



CHILDREN AND FAMILY COURT ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE

Paper for the Board meeting on 08 September 2006

ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

1 AIM AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This strategy provides **CAFCASS** with an approach to working with our partners, stakeholders and service users and how we will engage with them at all levels of the organisation.

2 ACTION FOR THE BOARD

- 2.1 To endorse the attached draft strategy document, with any suggested amendments.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Board are asked to endorse this draft strategy before it goes to the open Board meeting in October.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 These will be within existing financial considerations.

5 RISKS

- 5.1 Failure to engage our service users and stakeholders means we do not provide a relevant service.

6 IMPLICATIONS FOR DIVERSITY

- 6.1 This strategy will address our objective to understand and meet the diverse needs of our service users.

Sherry Malik
Corporate Director Strategy & Performance
31 August 2006



DRAFT

Engagement and Participation Strategy

" Don't just open your eyes... Open your hearts"

A young CAFCASS service user

August 2006



1. Introduction

This strategy has been developed in line with CAFCASS' desire to become a more inclusive organisation. We want to embrace the contribution of diverse and representative groups, develop effective engagement structures at national, regional and local levels to deliver an outward facing 'customer focused' service, which we believe will deliver better outcomes.

This strategy sets out our approach to working with our partners, stakeholders and service users and how we will engage with them at all levels of the organisation.

2. Context

We are a national organisation with ten regions and over 100 local offices from which we deliver our services. A small national office provides leadership, and strategic support to the devolved regional and local services. We reorganised in this way in 2005 because we believed that services should be provided and managed as locally as possible if they are to be effective. It follows therefore, that we should listen to and actively engage with our service users and stakeholders locally. At the same time we need to ensure that those who use our services locally and our stakeholders in our 10 regions are easily able to inform our work and our direction. We need to also ensure that any structures we set up are robust and are formalised in the overall governance arrangements for CAFCASS.

3. Our Strategic Aim

Our strategic aim is to move from just consulting with service users and stakeholders to genuine engagement and participation in an open and honest way. It supports our two-year Business Plan for 2005-07, which sets to (1) Transform Service and (2) Transform the Organisation.

We especially want to put the voices of the children and young people we work with at the heart of this. We believe that this will help us to continuously improve and transform the delivery of our services and we will achieve better outcomes for the children and their families we work with.

4. Our Objectives

We have five key engagement and participation objectives. These are:

1. To put in place an effective system of engaging nationally with our stakeholders by strengthening our system of Relationship Management
2. To work with our partners, stakeholders and service users to contribute to the development of key children and family policies which may include specific policy alliances
3. To ensure that we consult our stakeholders effectively about the way CAFCASS is being developed

4. To put in place regional and local structures to engage more effectively
5. To strengthen the voice of children's and young people in our work through improved engagement and participation.

These objectives link direct to the business objectives set out in the business plan 2005-07. These are highlighted in table 1.

Table 1. The Business Plan and Engagement & Participation

Business Objective	Reason
Objective 1.1 – Improving outcomes for children in line with Every Child Matters by modernising practice.	A key component of Every Child Matters is the child's right to participate and make a positive contribution. Also part of the UN convention on the rights of the child especially article 12.
Objective 1.2 – Mainstream race equality and diversity in all work.	By engaging with local stakeholders and service users it will help to ensure regional and local development plans reflect and take into account community characteristics and views.
Objective 1.4 – Supporting children and families and improving our services through working effectively with all our partners	A key component of the strategy is to work with partners to formulate policy alliances and improve our relationship with partner agencies improving service delivery.
Objective 2.1 – Becoming a more strategic organisation in order to represent children and their families	By developing the use of the performance framework and seeking out the views and feedback of service users we can more effectively plan improvements in the service
Objective 2.2 – Strengthen Leadership and Management at all levels	Elements of the strategy look to develop management to be more outward facing and responsive to the needs of service users. Developing a customer focused culture.
Objective 2.4 – Being more efficient and adding value in all we do	Engaging with service users will inform the planning process as part of the performance framework. This will add value to planning and make it more in line with service users needs.

