

The President of the Family Division
Family Division
Royal Courts of Justice
Strand
London
WC2A 2LL

27 June 19

To the President of the Family Division of the High Court

Re: Response to draft guidance on reporting in the Family Courts

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) is the professional association for social work in the UK with offices in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. With over 20,000 members we exist to promote the best possible social work services for all people who may need them, while also securing the well-being of social workers working in all health and social care settings.

BASW England welcomes the president's guidance on reporting in the family courts. While BASW England welcomes the clarification that it brings, we remain concerned about the potential for children to have their confidentiality breached, we are also mindful of the need and right to privacy of others, including; birth parents, siblings foster carers, extended friends and family and professionals.

While we recognise that there are no changes to the existing arrangements on reporting in the family courts, there should be more information on definitions and guidance made available to professionals and those receiving services. This is so everyone fully understands the limitations, rules and consequences around reporting, including posting to social media.

BASW England recognises that transparency in family proceedings will lead to greater public understanding of court procedures and the role of social workers. This will help to counter many common misconceptions which exist around social work practice and family court proceedings. However, this should not be at the detriment of confidentiality to the child and other individuals, including professionals. As such there should be no identifiable information in reporting, this includes references to locations.

BASW England would welcome an opportunity to meet with the President of the Family Division of the High Court and discuss the role of Social Workers in family proceedings and how we can work together to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and their families.

Yours faithfully

Gavin Moorghen
Professional Officer
BASW England
(Coordinator for membership response to the guidance)