

## Guidelines for Engaging with Clients Legal Representatives

As a family intervention service, we work intensively with services users who have been referred to ICH FIS from Child Safety. ICH FIS provide case work to support family preservation or support the goal of reunification and are not case managers; case management is Child Safety's role.

It is the role of ICH FIS to provide family intervention services aligned with the case plan. Providing details of the case or/and our assessment directly to legal representatives is not within the purview of the service and case work needs to be kept separate from litigation.

Communicating with legal representatives can increase the risk of the service getting involved in litigation. The service does not have access to all the information relevant to the family functioning or child/ren's safety and cannot provide comprehensive reasoning regarding any assessments made.

The appropriate avenues for lawyers to obtain information are:

- Through the Director of Child Protection Litigation (DCPL).
- Directly from Child Safety.
- Lodged Court documents such Affidavits (where ICH FIS Progress Reports are attached).
- Participation in FGM or Court Ordered conferences.
- By asking clients for copies of documentation that is available to them (e.g. Family Action Plans, Progress Reports, etc.).

ICH FIS will communicate with lawyers about:

- Procedural matters, e.g. explaining work processes such as developing a FAP and reporting or describing in a general sense the role of the service and the type of work done with clients.
- Updates for client and worker contact details.
- Brief factual information about arrangements, e.g. confirmation that a Case Worker will transport a client to an appointment.

### **Things which will be done for a service user:**

- Support them to apply for legal aid.
- Support them with the making of an appeal if they are refused legal aid.
- Transport clients to legal appointments and Court where required.
- Support them at Court at their request (excluding Children's Court which is a closed Court).
- Make copies of their Family Action Plans and Progress Reports available to them. These can also be emailed to legal representatives if requested by the client. Any requests such as this will be case noted as a record of their consent.
- Participate in stakeholder meetings such as Family Group Meetings.
- Provide sworn affidavits attaching records produced by the service for the Court.

### **Things which won't be done:**

- Communicate either in person or writing with lawyers about case details. This includes providing an assessment on decisions like family contact or support needs for the family.
- Seek to attend Court Ordered Conferences.
- Transport clients who can make their own way to appointments / Court / Conferences.