5. What do we mean by Engagement and Participation

There are many engagement and participation initiatives that are working well within regions and teams. Alongside these there are many initiatives and research projects, conferences etc., which provide ready opportunities for engagement. We already have some good examples of better liaison to learn from; for example: Families need Fathers who are working closely with the CAFCASS office in Liverpool and Women's Aid and the CAFCASS office in Rotherham who liaise closely and effectively. Nationally, initiatives such as the development of the 'Domestic Violence Toolkit' (see Appendix 1) have been highly praised. These need knitting together into a recognisable pattern of national, regional and local activity to provide a flexible matrix of service user engagement and participation.

The International Association of Public Participation's Spectrum shown in table 2, which we have adapted, visually demonstrates our commitment to make the journey through from simply consulting towards involving, collaborating and where appropriate empowering our service users. The CAFCASS tools show the different activities that demonstrate increasing levels of engagement and participation.

Table 2. Stakeholder Participation Spectrum

INCREASING LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION				
INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Participation Goal:	Participation Goal:	Participation Goal:	Participation Goal:	Participation Goal:
To provide service users and stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions	To obtain service users and stakeholder feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with service users and stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with service users and stakeholders in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To positively develop the skills of service users to take an active part in decision-making.
Our Promise	Our Promise	Our Promise	Our Promise	Our Promise
We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum possible.	Joint decision making
CAFCASS Tools:	CAFCASS Tools:	CAFCASS Tools:	CAFCASS Tools:	CAFCASS Tools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflets • Website • Conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCC • Service user Focus groups • Viewpoint • Public Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Workshops & liaison • Open board meetings • Reference Groups • Relationship Managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation Forum • Consensus-building & Policy Alliances • Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Persons board • Delegated decisions

This spectrum neatly illustrates how our national, regional and local activities, will support more effective decisions and contribute to improving our services. We will incrementally implement this model across the organisation over the next four years.

6. Development of the Strategy

For the development of this strategy we contacted stakeholder and partner organisations and service user groups, representing family and adult interest groups as well as children focused organisations. A number of these groups were members of the Service User Interest Group¹ (SUIG) who were contacted through emails, and this was followed up with a discussion. We also took time to consult a diverse range of other groups. For example, the CAFCASS Children's Rights Director has been seeking the views of organisations advocating for children and young people who are not currently involved in SUIG. Responses to the consultation were recorded and suggestions and ideas put forward as consensus-reflecting recommendations. A list of all those we contacted to carry out this review is included as Appendix 2.

Following the development of proposals internal discussions and consultation took place to measure the viability of the proposals with senior managers and the board. The finalised proposals were reviewed by the SUIG group in their final meeting and their support given. The final stage has been to consult with regional directors to look at regional and local issues that will affect the delivery of the strategy.

7. Our Engagement Objectives – How we will take them forward

a) National engagement with stakeholders – Relationship Management

We already have named relationship managers for each of our key partners and stakeholders and relationship management is a fundamental strand of our Partnership Strategy. Essentially this means that a key named individual within CAFCASS has the responsibility for managing and supporting our relationship with the partner organisation or individual communication with that agency and its representative. An excellent illustration of this working well is with Young Voice and their relationship manager Christine Smart, Children's Rights Director. As a consequence there have been joint initiatives on training and research, as well as Young Voice's input in evaluating Viewpoint a tool to seek feedback from Children and Young Persons.

We believe that for a partnership to be effective both partners need to work hard at it. In the short time this has been in place, it has strengthened our communication and we have more robust channels for progressing issues.

Where one of our partner organisations operates at local as well as national levels we may have relationship managers at national, regional and team level.

¹ SUIG came into existence following a parliamentary select-committee review in July 2003. Its membership consists of stakeholder organisations that had acted as an advisory panel to the Lord Chancellors Department (LCD) prior to CAFCASS, as well as a number of other service user and stakeholder groups, which operate in the family justice sector, who were invited onto the group at a later stage. Its primary function has been to consult, influence and participate in the development of CAFCASS and its policies.

