28 March 2019

Important update: ChildStory and access to KIDS

In December 2018 ChildStory executives made a unilateral decision to stop all new requests or re-instate KIDS access for existing employees. FACS disabled the KIDS access requests on the FACS Intranet business systems portal. All requests must be lodged through ServiceNow. This was against advice by workers in ChildStory and against the wishes of all who use ChildStory and continue to rely on KIDS to readily access legacy records (i.e. KIDS records) and attachments. The PSA understands that all child protection workers employed since ChildStory went live, have had their request to have access to KIDS declined.

This decision is absolutely wrong on so many levels, creating additional risk for children and young people as child protection workers report great difficulty finding all legacy records in ChildStory due to failures in data migration. The additional time required to navigate and complete work in ChildStory without any adjustment in allocated workloads, is having serious impacts on child protection workers health and safety as well as their ability to provide quality casework and support children, carers and families.

In the last PSA survey, 96% of the 600+ child protection workers who responded, stated that they could not do their work effectively without access to KIDS. The PSA provided a copy of the survey to the Minister and FACS. The level of disconnect FACS Executive have to the realities of child protection workers' needs is alarming. 80% of child protection workers also reported that ChildStory is impacting their physical and mental health. The irresponsible decision to restrict KIDS access ignores the views of workers and it is little wonder that the incidence rate of psychological injury for FACS workers is three times that of other NSW government departments.

The position taken by FACS has resulted in more work, stress and frustration for child protection and administrative support workers forced to search ChildStory for legacy records and attachments – often to no avail. KIDS contains some 29 years' worth of child protection records. Records created in ChildStory only date back to November 2017.

The PSA is aware of workplaces with large numbers of new child protection workers (i.e. since November 2017) who have no access to KIDS and continually rely on other Caseworkers or a MCW in providing access to KIDS. This is disruptive, time consuming and also in breach of the code of conduct. This practice leaves our members vulnerable to possible disciplinary action in the future.

We wrote to the now retired Minister and subsequently received a predictably glib response (refer here). FACS executives at Central Office want to totally remove KIDS access as soon as they can.

We recently met with FACS and were advised that guidance will shortly be issued about accessing KIDS to Districts. To assist you the PSA provides the following advice.

AUTHORISED BY STEWART LITTLE, GENERAL SECRETARY,
PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NSW, 160 CLARENCE STREET SYDNEY

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Advice to child protection workers and managers in successfully submitting KIDS access requests:

When submitting a request for KIDS access it is important that you provide a brief outline as to why access if required. This may include:

- The worker has reason to access legacy KIDS records on a regular basis in order to do their work effectively
- The worker has regular need to review legacy records in order to complete case reviews and case histories – especially with inter-generational abuse
- The worker had need to undertake probity checks – new foster carer applicants, household members, workers who are being considered for non-home based care work (motels etc.)
- The worker has been unable to locate all migrated records in ChildStory relating to their allocated cases
- The worker has noted that many attachments have become detached from records and cannot be located in ChildStory
- The narratives within many records has not been migrated in full - sometimes only half the narratives of migrated records are visible in ChildStory
- It is significantly quicker completing history checks and locating legacy records in KIDS as opposed to ChildStory, allowing more time to work directly with children, young people and families in order to meet productivity targets
- Attachments to some carers assessments and review records could not be located in ChildStory
- Attachments to some legal records could not be located in ChildStory

If you believe you are being unfairly treated in regard to your request to access KIDS which then makes it even more challenging to do your job please contact the Member Support Centre on **1300 772 679.**

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PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NSW, 160 CLARENCE STREET SYDNEY