



Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) Case Study

Elizabeth Morrison, Board and Corporate Support Assistant at Cafcass, on the business case for switching to Convene.

At Cafcass, we're always looking to be innovative and do more for less money, so it was the Director of Resources who suggested we look to use a digital solution for our board packs.

We prepared a business case for change. We looked at the average size of the board pack, the printing costs, how long it took to put the packs together, and the cost of postage. Then we compared that to the cost of purchasing Convene, and also the cost of buying tablets for all the board members, and worked out we'd make savings by going digital.

Use Convene on Different Devices

We looked at BoardPad, BoardVantage, BoardEffect and VirtualBoard but Convene was the best value for money compared to all the other providers. For example, you can use Convene on different devices, including Android tablets, whereas a lot of the other providers don't have that option. That was a key selling point for us because a lot of our board members already have their own devices so didn't want another piece of kit to carry around specifically for our meetings.

Convene's security and encryption was a key factor too because our documents can contain highly sensitive information so it's important our data is secure.

Straightforward and User Friendly

We had a trial period with Convene, which lasted for one cycle of meetings, and then got feedback from everyone. The board member who tried it really recommended it. She thought it offered just what we needed. She liked that you can still make comments on the documents, just as you can with hard copies, but that she didn't have to carry round a big bundle of papers. So we started phasing in Convene in December 2014, and the whole board has been using it since March 2015.

Cafcass represents the interests of children in family court cases, making sure children's voices are heard and decisions are taken in their best interests.



“It was really clear that Convene was the best value for money compared to all the other providers.”



Features

Award winning security

- Multi-factor authentication
- Document encryption on server and on device
- Real time decryption
- Remote data wipe on lost devices

Manage all stages of your meeting

Plan your meetings

- Attach documents to agenda items
- Control access & permission to files
- Digitally amend and distribute board packs

Engage your participants

- Start remote meetings
- Have real-time interactive presentations
- Lock participants' screens to the presentation
- Vote on items and approve documents

Follow-up easily

- Send a meeting summary immediately
- Track actions after the meeting
- Review previous meetings and documents

Quarterly upgrades

- Convene is updated every quarter. An upgrade is done when it is convenient for the client.

We took Convene's user guidance and ran workshops with the board members, who found it straightforward and user-friendly. As the administrator I didn't need any formal training either.

Ability to Customise the User Experience

We now have 13 licences and use Convene for all board and committee meetings. Since we've got Convene we've ran a survey of board members to ask whether there was anything that could be made better. For example, we asked if the pen line in the annotation options be made thinner and this change has now been carried out, which is great.

If a document needs updating, I can simply upload it and the next time someone logs in they can see what's been updated, so it's all very clear. Before, if a document came in late you had to hold off posting the papers, which didn't give people as much time to read them.

The library feature is useful too. You can store documents board members refer to regularly, such as terms of reference or the schedule of meeting dates, whereas before we'd have to email these out to people whenever they asked for them.

"A board pack in half an hour, if that."

Going back to the old way of doing things would be much slower. We worked out the average board pack was 100 sheets, so with 13 board members that's 1,300 pieces of paper. It took us up to a whole day to produce meeting packs for one meeting. Whereas with Convene it takes maybe half an hour, if that.

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