An example of this would be links with Assistant Directors of Social Services (ADSS) and Local Authorities or Safeguarding Boards. At national level our Corporate Director, Jane Booth is the relationship manager with ADSS in relation to Safeguarding, each Regional Director has a role as relationship manager with ADSS on a regional basis but an appointed local or regionally based manager will sit on and be the relationship manager with each Local Safeguarding Children Board.

However, in the context of participation and engagement, we need to extend our relationship manager role so that we are doing this more systematically and purposefully with our stakeholder and service user groups.

Our stakeholders and partners would also benefit from regular updates about CAFCASS developments, latest research and conferences, training events and project/programme initiatives happening in the field. Our internal CAFCASS newsletter, which provides this information, will be sent to all our stakeholders where we have a nominated relationship manager. We will however ensure that our Communications team reviews the content of the newsletter before its external release so that is entirely appropriate.

b) Policy Development including specific policy alliances

We believe that the development of policies should have the involvement of our service users and stakeholders where it is appropriate as this is fundamental to improving outcomes for children and families. We intend to set up short life policy forums or seminars that are inclusive of all relevant service user groups. Policy events organised in this targeted and focussed way will engage organisations more effectively and increase participation.

We provide a unique and expert perspective on our work in the family courts and we are keen to inform national policy debates from our expert perspective. We want to create policy alliances with our partners and stakeholders on issues of common concern. Two leading examples of where we have made good policy alliances are our work with Women's Aid and Refuge working on the management of Domestic Violence cases; with BAAF and the Judiciary in improving adoption panels and court timetabling; and with parents groups in developing our dispute resolution programmes.

We propose that on each major policy issue, which will significantly impact on our work in the family courts, we will hold a participative policy forum and seek to make alliances to influence public policy.

c) Effective Consultation about the way CAFCASS is being developed

In common with many organisations, CAFCASS has undergone much change in the past few years. We have a national change programme that has implemented structural change (more devolved structures) and we have recently publicised proposals for National Standards, which affect our practice. It is important that those we work with are kept informed of changes, but equally that they have an opportunity to comment on or shape such proposals.

We will ensure that all major changes are publicised, given adequate time for consultation and comment through written comment and/or face-to-face forums, using opportunities such as stakeholder conferences and existing forums. Our annual open Board meeting is a key forum where we would like more engagement on policies, research and project initiatives. Examples include family group conferences changes to practice in adoption proceedings, shorter more analytical reports, involvement of young people in decision making, mediation schemes, as well as partnerships and funding. We want to encourage constructive debate, and feedback at this annual forum.

d) Engagement Structures to improve service delivery

Currently, there are a number of clear examples of how CAFCASS engages at a national level with other organisations. The Alliance for Child Centered Practice brings together key agencies and young people to consider issues specifically for looked after children. The aspiration is to consider a shared approach to principles of good practice that can be collectively endorsed and promoted in respective organisations. It meets quarterly and plans to launch itself as an alliance with a conference in February 2007, CAFCASS is represented by the Children's Rights Director.

At a local level, this example of structured engagement is less visible. We recognise that there needs to be better service user and stakeholder engagement through regional forums and local initiatives, which would allow practical discussion and debate about good practice. This would also ensure that organisations have the opportunity for greater involvement and engagement in the areas most relevant to them. We therefore propose that we develop appropriate forums in the form of Participation Boards within our regions with the following purpose:

- ✓ Working together more effectively
- ✓ Working with partner organisations to engage our common service users
- ✓ Proactively seek views about national policy and practice developments
- ✓ Seek innovative ways to work together to benefit our service users
- ✓ Listen to and learn from feedback about our services, using it to improve our service delivery.

Regional Participation Boards would have as its membership, local stakeholders, service user representatives, children and young people's representatives, and would be chaired by our Regional Directors, and supported by Commissioning and Partnership Managers, a post we will be creating in every region over the next year. They would meet at a minimum three times a years, which would enable effective working without burdening the resources of any of the agencies participating.

The UK Youth Parliament have already expressed an interest in attending such a forum with a view to improving the input of children's views into service delivery, linking with the work being undertaken by the Children's Rights team.



