



## **ADSS Cymru Briefing to:**

### **The National Assembly for Wales' Children and Young People Committee's**

### **Inquiry into the work of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service in Wales (CAFCASS Cymru).**

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**ADSS Cymru welcomes the opportunity to respond on behalf of the local government family to your inquiry into the work of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service in Wales (CAFCASS Cymru).**

**The Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADSS Cymru)** is the acknowledged professional leadership organisation for Social Services in Wales. It represents the interests of the 21 statutory Directors of Social Services and the heads of services (adults, children and business) that support them in delivering Social Services responsibilities and accountabilities, across the twenty-two Councils in Wales. Its primary purpose is to support social care & health policy development and formulation, and thus, provide a national voice for the care and protection of adults and children in vulnerable situations in Wales.

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Key Points with respect to the Inquiry's questions are as follows:

1. Since the 2010 CSSIW Inspection Report there has been a very positive change in CAFCASS Cymru's structure, direction, leadership, data sharing, performance management and partnership resulting in and that this is manifest in our joint development of a joint work programme to address the issues.
2. Driven by its CEO, CAFCASS Cymru has demonstrated its commitment to renegotiate and strengthen relationships through regular meetings between the Heads of Service of CAFCASS Cymru and Local Authority Children's Services.
3. Local Authorities generally noted that a guardian's actual contact time with children and young people during the course of the Public law proceedings varies between practitioners. The majority of guardians are perceived as 'very good' in terms of working with LAs and also around the work they do with children and their parents.
4. There are now clear mechanisms in place at an operational and strategic level to address and resolve issues in a timely and effective manner.

5. Although we are aware that CAF/CASS Cymru has introduced an all-Wales approach to the provision of child contact services in Wales we have little information where it operates child contact centres in Wales. Authorities report that guardians tend to use Local Authority contact centres if Social Services are involved.
6. It is much too early in the implementation of the Family Justice Review's recommendations to assess the impact of the FJ review. However, the tripartite forum (comprising CAF/CASS Cymru, ADSS Cymru and HM Court & Justice Tribunal) is proactively working together to drive forward the changes required to support the recommendations set out in the FJR.
7. CAF/CASS Cymru could potentially utilise New Media as a tool to communicate more effectively and directly with children and young people.
8. It is, however, important to state that in some of the areas of the Inquiry, we do not have a singular or coherent view, and at best are relying on anecdote. For example, we are unaware of any specific discussion about revising the complaints procedures. More solid evidence of progress or of patterns of behaviour and practice may be forthcoming by further investigation.

Signed:



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