

PE1596/HH

Petitioner submission of 13 March 2020

I raised concerns with Future Pathways about their Support Agreement, suggesting amendments.

Following confirmation from Flora Henderson (included in the annexe below), amendments have now been made to the Agreement.

With regard to the submissions received since the last consideration of the petition:

I have no comments for Helen Holland submission: 26/1/20

I have the following comments about Deputy First Minister (DFN) John Swinney: 4/2/20—

Mr Swinney has mentioned that survivors can use a pseudonym and, an address is not required.

I wish to thank Mr Swinney for his consideration on these matters, I do so with the utmost respect.

Giving survivors a choice is very important as to how and when they are ready to provide sensitive and personal information about themselves.

Annexe

Email from Flora Henderson, dated 3 March 2020.

Dear Paul,

Thank you very much for the time you have taken to speak to Future Pathways about our support agreement and other data sharing issues. The feedback has been received in the spirit of improvement and trust building; thank you for the time you have taken to work with us directly on these matters. It has been much appreciated and the proposed changes are seen as an improvement that will help us be as effective as possible in encouraging people to sign up and access any needed supports.

I know our conversation was preceded by work done with [the Communications and Engagement Manager], which has helped us improve the Support Agreement, which people are requested to sign at the start. However, it is not necessary to sign the agreement to access the service. I promised that I would be in touch by email to confirm what we agreed in our conversation. I also confirm that you are welcome to share what we spoke about with others.

1. **We agreed that the support agreement should be changed.** A number of changes were agreed, including adjusting our language (for example, changing 'information collected' to 'recording of information'. We will remove the statement that '*no service can be provided without this box ticked*'. It is not accurate and some feel it is an ultimatum. Future Pathways does not wish to have language in the agreement that is

seen in this way. We also agreed to be clear that people may register with 'a name of their choice' and a contact number.

The refreshed support agreement will be used by all staff from now on. I expect the new version to be available across the service by 6 March.

2. **We agreed the support agreement should be available on our website.** We will likely post this on the '*Frequently Asked Questions*' part of the website, with encouragement for people to raise any concerns they might have with their support coordinator or directly to Future Pathways. We will also note this in the Future Pathways update newsletter, directing people to the website. The support agreement will be uploaded onto the website by 6 March. Once this is done, I will send the link so you may be assured of this.
3. **We will signpost people to the website location of the refreshed Support agreement in our next Future Pathways newsletter,** which is produced once a month.
4. **Support Coordinators/ all staff will be reminded to be proactive in assuring people about their data rights and alerted to the possibility that people may have questions when the new agreement is made available. The reminder to our staff team will be done by 11 March, in the next planned staff update letter.**

We talked about the importance of assuring people that they may say as much or as little as they wish. It is understood that this may affect what services someone might wish and that there is a need to be explicit that by choosing to pass information to a service, then anonymity may be affected. It is expected that support coordinators do this, in line with good practice and data protection regulations. This normally happens in conversation with the person on an ongoing basis as both support needs and inclination to share information will vary as time goes on.

Where individuals have already signed a support agreement, it is our view that it will not be necessary to repeat the process, bearing in mind that people working with a support coordinator will be talking about these matters periodically. Future Pathways' experience is that most people wish for admin procedures to be as minimalist as possible.

People may ask questions about why some people signed one version, and others signed another. We, all staff, will encourage anyone with questions to contact their Support Coordinator, the Communications and Engagement Manager or the Alliance Manager. Please also feel free to encourage anyone with any worry about this to be in touch with myself or [REDACTED] directly.

Please do be in touch with me at any time if further questions come to mind. It was a pleasure to speak to you yesterday.