Genuine participation requires that we involve service users and stakeholders in planning, designing and evaluating our services with us. Examples of this could include reviews of parts of our service by young people or members of Regional Participation Boards carrying out impact assessments of our newly devised court schemes.

Our team in Southampton has already taken effective and proactive steps to set up a multi-disciplinary working group with statutory and voluntary organisations to improve outcomes for children from minority ethnic communities. That same team reports 100% returns on diversity monitoring and has developed effective dialogue with religious leaders and BME groups, including asylum seekers. The benefits to service delivery can be clearly seen and shared across the region.

Other examples of engaging with our service users take the form a text messaging pilot scheme in the South East Region, where Children are provided a confidential mobile telephone number they can text in their views and feedback about their involvement with CAFCASS. The responses received are fed directly into the Complaints, Compliments and Comments (CCC) Manager who report back to the regional management team and act upon feedback received. Also in the North East Region a pilot is being set up to provide an advice line to young people so they can talk to an independent case worker about their case.

We have devolved a number of functions, such as complaints management, knowledge learning and development (KLD) to our regions in the past year. We will continue to strengthen the effectiveness of local service delivery by appointing a Commissioning and Partnership Manager in each region. We propose that this person, work in collaboration with our regional management team and the work undertaken by our regional groups leading on KLD, diversity, complaints, and children's rights to knit together the local engagement of service users and stakeholders. Examples of how we can achieve this are inviting, free of charge, local groups to regional conferences and for local Service Managers to be proactive in forging links with the wider community and their local MP/s, as some teams already do.

We should also make links with existing forums in local authorities, such as those for looked after children. Effective engagement requires our time and resources, both of which are stretched. However by adding value to existing forums and working groups we aim to embrace service user engagement and participation as 'the way in which we work' rather than as an additional burden.

e) To strengthen the voice of children's and young people in our work

We have clearly set out our commitment to Children's Rights through the leadership of our Children's Rights Director, a national team of Children's Rights Champions supported by Participation workers and our Children's Rights Strategy. There is a clear work plan, which is being reviewed and monitored by children and young people themselves.

We have adopted clear principles and procedures for the active participation of children and young people (as detailed in Appendix 3). More recently we are putting in place a Young People's Board to help inform the direction of our work.

We held a two-day residential event with 12 young people to develop the work of this Board. In addition there are national good practice guidelines that have been agreed in collaboration with children and young people on how they should be involved.

We are also increasingly involving children and young people in the recruitment of our staff. Appropriate training to increase knowledge of children's rights and how to involve children and young people in our work is being delivered and is under constant review.

8. A summary of our Engagement and Participation strategy

Our proposals to engage more effectively at National, Regional and local levels with our service users and stakeholders and move from merely consulting to genuine participation can be summarised as follows:

- National engagement through strengthening our Relationship Management roles and through policy alliances, which are more systematic and purposeful with all stakeholders including former SUIG members.
- Regular updates about CAFCASS developments, latest research and conferences, training events and project/programme initiatives happening in the field to our stakeholders and partners through our internal CAFCASS monthly newsletter.
- Publicise all major changes in CAFCASS; give adequate time for consultation and comment through written comment and/or face-to-face forums, using opportunities such as stakeholder conferences and existing forums.
- Use our annual open Board meeting for engagement on policies, research and project initiatives.
- Listen to and actively engage with our service users and stakeholders more locally and develop appropriate forums in the form of Regional Participation Boards within our regions, chaired by the Regional Director.
- Genuine participation through the involvement of service users and stakeholders in planning, designing and evaluating our services with us. E.g. review of parts of our service by young people or members of Regional Participation Boards carrying out impact assessments of our newly devised court schemes.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of local service delivery by appointing a Commissioning and Partnership Manager in each region to work with in collaboration with our regional management team and the work undertaken by our existing regional groups leading on KLD, diversity complaints children's rights to knit together local engagement of service users and stakeholders.
- A Young People's Board will be formed within the organisation and these young people will help to agree how it will function, its activities and how they can be involved within the organisation.



- Provide opportunities for Children and Young People's involvement including one off events and activities such as consultations, as well as ongoing peer mentoring, work placements and training and recruitment.

