

Family Proceedings Advisory Service Committee Meeting

Thursday 21st September at 3.30pm

Royal Court Library

MINUTES

FPAS Present:

Head of Operations of the Office of the Committee for Home Affairs, Chair
 Chief Probation Officer
 Family Proceedings Adviser
 Deputy Children's Convenor, CYCT
 Advocate from Mourant Ozannes
 Representative of Royal Court
 Legal Aid Deputy Administrator
 Children's Social Care. – CfHSC

1. FPAS Apologies

Chief Secretary of the Office of the Committee *for* Home Affairs
 NGO Representative
 Alderney Greffier
 Vulnerable Children's officer, CfESC

2. Minutes of previous meetings

Minutes of the meeting dated 4th May 2017 were approved apart from page 2 under Family Proceedings Advisory Service Update Report the Deputy Convenor asked for the word recommendation be changed to requirement.

3. Matters Arising

- Children First Course

The Committee was advised that the Contact Centre had now taken over administration of the Children First Course from FPAS.

The representative of the Royal Court asked for Children First leaflets to be sent to the Court to be able to promote the Course during domestic proceedings. Interest was also expressed in the Contact Centre presentations for the Judiciary and Family Bar.

ACTION: FPAS to ask Contact Centre to arrange.

- Annual Report

Amendments to CYCT and Mediation statistics – ACTIONED

- Review of Staffing after Inspection

The FPA on 6 month contract has been offered a permanent contract as has a member of admin staff.

There will be a review in regards to Manager’s position after the inspection.

4. Family Proceedings Advisory Service update report

Head of Service Report

Workloads and Statistics.

Meetings of the committee will be scheduled 3 times a year in January, May and September.

To ensure some consistency in reporting FPAS workloads the statistics are now reported on a rolling 12 month basis with a comparison to the previous 12 months, as well as a record of each 4 month period. This system of collecting statistical information was commenced in May 2016.

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS for the 4 month period 1st May – 31st August 2017 & 2016

The following table shows the new referrals received in the last 4 months, compared with a similar period in 2016.

- The number of referrals from the magistrates court are up by a third compared to the same period last year and up by a similar amount from the preceding 4 month period.
- Royal Court, CYCT and Juvenile court referrals are all increased in this period compared to the same period in 2016, and increased from the proceeding 4 month period.
- Total new referrals are up by 43% compared to the same period last year and 35% compared to the previous 4 months.
- Mediation referrals are down from the same period last year and slightly up, from 4 to 6 from the previous 4 month period. They remain at a lower level than would be anticipated.
- Short notice hearings continue to be a considerable commitment on FPA time and this year continue to be at a significantly higher level than the same period last year. The timings recorded for short notice hearings is underestimated as these take up considerably more time than the commitment to the court appearance.
- The work on closed cases is recorded following the Marshall recommendation that FPA’s should be available for advice to families after cases are closed to the court and the FPA is no longer allocated. This availability has always been offered and can avoid new applications to the court by brief intervention by an FPA who is known to the family.

Number of new cases referred by:	2017	2016
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Magistrate's Court	24	18
Royal Court	10 (includes 1 adoption)	1
CYCT	6 (all referred by Tribunal)	5
Juvenile Court	8 (includes 2 secure accommodation referrals)	3
Total new referrals	48	27
Mediation cases referred by:		
Royal Court	0	1
Magistrate's Court	1	1
Grefe	0	1
Advocate	1	1
Self	4	6
Total new mediation referrals	6	10
Short notice hearings		
No. attended	14	6
Time spent	25.75	9 hours
Work on closed cases		
Time spent	11.5 hours	6.25 hours
Specific work (at request of Court)		
Number of cases	-	3
Time spent	-	5 hours
Complaints received		
	0	2

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS FOR THE 12 month period ending 31.08.17 and 31.08.16.

The following table shows the new referrals received in the last 12 months, compared with the previous 12 month period.

- The number of referrals from the magistrate's court in the last 12 months are up by 25% compared to the previous 12 month period.
- Royal Court (including adoptions), CYCT and Juvenile Court referrals have stayed broadly steady in the past 12 months compared to the previous 12 months.
- Overall the referrals in the last 12 months are 6% higher than the preceding 12 months.
- Mediation cases are down by 25% in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months.
- Short notice hearings have trebled in the past 12 months compared to the previous 12 month period.

