



BOTH PARENTS MATTER



FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru Newspoints June 2020

You may be wondering what has been going on within the charity during the lockdown. Just because the usual meetings have not been possible does not mean we have been idle.

New Service Users

There has been no reduction in new service users contacting BPM. This has continued via the helpline, website, emails, and referrals from solicitors.

Video Conferencing

We have been endeavouring to create a facility to hold support meetings by video conferencing and have opted for Microsoft Teams as the platform. We have started to use the technology on a small scale and hope to roll this out to support meetings shortly. Whilst this may seem a little late, as the lockdown (hopefully) nears its end, our thoughts are that this facility will continue to be used even after physical meetings are also restarted.

The Lockdown & Our Survey

We have been very mindful of the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on child arrangements. Accordingly, we carried out a survey to discover how fathers' and mothers' childcare arrangements had changed. The survey was not confined to our service users, with many respondents from outside Wales (especially Scotland). The provisional results of the survey were formally communicated by the charity to the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee following their call for evidence of the impact of the lockdown. You can read our submission [here](#), and a later more complete analysis of the results is [here](#). We will shortly be holding discussions with friendly academics to see if these results can be promulgated more widely in the academic journals.



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The Buddy Scheme

The charity's top priority is to enhance the emotional support to our service users. The Buddy scheme is intended to do this. We have started a Facebook group for the Buddy scheme and have taken on a part-time member of staff, Phil Davies, to act as Buddy Coordinator. Unfortunately, no sooner had Phil joined us than the lockdown started – which rather frustrated our principal intention of encouraging social events via the Buddy scheme. However, this will happen in due course. We will shortly be calling for volunteers to act as Buddies. Watch this space for details of how you can be involved. The charity needs YOU!

Domestic Abuse Bill

The Domestic Abuse Bill has now reached the Committee stage in the House of Commons and the Committee are taking evidence. Thanks to Will, our Campaigns Coordinator, for compiling and submitting the charity's evidence, linked [here](#).

Recording Social Workers

The charity has an intention to pursue several campaigns. However, at present, we wish to focus on a campaign to introduce a statutory requirement within Wales to record in audio or video any interactions between social workers (including Cafcass Cymru) with parents, carers or other relevant parties that they later rely upon in any report. The charity submitted a draft petition to this effect to the Welsh Assembly Petitions Committee. It was rejected on grounds which we consider spurious. We have now drafted a plan to address the Petitions Committee's objections and ultimately to return with a reworded petition together with a raft of supporting material. Thanks to Karl for helping get this project off the ground. We will probably be seeking the assistance of other volunteers with this initiative shortly.

Male Suicide

The issue of men's high suicide rate, and its relationship with parental separation, has always been high amongst the charity's concerns. Good relations with the First Minister have helped keep us informed of what the Welsh Assembly has been doing in respect of researching this matter. There are now some anecdotal indications that men's suicide rate has become higher still during the lockdown. We have asked the First Minister if further information from the researchers is available and can be shared with us.



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BPM's 2018 Survey of Male Victims of Domestic Abuse

We made a contribution to an online conference on male victims. Links to the videos can be found [here](#) (as they appear during Sunday 7th July).

Service User Data

Over the last 12 months the charity has introduced a new piece of software, “Caseworker”, which has revolutionised how we hold service user data. Over that period we have also refined the (now 5-page) Service User Pack, which is uploaded into the Caseworker system. Whilst this may appear to be a tedious bit of admin to many, it is of immeasurable value to the charity. For the first time we have solid evidence from standard psychology tests of the poor mental wellbeing and social and emotional isolation of many service users. It also means we can compile statistics of the results of the domestic abuse Risk Indicator Checklist. So, thanks to all those who have facilitated new users completing the Service User Pack. It remains essential.

...and finally

We hope you have found these Newspoints informative. We intend to update you on a more regular basis from now on,

The Management Team, BPM