a more proportionate and analytical style of working. These changes in working practices have enabled frontline staff to undertake and maintain higher numbers of cases by reducing the scale of the professional task in each individual case, effectively increasing the available capacity without requiring an increase in frontline staff. The required professional development for practitioners was fully supported by a national training plan delivered by our National Improvement Service (NIS). These changes have been reflected in the revised Cafcass Operating Framework (2014), with the core principles referred to remaining in place.

The emphasis on self-regulation and professional development was also reflected in a new Supervision Policy (introduced in April 2012), adopting a more proportionate approach to supervision and providing greater focus on a quarterly individual review and identification of development needs. MySkills was introduced as the platform to support learning with access to e-learning and workshop booking. In November 2012 aspects of learning such as booking training events moved to iTrent.

The need to invest in support for managers to aid their professional development was identified and initially met through the provision of a management development programme during 2010. The programme was based around modules for leadership and development, performance management and change management.

Evidence of improved service delivery has already begun to emerge, and during the period 2010-12 our performance as measured by Ofsted began to demonstrate notable improvements. Of the five inspection reports published by Ofsted in 2010, four included an assessment of inadequate for overall effectiveness with one report also assessed as inadequate for capacity to improve. Only one service area was assessed as being satisfactory in both areas.

Of the four reports published in 2011 only one service area was assessed as inadequate for its overall effectiveness. The other three were assessed as satisfactory, with one area also being assessed as good for its capacity for improvement.

During 2012 three inspection reports were published with all service areas being assessed as adequate (satisfactory) for overall effectiveness and good for capacity for improvement.

This improvement journey has continued into the three inspections conducted during 2013 and is clearly shown in Figure 5. Two service areas were assessed as good for overall effectiveness, with the other being adequate (satisfactory). All three were assessed as good for their capacity for improvement.

Following the implementation of a new Ofsted inspection framework Cafcass were subject to a national inspection during February-March 2014 and were assessed overall as being good, and with some outstanding features. These results are testament to the improvements that have been achieved in service delivery allied to development of the workforce, and this provides the basis and direction of travel during 2014-16 for all service areas as we consolidate the good judgement and move towards being outstanding.

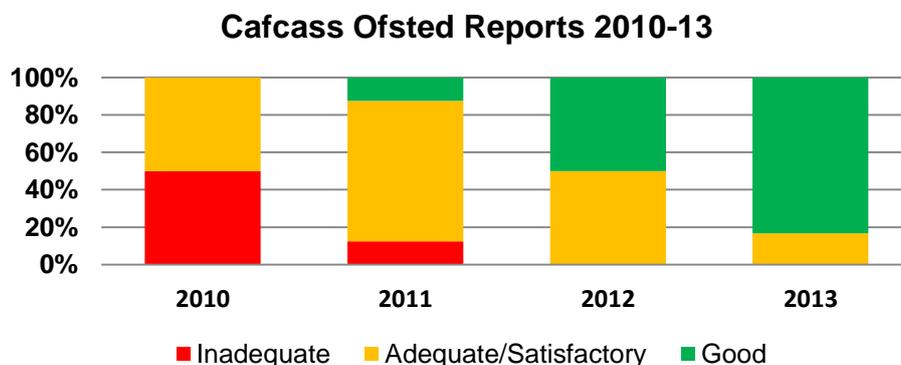


Figure 6. Summary of Ofsted results 2010-13

Section 2 – Where We Are Now

2.1 – The Changing External Environment: 2013

The pace of change affecting Cafcass is continuous as we implement our part of the family justice reform programme, and the Revised Public Law Outline in particular (June 2013 – April 2014). Changes to our working practices are underway following the implementation of the Operating Framework in 2012 incorporating updates in January 2014.

The level of demand for our services continues to rise, so there remains a need to build, develop and maintain a highly engaged workforce with sufficient capacity and with the right skills, knowledge and capabilities to adapt to the changing nature of family court social work.

Building workforce capacity is supported by recruiting high quality new staff where vacancies arise. However we cannot assume a ready supply of new staff with the necessary skills and experience. Indicators predict that whilst there will be a small oversupply of social workers generally due to new graduates entering the profession, social workers with the skills and experience we require will remain in short supply. We are therefore in competition with other employers to secure the most talented individuals.

Although we cannot accurately forecast budgets beyond the reductions in 2014/15 we must conduct our workforce planning on the basis that our funding is unlikely to increase in real terms and may reduce further. Significant savings have already been realised whilst protecting our frontline capacity.

