



PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

General Secretary Stewart Little
President Kylie McKelvie
ABN 83 717 214 309



In reply please quote: **RC: ljm: A17/0732**

25 September 2017

The Hon Pru Goward MP
Minister for Family and Community Services,
Minister for Social Housing and Minister for the
Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Minister

The Association has been informed by its members that the preparations for Go Live are seriously behind schedule and much of the critical infrastructure and testing is so far from being ready that the very viability of ChildStory is now in question. The Association and its members fully support a successful implementation of ChildStory but the concerns brought to our attention need to be fully assessed and tested. Based on the feedback from our members, the risk that ChildStory will experience significant problems affecting direct service delivery of child protection and OOHC frontline services as well as other areas such as the Helpline and JIRT, is very real. These concerns also include the possible collapse in payments for foster carers and other stakeholders as ChildStory is linked into the still problematic OneSAP financial system.

Indeed, our concerns are so acute that we believe that a thorough independent assessment of the functionality of ChildStory needs to be undertaken before 31 October, even if this means deferring the planned Go Live date. Given the seriousness of our concerns the Association requests a further meeting with you to discuss these issues in more detail. The success of ChildStory is too important to not give serious consideration to the aforementioned issues. It would appear that the very small number of FACS employees who have direct knowledge of these issues are not fully informing the key stakeholders, including you.

Following our last meeting with you on 2 August 2017 the Association raised significant concerns about the planned restructure of the support teams transitioning from KIDS to ChildStory. I advised you that this would result in a significant number of highly experienced FACS employees not securing a role in the new support teams.

Unfortunately, our concerns have proven to be correct and 19 of the current support staff have not been matched to a role. This includes the managers of these teams who have a proven record in effectively leading their teams and supporting frontline staff. Between the 19 unmatched employees they have several hundred years of experience in working in Community Services and supporting child protection. As stated in our meeting these are the very people FACS needs to have on board to support frontline staff when ChildStory goes live on 31 October.

Despite the fact that the new ChildStory support teams are meant to be in place three months before Go Live on 31 October, some 21 out of 38 roles remain unfilled, including the managers' roles. In fact, the vacant roles have not yet even gone to ad with only five weeks left before Go Live. These roles will be filled by people who have no background in Community Services and child protection or understanding of the needs of frontline staff.

A large number of our members have contacted the Association to express their dismay and concern that the current support staff will not be part of the support for ChildStory. Even those who have been matched into the new teams share this view. You should note that the support teams are highly valued and respected by frontline staff. In recent surveys of frontline staff (June 2017) 94% responded that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the support teams were "responsive and accessible for day to day support and assistance", 87% responded that the support teams "behaviours reflect an appreciation and respect for the efforts and challenges undertaken by our frontline staff" and 86% responded that the support teams were "very knowledgeable or "knowledgeable" in "Operational / Practice Guidance".

As stated in our previous meeting, the loss of these critical support staff and their replacement by external applicants will seriously undermine the support available to frontline staff following Go Live. The Association believes that FACS needs to make every effort to keep these staff.

I seek an urgent meeting with you to discuss these issues. Please contact Sandra Lockey of my office on 9220 0982 to arrange a meeting.

Yours faithfully



Troy Wright
A/GENERAL SECRETARY