

ChildStory – The Minister and FACS are beginning to listen

PSA delegates and staff met with the Minister to inform her of members' ongoing concerns with ChildStory. The FACS Secretary also attended.

We stressed staff don't have trust in the system or the integrity of the migrated data. We pointed out that staff workloads have increased due to the need to use two systems, KiDS as well as ChildStory, plus the fact it takes so much longer to do your work on the new system.

The Minister listened to our concerns and there were no denials of the issues raised. She stated she took it upon herself to visit Community Services Centres (CSCs) and speak with child protection employees and surmised the problems with ChildStory are "very concerning". The Minister stated she heard the "horror stories" from staff about trying to use ChildStory.

There was acknowledgement that there are still problems with migration of records – if caseworkers can't see or find all migrated records, migration has not been successful. Staff continue to need access to KiDS to readily view all records. Unbelievably, KiDS access has not been provided to any new employees since ChildStory went live six months ago. We asked the Minister to direct the Department to arrange access to KiDS for all new child protection workers, as well as training.

There was more than tacit acknowledgement the issues raised by the PSA on behalf of members are valid. The PSA stressed that the priority must be fixing the in-house problems with ChildStory before opening the system to external agencies and potentially creating a new batch of problems and errors.

The PSA advocated that priority needs to be placed on redesigning ChildStory so it is better streamlined, more user-friendly and to ensure it delivers on the promise to free up child protection workers from their computers to focus on their core work with children and families. The Minister stated FACS needed to 'rebuild confidence' and that staff needed a 'broad scale refresher' in ChildStory.

To that end Minister Goward agreed to extending the proposed training, scheduled for June, to ensure it was comprehensive and also to ensure it was about listening to staff and having meaningful discussions during the training sessions to ensure trust.

The issue of back-filling of staff who were taken away to deliver training was also raised. These staff are taken from front line positions and mean that workloads for staff have further increased. Delegates raised the need for staff to have two computer monitors while still needing to use KiDS and ChildStory. We highlighted the fact that employees at FACS Head Office have two monitors but not frontline staff.

The PSA would like to thank members across the state, those 20+ CSCs and the 400 or so members who have continued to highlight the serious problems with ChildStory through their walk-outs. Your voice is finally being heard and it is making a difference. There is still a long way to go but together we can get this done.