2.2 – Managing Attendance – Adding Capacity

In April 2013 a new Managing Attendance policy replaced the previous Management of Sickness Absence Policy. This new policy embodies the shift in emphasis from absence management towards supporting staff in the workplace and adopting strategic measures to prevent absences occurring, or where they do occur ensure early intervention and resolution. Specified timelines and trigger points have been removed in favour of a more flexible approach to meet the needs or circumstances of each individual, whilst ensuring the focus remains on service delivery and business continuity at all times.

The quality of support from Occupational Health has been addressed and, in August 2013, a new service provider was appointed. The ability to intervene early and identify appropriate support is fully supported by high quality medical advice and guidance for managers.

Absence levels have continued to decrease and look likely to stabilise at around 5 days per annum, significantly below sector averages.

2.3 – Supporting Wellbeing

From April 2013 a Health and Wellbeing Plan was launched for all staff, with more than 98% of the workforce opting to be involved in the scheme, with 13% deciding to upgrade their level of membership beyond the entry level. The value of the scheme has quickly become evident, with more than 2500 claims made within the first 12 months amounting to over £125,000 in medical treatments. Although not necessarily a directly causative relationship, there is a clear correlation between the launch of the Health and Wellbeing Plan and the continued improvements in attendance when compared to the past two years. There is a similar correlation with the increased numbers of proactive interventions by managers to support staff in the workplace, and positive feedback on the effectiveness of our 'Day 1 Stress Intervention' service provided as part of the total Employee Assistance Plan. Also during 2012/13 a national programme of well attended training sessions was conducted to assist staff in all roles to develop their personal resilience. Results from the 2014 Ofsted staff survey indicated that 81% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that their health and wellbeing was taken into account in the way their managers supported and supervised their work. Taken together, these form a convincing set of evidence to demonstrate that pro-active management of absence combined with a focus on employee wellbeing can deliver sustained reductions in the number of working days lost to ill-health, whilst also making an important contribution to increasing levels of staff engagement.