Number of new cases referred by:	01.09.16-31.08.17	01.09.15-31.08.16
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Magistrate's Court	60	48
Royal Court	31 (includes 6 adoptions)	36 (includes 7 adoptions)
CYCT	15	17
Juvenile Court	17	15
Total new referrals	123	116
Mediation cases referred by:		
Royal Court	2	9
Magistrate's Court	2	3
Grefe	0	5
Advocate	2	4
Self	12	3
Total new mediation referrals	18	24
Short notice hearings		
No. attended	33	10
Time spent	63 hours	23 hours
Work on closed cases		
Time spent	38.25 hours	23.25 hours (partial year)
No of cases	48	15
Specific work (at request of Court)		
Number of cases	-	9 (partial year)
Time spent	-	14 hours
Complaints received		
	1	4

Annual Report.

The annual report for 2016 went before the Committee for Home Affairs following the amendments made at the last advisory group meeting in April and is now published on the public access government website.

External Inspection of the service: (recommendation 4 of Marshall Report)

Senior HMI, Social Care Policy Ofsted, came for a scoping visit on 22nd and 23rd May and met with the advisory committee as part of his visit. The actual inspection is scheduled for week commencing 16th October with two inspectors on Island from Monday afternoon to Friday morning. The Senior HMI has undertaken to report back preliminary findings to the Advisory committee and this is scheduled for Thursday 19th October at 4pm.

Staffing

The Chief Probation Officer has been providing strategic and operational support to the team and a review of staffing has been completed looking at the most effective structure for the Service.

The focus will be on maximising front line staff to facilitate timely allocation and processing of cases.

The review will be informed by the PWC report and by outcomes from the inspection.

A new FPA appointed on a 6 month contract in April this year has now been given a permanent contract. The new member of staff is not a qualified Social Worker (see recommendation 1 of the Marshall report) but has relevant transferable experience and will be allocated work accordingly. The administration team has also been given some stability by a contract being made permanent.

Two experienced FPA's have taken turns in acting up as senior practitioner to cover some supervision and allocation tasks. Further decisions about management of the service and staffing structures will be made taking into account any recommendations made in the inspection.

Training undertaken by FPAs since May 2017.

Sadie Gill	Recognising the warning signs of emotional distress in children	The Hub	18.05.17
Ursula Scott	direct contact post adoption	CoramBAFF	22.06.17
Harry Harris	direct contact post adoption	CoramBAFF	22.06.17
Sadie Gill	direct contact post adoption	CoramBAFF	22.06.17
Harry Harris	CP Practitioners' Forum	Island Safeguarding Children partnership	23.06.17 pm

The Head of Service report was read through.

The Representative of the Royal Court recognised how busy FPAS is at present and said the onus was on the Court and Advocates to help out where possible. The Court would accept short reports but this was not to become the norm. The quality of reports from FPAS is excellent. The FPA advised they could not always write just a short report as this would not do the case justice in some instances. The Representative of the Royal Court advised the Court could ask Advocates to submit an email report with the FPA's recommendations. The Advocate thought this could raise issues with legal aid.

5. Progress on Marshall Report

Most actions in hand or complete.

With regards to Recommendation 6, Legal Aid are in talks with Scrutiny.

With regards to recommendation 8 it was felt that a meeting between FPAS, CYCT, CHSC and the Law Officers should take place for preliminary discussion. Deputy Convenor to arrange preliminary discussion – ACTIONED.

ACTION: Chief Probation Officer to arrange a further meeting.

6. Ofsted inspection

ACTIONED: FPAS admin to arrange meetings. Chief Probation Officer to circulate Ordinance and Schedule 4 to Committee members.

The Chief Probation Officer advised the inspection is 16-20 October and went over the schedule.

7. AOB

The Representative of the Royal Court brought up the issue of FPAS still Safeguarder under law. Name issue has to be resolved as confusing to families.

ACTION: Chief Probation Officer to arrange meeting with Law Officers to discuss.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in January after the next FCUG meeting and that a date should be obtained for this from The Greffier.