9. Implementation, Timescales and Monitoring

Consideration has been given to each of the proposals and the activities required for the implementation are set out in table 3 'the Strategy Planning matrix' on the following page. Strengths and weakness have been identified for each of the proposals, which will effect their implementation. The timescale for the strategy is that it by the April 2007 when regional business plans are submitted for the forthcoming year formal regional structures are established, functioning and incorporated into those business plans. Other activities have been mapped out to take place in the coming year and will move forward with greater levels of engagement of stakeholders and service users. We have established measurable indicators that will demonstrate when proposals have been completed and allow for evaluation of the effectiveness of activities. The strategy and performance team and children's rights team will monitor progress.

10. Having your say

It is important that CAFCASS staff have involvement with and ownership of the Engagement and Participation Strategy. We want to hear from you and for you to input to and help shape this strategy. We also welcome external views from our partners and stakeholders. You can do this either individually, or as a team or region by directly emailing either:

Paul.Brown@CAFCASS.gov.uk
Sherry.Malik@CAFCASS.gov.uk

Table 3. Strategy Planning Matrix

Outputs Results	Inputs Activities	Measurable Indicators	Strengths/Successes	Weaknesses/ Risks	Owner
Relationship Managers - Strengthening their role	<p>Ensure all our partners and stakeholders have a named relationship manager.</p> <p>Establish a directory of relationship managers Partnership Strategy launched</p> <p>Clear communication link between Relationship managers and national office</p>	Up to date relationship manager list updated by the Communications team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Managers are currently in place and assigned to organisations. ✓ Partnership strategy clarifies role of relationship manager. ✓ System already set up and in operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Stakeholder list not up to date X Ownership of relationship manager list at national office X Relationship managers unclear to their role X Inconsistency across the organisation 	L Wooderson
Improved communication of CAFCASS activities	<p>Establish regular mailings to relationship managers</p> <p>Relationship managers to forward to partner organisation</p>	Newsletter regularly received via Relationship manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Information provided to partner about activities that CAFCASS is involved in ✓ Use existing information system ✓ Low level of input required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Newsletter not forwarded to Stakeholders and Service users. 	Comms & Relationship Mangers
Full & proper consultation - Publicise major changes and allow for responses	All major changes are publicised, given adequate time for consultation and comment through written comment and/or face-to-face forums, using opportunities such as stakeholder conferences and existing forums	Responses from all stakeholders and Service users published and appropriate amendments made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Effective consultation already taking place ✓ Allows for effective and direct engagement participation in policy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Not all appropriate Stakeholders and Service Users are consulted X Not all responses can be adopted, may lead to disillusionment 	CDG

Outputs Results	Inputs Activities	Measurable Indicators	Strengths/Successes	Weaknesses1 Risks	Owner
Open Board Meetings – engagement on policies	Organise annual event Invitations to be sent out Set policy questions Set policy questions	Evaluation forms to be made available on the day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Board meeting already an annual event ✓ High level policy influence for Stakeholders and Service User groups ✓ Backing of the Board and Senior Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Meeting hijacked by single groups X Failure to invite all Stakeholders and Service User groups 	Board & Governance
Participation forums – Regional Boards and local liaison	Regions to decide best type of participation forum Identify managers responsible for organising events regionally RDs to chair regional forums bi-annually Business plans to be influenced by forums	Team and Regional plans Quarterly performance reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ RDs in support of establishing regular regional forums ✓ Regional stakeholder and service user group already identified in regions ✓ Stakeholder and Service User groups keen to engage at regional and local level ✓ Forum can take shape that is most effective for the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X National priorities lower importance of establishing forums X Time and resources limited in regions and teams X Dependent on the appointment of coordinating Manager 	Regional Directors
Commissioning & Partnership Managers – engaging with local stakeholders	Appointment of Commissioning and Partnership managers CP managers organising regional forums	Commissioning and Partnership managers appointed and in post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Part of job description is to work closely with partner organisations ✓ Financial resources already set aside nationally ✓ RDs see this as CP manager role ✓ Does not take up more Service Manager time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Time delay in CP managers being appointed. X Stakeholder and Service User groups do not have regional structure. 	CDG