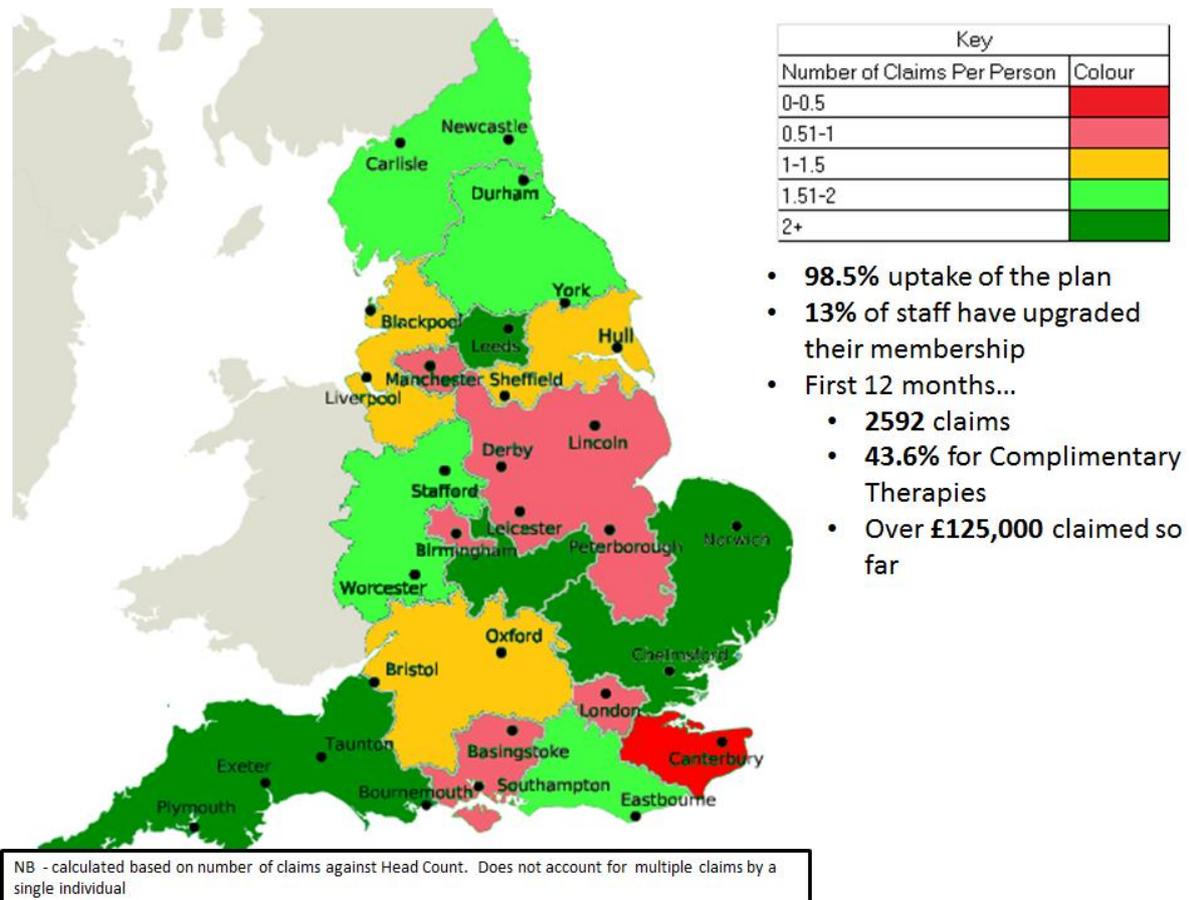


Figure 7. Uptake of Health and Wellbeing Plan

"Having the scheme available to me has encouraged me to get these issues sorted instead of putting them off, and so far I am really pleased I have done so. I would highly recommend using the scheme to all the members." Administrative Assistant

"I claimed for my daughter's glasses; it was really quick and easy. She went to the opticians, we kept the receipt, I filled out the form and the money was repaid. I've also used the discounted gym service to trial a few gyms; it was no problem at all, and I'm probably going to join. Best of all I haven't had to pay anything yet!" FCA

2.4 – Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment and selection process has been significantly updated to provide managers with a broader range of evidence to support their decisions whilst reducing the amount of time spent conducting face-to-face interviews. A more streamlined approach to short-listing, along with the introduction of telephone interviews, means that candidates who do not meet the minimum criteria in terms of qualifications or experience are sifted out at an early stage of the process. Bespoke, role specific online assessments have been developed to assess required competencies, through a mixture of situational judgement and written assessment tasks. Interview questions for the most regularly recruited roles have been refreshed to ensure they are aligned to the skills required and up to date with developments in family justice. Job Descriptions and Person Specifications have also been revised and restructured around the relevant skill areas to increase clarity for candidates and more focussed assessment criteria for managers.

The provision of information to candidates has been improved through the development of the *Cafcass Careers* web pages, which offer an informative, engaging and accurate description of what it is like to work for us, what we look for in our staff and what we can offer in terms of career progression and development.

Our profile as an employer of choice for social workers is also being developed and enhanced through effective use of external networks and partnerships, both to improve our presence within the social work job market, and as a platform for our employer brand. Evidence of this comes from the Social Worker of the Year Awards 2013 where Cafcass received silver awards in the categories for Team of the Year and Employer of the Year. This will be further bolstered by Ofsted results published in April 2014 as strong evidence of the progress we are making as an organisation and the clear focus on providing support and development for staff.

This holistic approach to recruitment and selection will enable us to compete effectively in the job market and to attract and then appoint the most talented individuals who will have the right skills and attributes to bring additional capacity to the organisation and will contribute positively to improvements in practice, aligning their efforts to the achievement of Cafcass' objectives.

Based on our current stable turnover rate for frontline staff we can expect to recruit over 400 Family Court Advisers during the next 3 years. In other words as many as a third of current FCAs could potentially have left and been replaced by the end of 2016. Ensuring that every new FCA appointed has the right skills and attributes is therefore crucial to our future service quality and effectiveness.

2.5 – Nurturing Talent

2.5.1. Talent Management

Our Talent Management Strategy was launched in February 2013 and builds on the success that we have achieved over the last few years in developing performance and providing a range of high quality learning opportunities. Our Strategy and our overall approach to Talent Management is an inclusive one, involving every Cafcass employee. It has been designed to enable individual employees to realise their aspirations for job enrichment, role and/or career progression, whilst contributing to continuous service and practice improvement.

As part of Talent Management we have introduced a new on-line tool to support identification of individual strengths. We have also trained over 60 staff to become accredited Strengths Coaches who will provide coaching sessions to individuals to help them understand and incorporate their strengths into their role, plus a series of workshops to train up to 150 managers in using the strengths approach as part of their Performance and Learning Reviews (PLRs).

The *Emerging Talent* programme offers additional focus on learning and development for those who are identified as having high performance and future potential. Applications for the *Emerging Talent* programme have resulted in 60 staff from across the organisation, in a range of roles, being accepted on to a bespoke, strengths-based learning programme which will help them develop and achieve their career aspirations whilst harnessing their potential for Cafcass.

Further details regarding our long term approach to nurturing talent can be found in our Talent Management Strategy at Appendix 1.



