

PE1596/GG

Deputy First Minister submission of 4 February 2020

Thank you for your letter of 7 January. I was glad to have the opportunity to give evidence and am happy to clarify the points raised in your letter.

You have asked about two specific areas – data sharing and referrals.

On data sharing, the committee has expressed particular concern for clarity on whether survivors can access support from Future Pathways without initially being required to provide their personal data. I asked officials to pursue this further and I think this can best be covered by an explanation of Future Pathways' approach.

A name and at least one way of getting in touch is required to register with Future Pathways. A pseudonym may be used. The address is not required.

Additional information may be required to access other services. For example, the name and bank details may be required if the person wishes to receive Discretionary Fund support directly. I understand that most people prefer this. In other cases, Future Pathways may make a purchase directly on behalf of the person, but an address would be needed to send any goods. Information is not kept for longer than it is needed: once a transaction is completed, a record will exist in finance records. This is not easily retrievable and is required for audit purposes.

Future Pathways' support agreement is designed to document permission for Future Pathways to process personal information in order to respond to the person's needs and in line with all UK data protection legislation (including GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018).

A small number of people have chosen to remain anonymous. Future Pathways has been able to support them by having good links with specific named staff, as well as using a pseudonym. This has permitted Future Pathways to deliver support whilst respecting a person's wish for anonymity.

The processing of personal data is managed in dialogue between the Support Coordinator and the individual, with the person's preferences being reviewed regularly. Whilst it is possible to obtain some support without giving personal information, the range and types of support that may be provided in this circumstance would be limited.

In many, if not most, instances, people have multiple needs and would wish Future Pathways to respond to these. As people get to know their Support Coordinator and the service, they are usually content to provide additional information and permit Support Coordinators to progress support according to their needs.

Future Pathways recognises that signing a support agreement is difficult for some. The document was produced with input from survivors. Future Pathways notes that many people seem open to signing the agreement, although some have difficulty in knowing which parts must be completed. The organisation has taken steps to highlight these and to explain why they are necessary. Future Pathways continues to listen to feedback regarding the language used, is keen to review the document again and to

resolve any language which might risk introducing uncertainty about what is recorded and how information is used.

On referrals, you asked about a specific discrepancy in information and referred to a figure of 171. This was a figure provided by Wellbeing Scotland and I understand refers to the number of new referrals received by Wellbeing Scotland from all sources and funded by Future Pathways. Future Pathways has made 58 direct referrals, which we would expect to be included in this number.

You also asked about continuing support for Wellbeing Scotland. I understand that the discussions between Future Pathways and Wellbeing Scotland continue on a contract for continued support and, separately, that Wellbeing Scotland has been successful in a bid for funding from the new Survivors of Childhood Abuse Support Fund, though confirmation of awards will be subject to the outcome of the Scottish budget process and final Ministerial approval.