

ChildStory – The truth and the lies

The truth:

Last year in the months leading up to the implementation of ChildStory, numerous employees associated with the ChildStory program had repeatedly warned decision-makers it was not near ready to go live. Indeed one senior employee who was part of the “inner sanctum” had repeatedly highlighted their concerns, but was ignored. This person chose to resign immediately before ChildStory went live and sent correspondence detailing their reasons to the decision-makers, stating they would not have their name and professional reputation associated with the decision to go live with a system that would result in chaos for its users, including FACS child protection workers, across NSW.

Has the FACS Secretary and Minister been shown a copy of this correspondence?

Senior people in charge of ChildStory also knew from day one that the data migration of records from KIDS was riddled with defects and errors. They had in their possession the data migration logs which detailed every record which had not been successfully migrated. They chose not share this crucial information, deciding to keep this from the Districts and users of ChildStory.

Was this information was provided to the FACS Secretary and the Minister?

The PSA met with the two main architects of ChildStory, Lisa Alonso-Love and Greg Wells, on 13 March 2018. The PSA asked FACS to provide the details of the number of records which were identified as having not been successfully migrated. FACS refused. At the meeting, FACS

stated ALL records, including unsuccessfully migrated records, CIS records, as well as all notes and attachments, will be successfully migrated by 18 March. Based on experience to date, it is hard not to be sceptical.

The PSA also highlighted concerns that the resourcing of ChildStory support both centrally and in the Districts was woefully inadequate. Many child protection workers have still not received a response to issues logged from day one of go live almost four months ago. Again we asked for details as to the number of outstanding and backlogged requests. Again FACS refused to share this information. FACS stated it is working backwards through the outstanding requests and it is resolving 85 per cent of new requests on the same day. However, the “additional” support brought on board to support child protection workers is not additional – it is being sourced from existing child protection workers who have been taken mostly from the frontline without replacement.

The lies:

Given that those entrusted with the implementation of ChildStory knew there would be serious problems with functionality as well as with data migration, why did they not share this with the Districts and with child protection workers?

Why wasn't ALL data successfully migrated PRIOR to go live?

Why were child protection workers initially bombarded with false and misleading emails with positive testimonials spruiking how well ChildStory was working?



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Why did the FACS Secretary tell staff that there were only some “small teething problems” and that caseworkers “were taking it in their stride”?

Was the FACS Secretary fully informed or did he intentionally choose to try and hide the seriousness of the problems?

Why hasn't the Minister intervened or even made comment on ChildStory?

Was the Minister fully informed or did she intentionally choose to wash her hands of ChildStory?

Why does FACS continue to hide the truth?

Who is protecting who?

The FACS Secretary promised ChildStory would be intuitive and free up child protection workers to spend more time protecting children. **This has not happened.**

As recently as last week in response to a lunchtime walkout at Tamworth CSC, FACS “refuted claims the system was riddled with errors and at no point was any child at risk” (9 March 2018 *Northern Daily Leader*).

Everyone who uses ChildStory knows the truth. Why is the Department intent on hiding it? The protection of children is meant to be paramount, but it seems that the protection of senior FACS employees linked to ChildStory, and the protection of the Minister is the real priority.

With foster carers suffering from delays in payments, more than 70 per cent of child protection workers reporting ChildStory has affected their physical and mental health,

thousands of ROSH reports backlogged at the Helpline, mandatory reporters having extreme difficulties reporting and community reporters giving up trying to report, **there is absolutely no doubt that children have been placed at risk as a result of the botched launch of ChildStory.**

To add insult to injury FACS decided to draft a WHS Risk Assessment on ChildStory more than three months after implementation. Under WHS legislation FACS was required to complete a risk assessment before ChildStory went live.

With the ongoing active support of members the PSA will continue to fight to get this mess fixed.

Two easy things you can do to support your union!

- » Support the work of the PSA and delegates by asking your colleagues to **JOIN** their union.
- » If members you work with have not received this bulletin, ask them to update their details at: <https://membership.psa.asn.au/>