"Being on the Emerging Talent programme has helped me be clear about my strengths, and the opportunities I need to make best use of them in Cafcass." FCA

2.5.2 Developing Leaders and Managers

Building on previous management development activity, a refreshed series of workshops for managers is now available. This programme offers learning in six key management areas including: Essential People Management; Developing Your Team; Recruitment and Selection and Supervision Skills. To-date 95% of our managers have accessed some form of management development learning.

As part of Talent Management we have identified a preferred partner, Sheffield Hallam University, for the design and delivery of a Leadership Development Programme commencing in February 2014.

2.5.3 Graduates and Apprentices

A Cafcass Graduate Development Programme has been introduced to provide high calibre graduates with the opportunity to develop their skills and experience on a bespoke development scheme involving a range of different portfolios. Our Graduates will develop a broad understanding of the various organisational functions, enabling them to maximise their potential and deliver a positive contribution to the organisation.

An Apprenticeship Scheme is now available which provides a national framework offering individuals a 12 month placement (level 2) or an 18 month placement (level 3) in a corporate function or business support role (including the National Business Centre). Apprentices will gain skills, expertise and the chance to achieve a qualification. Those demonstrating ability and the potential to develop further within the organisation will be encouraged to explore opportunities for further career progression on completion of their placement. Following a procurement process, we have appointed a preferred apprenticeship provider, *First4Skills*, who we are working with to develop a consistent and comprehensive programme to support both new Cafcass apprentices and their managers.

2.6 – Learning and Development

Continuous Learning and Development (L&D) has remained one of the highest organisational priorities, and evidence from the 2014 Ofsted staff survey demonstrated that 71% of staff felt that managers created a supportive environment which reflects a learning culture. At individual level the PLR discussion remains the primary way of establishing learning needs and agreeing development solutions. Discussions between managers and HR or NIS colleagues and effective use of information from performance matrices provide the mechanism for identifying learning requirements at team and national levels.

These have been delivered through the National Improvement Service, IT trainers and HR colleagues utilising a range of delivery methods, including online and blended learning through *MySkills*, our online and self-directed learning platform for staff. In addition, the role of social work managers and enhanced practitioners, acting as coaches, mentors and practice educators, remains a fundamental element of our learning and development approach.

Recent innovations include accessing YouTube® via the corporate network, opening up access to a range of additional training media/videos. Corporate membership of The College of Social Work promotes continuous professional development and further enhances access to learning materials and other resources to facilitate continuous and self-enabled professional development.

The National Training Plan for 2013/14 includes a number of new training workshops including Court Skills, Child Protection and Decision Making and Private Law.

2.7 – Driving Engagement

Effective employee engagement is essential for Cafcass to deliver the increased demand for our services and achieve our continued focus on delivering high quality outcomes for children. In order to meet our challenges, we must harness the talents of all our staff to the full, helping to ensure that they have access to the opportunities they need to achieve success in their roles.

Meaningful and effective two-way communication is vital in building sustained employee engagement. We have enhanced our existing communication channels to enable staff to communicate better with their colleagues, managers and the wider organisation. This has included the effective use of employee surveys at local and national level to obtain feedback, to identify areas where individual or organisational development is required and to help us to devise the most suitable solutions to the challenges facing our staff. The effectiveness of this approach has been evidenced in the healthy response rate to the staff survey for the Health and Wellbeing plan (50%) and the even higher response rate to the survey of Business Support (over 80% response rate). Further local staff surveys and ‘pulse check’ surveys alongside opportunities for individuals to exercise employee ‘voice’ provide a range of channels for upward communication. Our ability to provide feedback allied to the results and findings of surveys, and the conversion of these into clear actions using a ‘you said, we did’ approach, are key measures of effectiveness.

2.8 – Workforce Planning

Dynamic and data-rich workforce plans have been developed and implemented during 2012 which bring together a range of HR, operational data and other relevant management information to support planning decisions at national, service area and team levels. Presented in a dashboard format the plans highlight areas of strengths and any which require action or attention in the short, medium and long term. The workforce plans are evidence based with minimal narrative content which is focused on priority outcomes.

Service area workforce plans will feed logically into the National Workforce Plans. Effective planning will enable managers to deploy resources appropriately; planning ahead for turnover including support for retirement. This will achieve a balanced workforce which can respond to demand, including appropriate use of flexible workforce such as agency, bank workers, self-employed and fixed-term contracts where these meet the needs of the organisation and support the core workforce of full and part-time employees.