Outputs Results	Inputs Activities	Measurable Indicators	Strengths/Successes	Weaknesses1 Risks	Owner
Young People's Board – voicing the views of children and young people	<p>Recruit children and young people</p> <p>Residential weekend for staff and young people to develop role of YP board</p> <p>Regular bi-monthly meetings to increase knowledge and skills of the Board.</p> <p>Opportunities for involvement e.g. training of CAFCASS staff, consultations, policy input etc.</p>	<p>Young Person Board set up</p> <p>Attendance and input into policy, practice & wider partnerships.</p> <p>Evaluation of business plans and children's rights strategy report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Children and young people with experience of parental separation and CAFCASS' services both in public and private law. ✓ A key service user group who are able to comprehend and relate to other children and young people thus helping to see things from their perspective. ✓ Innovative and thought provoking ideas on what helps/hinders practice. ✓ A frank portrayal of what can happen when things go wrong and what help/support is needed for those in similar situations. ✓ Helping to contribute to achieving the 'Every Child Matters' 5 outcomes. ✓ The Board will operate in line with the 'Hear by Right' standards as recognised as good practice by the MES and DCA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X The young people lose interest once time and effort have been invested into bringing them up to date with skills and knowledge. X This is a small group of young people who are not necessarily representative of those across the country – this must be taken into account and acted upon if/when needed. X Excessive use of children and young people by CAFCASS staff. 	Children's Rights Team

Outputs Results	Inputs Activities	Measurable Indicators	Strengths/Successes	Weaknesses1 Risks	Owner
Participation Opportunities for Children and Young People: One-off involvement	Consultations surrounding CAFcass practice e.g. leaflets, websites and contribution to websites. Consultations surrounding Government policy e.g. transparency in family courts.	Evaluation and reports. Change in practice/practice tool. Contributions to reports and Government agendas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Able to get feedback from a wide-range of children and young people. ✓ Succeed in providing practice tools, which are fit for the purpose and user-friendly according to children and young people. ✓ Provide credibility to work as ensuring children and young people are being listened to throughout the organisation and in its work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X Focus groups not from a broad enough selection of young people. X The young people might not feel comfortable inputting as they have not built a relationship with the workers. X The information received might not be relevant, of use or unrealistic. X A large amount of time and effort to organise an event – especially if from a national pool. 	Children's Rights team
Participation Opportunities for Children and Young People: Ongoing involvement	Peer Mentoring – offering support to children and young people. Training FCAs and staff in how to communicate with young people. Helping to recruit workers who will come into direct contact with children and young people. Advice line – offering advice and support to those that ring/email CAFcass advice line	Evaluation and reports. Reduction in complaints. Better feedback from young people. Volume of calls and emails.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Able to offer advice to children and young people from their own perspective and help them feel that they're not alone. ✓ Provide a service, which is tailored to the needs and requirements of children and young people. ✓ Selection of workers is in partnership of those whom they will be working with. ✓ Provide training opportunities for the young people and help with their future careers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X A small number of young people involved. X Have to ensure adequate training and support for the young people involved. X Time consuming. X Could be costly especially if outside of normal working hours. 	Children's Rights Team

■ ■ Appendices

Appendix 1.

An example of effective engagement and consultation – The Domestic Violence Toolkit

The process of engagement can be effective and produce high quality pieces of work as an outcome and the domestic violence toolkit is an example of what can be achieved by partner agencies working together. A Domestic Violence advisory group was set up, consisting of a mix of CAFCASS staff, (FCA's, Service Managers Regional Directors) along with representatives from an NSPCC project based in Cardiff (the project assisted young adolescent boys, who as a result of experiencing domestic violence, had begun acting out violent behavior.) The advisory group obtained advice from a national disability organisation, 'Contact a Family', including use of their research into the barriers facing families where a child with disability had also experienced domestic violence.

The outcome of the work was good practice guidance and assessment tools and collated in the form of a toolkit. This allowed practitioners to dip in and out of the material as needed, although they are required to be familiar with the standards and ensure their practice meets these.

