

## Appendix A - Cafcass Framework Agreement

### Protocol for the attendance of observer at meetings of the Board

#### **The role of Departmental observers is:**

- To advise the Board/committee on the Department's priorities, perspectives and areas of concern;
- As far as possible, to contribute more generally to discussions, including providing challenge where appropriate, to help the Board/committee reach the best possible judgements; and
- To feed back to Departmental colleagues (and, where they judge appropriate, to Ministers) so that any significant issues or risks can be followed up by the Department.

#### **The role of Departmental observers is not:**

- To be an automatic escalation route to Ministers. If the Board/committee wishes to draw something formally to the attention of Ministers, it should do so directly (in some cases it may be appropriate to ask the observer to do this, in which case this should be minuted);
- To provide Departmental endorsement of the decisions of the Board/committee;
- To provide the Department's definitive view of issues discussed by the Board/committee; or
- To provide a failsafe check on the consistency, coherence, deliverability or appropriateness of a decision.

Where observers shall attend operational / executive board meetings, the [terms of reference] or [minutes of the board] shall record agreement on the role and responsibilities of the Departmental official. The document shall be clear whether the terms on which the observer is attending the board are the same as for the NDPB Board or different.