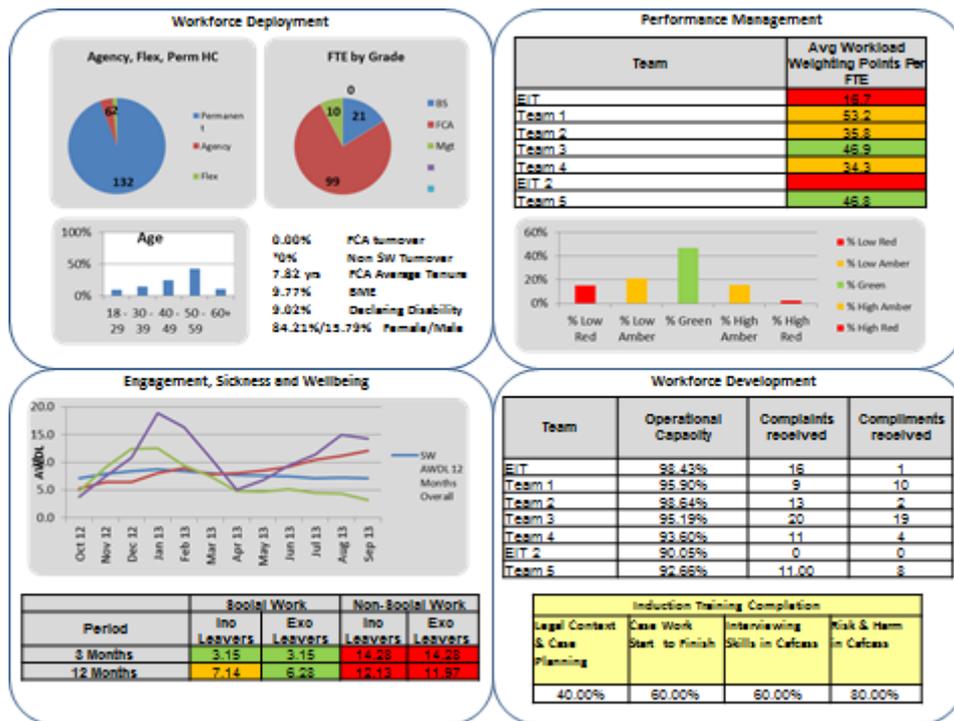


Figure 8. – Example Service Area 'Dashboard' Workforce Plan

2.9 Equality and Diversity (E&D)

Cafcass is absolutely committed to furthering equality, promoting diversity and eliminating discrimination in all its forms. We are continuously working towards building a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture where individuals have equality of opportunity, can achieve their full potential and have their contributions valued; irrespective of their differences and backgrounds. This commitment is articulated through our Equality and Diversity Strategy 2013-15.

Ensuring that our workforce understands the meaning and embraces the importance of both equality and diversity also enables us to deliver relevant and high quality services to the diverse community of children and families we work with. Our Equality and Diversity Strategy is integrated with our workforce planning, with a key objective of developing a workforce that is diverse in its knowledge, skills and experience and which is enabled to understand and integrate equality and diversity into working practice. This is to ensure that the 'threshold of relevance, vulnerability and outcomes' are key in the context of practitioners considering equality and diversity factors affecting the child. This includes providing the tools and the opportunities for an integrated approach to learning and development around equality and diversity and closely monitoring and reflecting upon the equality and outcomes through the performance management framework.

Where service areas have been more successful than others in attracting a diverse workforce then we will identify and share good practice. Examples include using focussed advertising channels such as diversity webpages, and local recruitment open days. Through

our increasing national and international reputation we will also aspire to attract talent internationally.

Through our Operating Framework we aim to ensure that E&D is reflected in individual practice, and a self-assessment has been embedded within the PLR, and this also involves equipping them with the necessary tools and infrastructure to improve the systems, skills and processes which promote effective equality and diversity work enabling them to provide the best service to children and families; recognising and responding to the diverse needs of all service users. We are also reinvigorating groups and networks, for example to include LGBT, BME and staff with disabilities.

We will continue to ensure that reasonable adjustments are provided where needed, based on advice from Occupational Health or other relevant specialists as well as focussing on the wellbeing needs of all staff through the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing plan. We will also continue to identify appropriate guidance and support for managers and staff for a variety of specific conditions such as dyslexia, mental health and cancer.

“The evaluation of practice in this area identified outstanding features in work on equality and diversity and this is due to the focus placed on this priority by local senior leaders.”

