

Amendments to Workload Planner – Your protection against excessive workloads

There is a current PSA direction (found [HERE](#)) that all Caseworkers use the PSA Workload Planner (WLP).

Use of the WLP is supported by FACS – see joint FACS/PSA communique [HERE](#).

DIRECTION: AN ADDITIONAL 20 HOURS PER FOUR-WEEK (one hour per working day) **SETTLEMENT PERIOD NEEDS TO FACTORED INTO THE WLP TO FAIRLY CATER FOR THE CURRENT ADDITIONAL TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE TASKS IN CHILDSTORY.** (NOTE: Section 1 “ACTIVITY HOURS” of the WLP has been amended to reflect this)

DIRECTION: A MINIMUM OF 56.8 HOURS PER FOUR-WEEK SETTLEMENT PERIOD NEEDS TO BE RECORDED IN SECTION 1 “ACTIVITY HOURS” OF THE WLP. (Note adjustments need to be made for time taken on paid leave, deducting 2 hours 50 minutes per each pay on paid leave).

DIRECTION: A MAXIMUM OF 83.2 HOURS IS AVAILABLE FOR PRIMARY CASEWORK ACTIVITY PER FOUR-WEEK CYCLE (adjustments need to be made for paid leave)

The PSA has and will continue to fight for members' rights to have a safe workplace. The risks that Child Protection Workers face are not just physical (assaults, threats and verbal abuse) but also psychological. Child Protection Workers refers to all roles involved in child protection work including caseworkers, admin support, managers, casework specialists, psychologists, casework support officers, legal officers etc.

It is a fact that psychological injury is the highest cost claim for FACS in relation to Workers Compensation. Child Protection work is by its nature very challenging and research has shown that as well as inherent risks such as secondary and vicarious trauma, workplace structural issues also have a significant factor on workers' psychological safety. These include:

- » safe and manageable workloads
- » a fair and transparent system for casework allocation
- » quality training and support
- » quality and regular supervision, especially one on one supervision

These are all areas in which FACS is failing.

FACS continues to fail in ensuring that you have safe systems of work and safe work environments. FACS imposes arbitrary caseload benchmarks.

FACS imposes unrealistic productivity benchmarks on Districts which cascade down to MCSs, MCWs and ultimately to all Child Protection Workers - including Administrative Support staff. FACS does not have a fair and agreed system for allocation of work. As a result, too many Child Protection Workers are being placed at risk, trying to manage unmanageable workloads and working excessive unpaid hours. You have informed the PSA through recent surveys that the current work environment coupled with the implementation of ChildStory is impacting your physical and psychological health.



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You need to protect yourself before you can protect others.

SAFE AND MANAGEABLE WORKLOADS – APPROPRIATE USE OF THE WORKLOAD PLANNER

SECTION 1 “ACTIVITY HOURS” IN THE WLP

The PSA is receiving an increasing number of complaints from members that in some CSCs local management are misusing the PSA's Workload Planner (found [HERE](#)) and allocating excessive caseloads and requiring unrealistic timeframes in completion of casework tasks. The Time to Tasks estimates (found [HERE](#)) used for the Workload Planner were compiled prior to ChildStory as well as a number of new casework tasks and tools.

Based on feedback from current PSA survey's on ChildStory, a conservative estimate of additional time which needs to be factored into the workload planner is an average of five hours per week. Caseworkers need to be acquainted with the guidelines (details on page 8 of WLP) on using the WLP as well as the information in the Frequently Asked Questions found [HERE](#) to ensure that it is used appropriately by their managers.

SECTION 1 “ACTIVITY HOURS” OF THE WLP HAS BEEN AMENDED TO ACCOMMODATE:

- » ChildStory
- » Non-direct casework tasks and activities
- » Entitlement of two 10-minute paid breaks per day (*Clause 14, Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009*)

It is important that caseworkers understand that although their contract hours (for full time employees) are 140 hours per four-week settlement period (as reflected in the WLP), this does not mean that allocated casework activities should amount to 140 hours in each settlement period.

Caseworkers need to complete an estimate of hours which do not involve direct casework tasks and activities. As in Section 1 of the WLP. Using a conservative guide (based on OOH and Child Protection Caseload Review Reports Ernst & Young June 2011, page 9) in estimating the time taken with just administrative and secondary casework duties, this amounts to 7.1 hours per working week. Note this estimate did not factor in 3 hours per week for Group Supervision.

Remember 2 hours should also be added for preparation and completion of the WLP per four-week cycle.

SECTION 2 “ALLOCATED HOURS” IN THE WLP

This section is where the agreed planned direct casework tasks and activities are recorded for each plan/case, in line with available hours. This relates only to those cases that are allocated to you. Any plan/case that you cannot work on during the planner period should NOT be allocated to you.

For further information, please contact your workplace delegate, departmental committee delegate or PSA organiser.