The toolkit was issued for a three-month consultation and actively sought views to identify weaknesses, gaps and difficulties. Responses were received from a range of statutory, voluntary sector organisations and academics as well as some individuals. These were analysed and reported to the advisory group with a set of proposals about how the policy should be amended to fairly reflect the issues raised by respondents to the document. The advisory group jointly agreed how the final document should be amended.

The toolkit was launched for implementation through regional events, which included external local partnerships, local refuge providers, regional Domestic Violence coordinators and contact centre managers. In addition it was made available on the Internet and intranet. Every regional management team, along with practitioner staff across CAFCASS were trained on the toolkit during 05/06. A comprehensive, 3-part DV training programme aimed at reaching all practitioners and service managers over the next 3 years is being developed. The Domestic Violence Toolkit is now a highly acknowledged quality piece of work, to the benefit of external and internal practitioners working with children and issues of domestic violence.



Appendix 2.

External stakeholders we consulted to carry out this review.

Association of Shared Parenting – Graham Porter
British Youth Council – Jules Mason
Commission for Social Care Inspectorate – Roger Morgan
Family need Fathers – John Baker
Family Rights Group – Maggs Bevan
Fathers Direct – David **Bartlett**
Grandparents Association – Lady Barbara **Lowry**
NACCC – **Duncan** Gore
National Children's Bureau – Janine Shaw
National Youth Advocacy Service – Elena Fowler
National Youth Agency – Bill **Badham**
NSPCC – Barbara Esam
One Parent Families – Alison Garnham
Parentline plus – Gill **Loughran**
The Children's Society – Christine Osbourne
Triangle Services – Ruth **Marchant**
UK College of Family Mediators – Dominic Raeside
UK Youth Parliament – **Ashley Sweetland/Kate** Parish
Voice – John Kemmis
Who Cares Trust – James Massender
Women's Aid – Alison Buchanan
Young Voice – Adrainne Katz

Appendix 3.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATION STANDARDS

In order to ensure that children and young people's involvement works well there are a number of principles that should be followed.

VISIBLE

It should be clear to those in the organisation at all levels, to the service users and to children and young people that there is a clear commitment to the participation of children and young people. This can be portrayed in a number of ways including:

- Strategies
- Updates from children and young people
- Commitment at all levels of CAFCASS: from admin, practitioners to service managers and directors.

RESOURCED

The work undertaken needs to be completed by such means that it is funded appropriately. This is to allow for true participation of children and young people,

allowing them to get involved throughout the process in a meaningful manner rather than just on a one-off occasion.

Ensuring that work is properly resourced can include:

- Having appropriate money for expenses
- Providing rewards
- Staff-time (administrative as well as frontline).

VALUED

For participation to truly work and benefit the individual, the organisation and service-users any input must be valued. This must be clear to the children and young people involved, members of staff and service-users. Valued involvement can lead to an improvement in service, an increase in those wanting to get involved and an improvement in the delivery of service.

Valued involvement can portray itself in a number of ways with the key being that any involvement is not tokenistic i.e. that it will make a real difference and be taken into account/suggestions acted upon. It is important that there is involvement at all stage of a process (not just consultation) including in the planning and preparation, the delivery and the evaluation. It is also imperative that feedback is given in a timely and appropriate manner.

ACCESSIBLE

It is clear that not all children and young people are able to participate to the same level or in the same ways. When planning any participation activity it must be clear who it is aimed at and that broad cross-section of children and young people are able to participate.

Some factors to take into account include:

- Age
- Disability
- Reading ability
- Attention span
- Socio-economic background
- Understanding of involvement

SAFE and SOUND

It is crucial that whenever any participation activity is being planned the safety and well being of the children and young people is considered. It is clear that those working directly with the children and young people must be CRB checked, have the appropriate skills and that consent is gained for all activities (either from the parent/guardian or the child or young person themselves and preferably both).

In addition to the standard safety procedures it must also be considered if the children and young people will feel comfortable in the space the activity is being held in; that they feel comfortable with each other and the workers; that they feel able to contribute and that they are not hungry/thirsty.