*“Local leaders have been at the heart of ensuring strategic priorities are embedded within local service delivery and this has been evident for example in how equality and diversity are promoted and practice in this area strengthened.” **Ofsted, 2014***

*“Cafcass has an extremely comprehensive workforce strategy... The workforce is analysed by age, gender, ethnicity, disability and makes clear links to other strategies such as the Diversity Champions.” **Ofsted, 2014***

3.1 The Future Workforce

3.1.1 Social Work Career Paths

The majority of FCAs will continue to join Cafcass having already gained post qualifying experience elsewhere. However, we will continue to provide early-career opportunities for those who are seeking to combine work with study towards a qualification (student social workers), or those who have recently qualified and are undertaking their first role social work role.

“Once qualified, specific attention should be given to the knowledge base needed for effective practice with children on the edge of care or in care including an enhanced understanding of child and adolescent development, the legal and regulatory system, the messages from research, and on relationship based and participative practice.”

The Care Inquiry, April 2013

We will continue to provide a NQSW programme commencing with an Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) followed by Early Professional years 2 and 3. The programme will initially focus on private law/EIT before building a foundation in public law practice. Progress to FCA roles will follow upon successful completion of the programme, ensuring retention of talent within the organisation. We will continue to provide high quality placements for NQSWs seconded from Local Authorities as a long term investment in our employer brand.

In order to better understand the future workforce and the availability of social workers with the right skills and experience we will also draw upon the findings and data from the DfE and the Centre for Workforce Intelligence who are currently developing a supply and demand model for social work. This is expected to become available from 2014 onwards.

FCAs are required to demonstrate continuous professional development as part of their HCPC registration, supporting the move to self-regulation set out in the Operating Framework. Those aspiring to develop their careers beyond the role of FCA will have two routes available. Those wishing to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities within a purely practitioner role will have the opportunity to progress as an Advanced Family Court Adviser². Those aspiring to management roles may do so as an Enhanced Practitioner and then Service Manager. There will also be opportunities to specialise as a Social Work Educator within NIS. In some areas Senior Service Manager positions will also be available to support Assistant Directors and Heads of Service. This strategy will therefore support the delivery of a career structure within Cafcass which is aligned with the Professional Capabilities Framework for social work.

² Analogous to the Advanced Social Worker role set out in the Professional Capability Framework for social work.

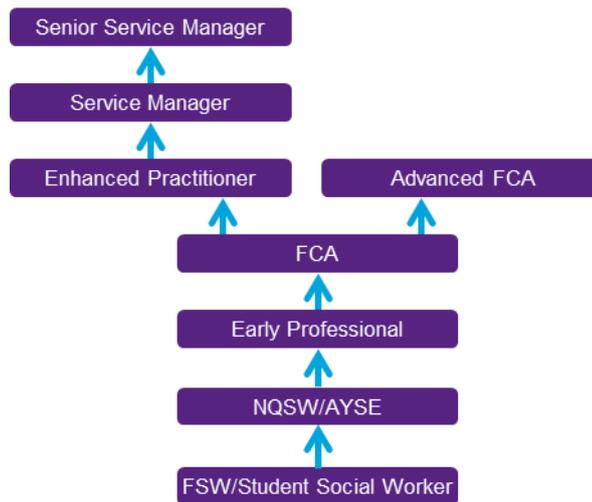


Figure 9. Social Work Career Path

Senior Management capacity has already been significantly increased through the appointment of a small number of Assistant Directors, and this will assist in succession planning at a senior level. Further internal progression to these roles may be considered where additional leadership and management capacity is required and where the competencies required are demonstrated by the individual.

3.1.2 Business Support and other Professional Career Paths

Business Support roles and structures will be reviewed to ensure they remain aligned with the Operating Framework, with an increased emphasis on case progression and responsive to improved processes, IT systems and digitisation.

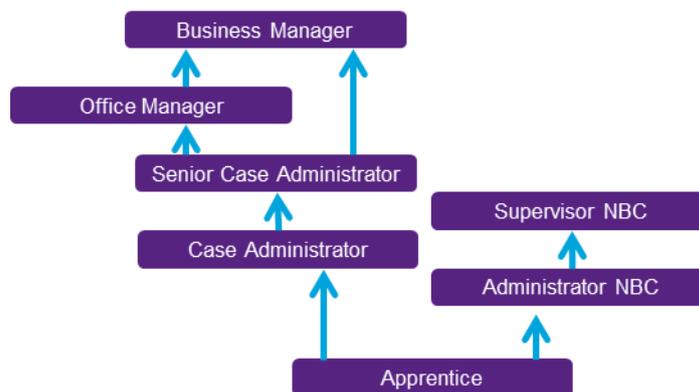


Figure 10. Business Support Career Path

Existing Office Manager roles will be further augmented or supplemented by the broader role of Business Manager where that meets the need of each service area and provides additional local management capacity and support to Heads of Service.

