

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-588
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/01546/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
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14 June 2015

Dear William,

Earlier this year you forwarded correspondence the Petitions Committee received from Mr Paul Apreda, National Manager, Families Need Fathers: Both Parents Matter Cymru. In your covering letter you ask if the Welsh Government would consider collecting data around male engagement and provide further information about why the CAF/CASS Cymru Child and Adolescent Welfare Checklist (CC-CAWAC) cannot be shared more widely.

It may help at this point to inform you I met with Mr Apreda in February. At that meeting, I was accompanied by Gillian Baranski, chief executive of CAF/CASS Cymru. During our meeting we discussed the CC-CAWAC and explained the reasons it would not be appropriate to disclose the toolkits to a wider audience. I have also written to Mr Apreda following that meeting with similar information.

The use of CC-CAWAC relies on ensuring its integrity. In the context of litigation and court where separated parents are in dispute over child arrangements, there is the potential that children could be "coached" and/or highly influenced if copies of the questionnaires and scoring booklet become freely available. This could potentially prejudice the reliability of a Family Court Advisor's assessment and analysis of a child's situation and could skew the child's true wishes and feelings as to a particular proposal being considered by the court.

If CC-CAWAC was shared more widely it would also be likely to prejudice confidence in the CC-CAWAC and undermine its value as an objective and evidence-based assessment tool within CAF/CASS Cymru but also amongst children, service users and the family court.

Whilst there would be benefits to releasing the individual questionnaires and the scoring booklet which supports them, in terms of improved transparency and scrutiny, these are outweighed by the significant detriments which could potentially flow, not least in

undermining the integrity and value of the CC-CAWAC and placing children in an increasingly difficult situation.

You also raise the issue of collecting data around male engagement. Within the department for health and social services, only CAF/CASS Cymru works directly with service users. CAF/CASS Cymru is currently developing a new information recording system, which, when implemented, will record the gender details of the parents with whom they work.

Best wishes,

Mark

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