

## PSA bans remain in place

The PSA has and will continue to fight for members' rights to have a safe workplace, manageable workloads and their Award entitlements. The risks that Child Protection Workers face are not just physical – assaults, threats and verbal abuse – but also psychological. icare, part of the NSW government's health and safety regulator reported last year that FACS's workers' compensations claims for psychological injury is similar to first-responder organisations and indeed the severity and incidence rate of our psychological claims exceeds organisations such as Ambulance and NSW Police.

Child Protection Workers refers to all roles involved in child protection work including caseworkers, admin support, managers, casework specialists, psychologists, casework support officers and legal officers.

1. *PSA members are directed to use the Workload Planner (WLP) and not accept or allocate cases beyond a worker's contracted hours or agreed paid overtime hours. Any case that you cannot work on during a four-week WLP period should NOT be allocated to you. This means if a child/case has zero activity hours in your WLP, that child is not to be allocated to you on ChildStory.*

- An additional 20 hours per four-week (one hour per working day) settlement period needs to be 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).*

- 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).*

- A maximum of 83.2 hours is available for primary casework activity per four-week cycle (adjustments need to be made for paid leave).*

2. *PSA members are directed NOT to work excessive and unsafe hours which results in the forfeiture of hours, such as working in excess of 14 hours' credit in any flex period. Members are reminded it is a legal requirement to accurately record all hours on your flex sheet. If you do unpaid work (such as overtime that has not been approved) over a weekend, then record the dates and hours worked in the section "Certified Correct" on your flex sheet.*

3. *PSA members are directed NOT to complete their Performance Development Plan (PDP) including participation in the E-Learning modules, or take part in any Performance Development Program planning or implementation activities. The Career Plan section and Performance Development Career Planning Tool are exempt. Refer to bulletin issued on 10 May 2018 – [HERE](#).*

The bans remain in place because FACS has failed to resolve ongoing problems with ChildStory, unsafe workloads and the risks to workers' mental health, safety and wellbeing.



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ChildStory has failed to deliver the promises FACS made to staff, when they agreed to pay over \$120 million to replace the KIDS system. ChildStory is still unreliable, not user friendly and is still not working properly.

Whilst FACS senior executives pat themselves on the shoulders and proclaim a job well done because the statistics look good in their resumes, the reality in the field is quite different. FACS senior executives have failed to deliver real answers to ongoing problems and concerns held by our members. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that improved productivity statistics only look good in the short-term and do not lead to ongoing positive outcomes for children at risk. The short-term increase in productivity numbers also comes at the cost of workers' health and safety and erodes quality practice, ultimately resulting in poorer outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

FACS has failed to ensure safe and manageable workloads for caseworkers resulting in long hours and forfeited Flextime. Workload continues to be a significant issue in Community Services. This has an impact on members' health and wellbeing, and can also contribute to bullying and harassment issues. Members are reporting management is allocating work to caseworkers based on arbitrary caseload benchmarks, regardless of individual capacity. There are also reports of threats of performance management if targets are not met.

FACS continues with its obsession with productivity. Members are experiencing unprecedented pressure from senior management to increase productivity, with no additional support or resources. The NSW Government has failed to give FACS the resources needed to keep up with demand. There has only been an increase of 54 caseworkers in the last 10 years despite a massive increase in child protection reports. The 75 "new" caseworkers announced by the NSW Government previously announced in the media, is only an attempt to cover up the number of caseworker positions they previously cut.

Now, more than ever, all members involved in casework must take steps to protect themselves from work overload and undertake proper planning and documentation of your work. The Workload Planner provides this protection and allows Caseworkers and Managers Casework to work safely and effectively in their increasingly hazardous work environments. The PSA will continue to lobby the Department and the Minister to take your concerns seriously and meet their legislative responsibilities by providing a safe workplace for their employees.

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