Responding to feedback from a survey of all Business Support staff in July 2013 we will ensure that routes for progression through more senior roles are clearly set out for Business Support, and staff will benefit from training and development to support any further

centralisation of processes. The foundations for personal development within Business Support will be laid by utilising Strengthscope®.

The same principles will apply to develop bespoke career paths within other Cafcass departments which allow for professional and career development in order that individuals working in corporate functions have appropriate opportunities to develop their skills, enrich their current roles and to progress to more senior roles within the organisation.

3.1.3 Graduates and Apprentices

The Graduate Development Scheme and the employment of Apprentices will continue to be a key feature of our workforce development planning, providing an important source of new talent entering the organisation. Those remaining with us will have opportunities to further develop their skills, helping us to build the capacity of our workforce. Those moving on will take with them an improved range of skills for the modern workplace, a positive impression of Cafcass as an employer and will act as positive ambassadors for our employer brand.

3.1.4 Continuous Professional Development

Continuous personal and professional development will be a hallmark of employment with Cafcass and a key component of our employer brand. Learning will be synonymous with our organisation and where possible we will identify opportunities for learning and development opportunities to be accredited or build towards recognised qualifications thus developing expertise and extending further opportunities to all our staff.

The Learning and Development Strategy and the National Training plan will remain the key vehicles for developing and improving practice internally. This will be further supported and enabled by a growing network of key contacts and strategic partnerships with academic institutions and professional bodies.

3.1.5 Leadership Development

A Leadership Development programme delivered in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University will be implemented with the aim of equipping leaders and senior managers with the skills required to meet the challenges facing the organisation. The programme will focus on developing the key leadership behaviours required including a focus on delivering results, setting the direction, developing people and living the organisation's values.

The programme will be delivered in 3 phases between April 2014 and February 2015, providing leadership and management development to around 150 leaders and managers at various levels across the organisation.

Delivering Results		
Focus on Impact	Challenge and Improve	Engage Stakeholders
Setting Direction		
Inspire with vision	Seize opportunity	Take tough decisions
Developing our People		
Cultivate innovation	Get the best from everyone	Grow from experience
Living our Values		
Self-confidence	Honesty and openness	Focus on the child

Figure 11. Senior Leadership Behaviours

3.1.6 Future Social Work Skills

The importance of continuous professional development for staff will be clearly articulated through concepts such as Talent Management whilst the Learning and Development Strategy and the National Training plan will remain the key vehicles for developing and improving social work practice internally. This will be supported by embedding continuous learning through effective supervision and coaching.

As the general trends for delivery of learning move towards more social learning and ‘bite size’ inputs, we will, where appropriate, adopt these approaches. As new technology continues to be made available we will embrace it and investigate its application in the context of learning. Using webinar technology to link diverse locations to share knowledge and best practice would be one such example. To encourage greater self and peer learning we will promote internet based resources and greater use of forum such as discussion boards and journal clubs.

The areas of development initially identified for frontline staff commencing in 2014/15 will include case analysis and analytical writing, dealing with cases involving complex diversity issues and dispute resolution. This will be supported by a continued emphasis on developing the skills for self-regulation and personal efficacy.

Practitioners will have the opportunity to submit portfolios of reflective practice to demonstrate their continued professional development in line with the Professional Capabilities Framework.

3.1.7 Future Engagement Strategy

This document refreshes our commitment to create an environment which empowers and enables staff to feel committed, engaged and motivated in all aspects of their experience at work. This in turn supports our drive to deliver better outcomes for the children and families we support and will further establish and embed our employer brand.

Staff who feel valued are more likely to be resilient during times of change or high demand for services. To achieve this we will continue to seek the views and listen to the needs of our

staff and to respond in ways which meet their needs whilst at the same time building our organisational capacity.

We will deliver a Workplace Culture Programme and have invested in a range of additional resources to develop and support resilience and to enable managers and leaders to drive high levels of engagement within their teams. These will include Leadership Impact Reports to enable leaders to understand how they can positively influence the wellbeing and the engagement of their staff; professional resilience workshops and an individual self-reflective tool (i-resilience[®]). These will be complemented by our own bespoke individual diagnostic, based on the HSE management standards, to help identify sources of pressure in the workplace. Feedback will be achieved via snap-shot surveys to include all members of staff on an annual basis to assess wellbeing and engagement across the organisation.

3.2 – Rewarding Staff

3.2.1 Flexible Benefits

Our benefits package and our total reward offering will maximise worth to staff whilst providing value for money to the organisation. Key to this will be to understand how reward and benefits help to attract, retain and motivate staff, recognising that this will be different from one person to another. We will provide options through a flexible benefits scheme which individuals can tailor to meet their particular needs or preferences. Benefits which support individual health and wellbeing will remain a key feature of our benefits package, as will benefits which can be delivered through tax efficient salary sacrifice arrangements. We believe that by offering a diverse range of benefits on a flexible basis this will provide an employee value proposition which is attractive to the broadest possible range of staff.

Some of the key features of the scheme may include the ability to buy or sell annual leave (within limits), a choice of pension scheme, childcare vouchers, a car scheme, health cash plan and cycle to work scheme. In order to ensure these benefits are maximised we aim to provide access to these benefits through an online solution.

To help staff maximise the value of their salary we will continue to identify opportunities for staff to achieve savings on products and services. A range of discounts have already been made available through Medicash Extras, and from December 2013 discounted mobile phone contracts have been available with Vodafone. These latter additions are of particular note given that they are the direct result of a staff suggestion.

3.2.2 Pay Structures and Terms and Conditions

The existing pay structure will be reviewed. It is unclear whether the current structure of commencement pay, confirmation pay and target pay provides meaningful motivation toward high performance beyond the earliest years of employment. Additionally we will need to respond to the Government's aspiration to remove length of service related pay progression. We therefore propose to implement a new structure which is not based on length of service

related pay progression with pay bands clearly aligned to career paths. Existing attraction and retention premiums will be retained as will the application of a London weighting.

We will also review entitlements to contractual annual leave and sick pay, with the intention that the accrual of these benefits will link to the number of years' service, and for increases to be applied on an annual basis. The current situation whereby occupational sick pay entitlements commence after 13 weeks, but additional annual leave arises only after 5 years, are not considered to have any beneficial effect on retention or motivation.

3.2.3 Recognising Contribution

Alongside changes to our benefits package and salary structures, from 2014 onwards we will also focus on how we provide non-financial recognition for the work of our staff and to celebrate the individual contributions made by staff throughout the organisation.

3.3 – Measuring Performance

3.3.1 Supervision

Supervision and appraisal will continue to be delivered through quarterly Performance and Learning Reviews (PLRs). The emphasis will remain on self-regulation and personal development, and away from audit and compliance.

“Organisations should make a strong and unambiguous commitment to a strong culture of supervision, reflective practice and adaptive learning.”

Standards for Employers and Supervision Framework, Social Work Reform Board

The outcomes and decisions from individual PLRs can now be monitored and managed through an improved performance management system within iTrent, further unifying and consolidating systems and data in one place. We will support managers and staff to get the most out of their PLR discussions with the aim of creating a performance culture which is focussed on continuous learning and improvement as we aim to move from good to outstanding.

3.3.2 Tools for Self-Regulation

To support self-regulation with the professional task, an individual electronic tool (MyWork) has been implemented to enable staff to access a range of up to date measures related to their own performance, productivity and development, including the ability to draw comparisons with local and national averages. From March 2014 this has been made available to all staff.

“MyWork allows staff to see a golden thread between their individual contribution and organisational goals and targets, giving the sense of purpose and achievement that is vital to positive wellbeing.”

Robertson Cooper; Good Day at Work 2014

Conclusions

It is clear from a range of measures that the development of our workforce has been achieved over recent years in tandem with significant improvements in our organisational performance, and that further such improvements are achievable. Our ability to accomplish our organisational objectives will be based on the firm foundations which are set out in this workforce strategy.

We aim to make tangible improvements which will operate across all stages of the employment lifecycle. We will provide an employment offer which combines an attractive package of pay and benefits for all staff with a strong employment brand, focussing on individual development and career progression.

We will maintain methods of recruitment and selection which ensure that we are able to identify those individuals with the required skills and experience to meet the challenges of self-regulated practice and to help us to deliver our part of the reform of the family justice system.

We will provide all our staff with clear feedback and measures of their performance along with the tools and resources they need to operate effectively as self-regulating practitioners. Recognising the challenging nature of the work we will maintain and develop our emphasis on the health and wellbeing of our staff, providing a comprehensive package of support.

In keeping with our diverse workforce we will provide a range of employment benefits which will maximise the value to the individual, giving them choice and flexibility.

The capacity of our managers will continue to be developed through Emerging Talent and Senior Leadership programmes. We will equally focus on bringing in new talent at the earliest stages of their careers through the NQSW route as well as through Apprentice and Graduate schemes.