

Respect

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Self-referrals to Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes from July 2022

Why have I been given this letter?

You have been given this letter because you – or someone whose case you are working on in **Child Arrangement Order (CAO) proceedings** – contacted the Respect Phonenumber or a local service provider to self-refer to a **Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP)**.

Who are Respect?

[Respect](#) are the accreditation and membership body for Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes in England and Wales which are not run by the National Probation Service. Respect provide quality assurance, advice and guidance to accredited programme providers, and run the [Respect Phonenumber](#) for people who are concerned about their behaviour and/or wish to find a programme that is local to them and/or which they can attend.

What has happened to DAPPs?

Until recently, Cafcass England commissioned DAPPs in Child Arrangement Order proceedings. This meant that funded places were available on quality-assured programmes for parents wishing to have contact with their child/ren, but who agreed they needed to work on their abusive behaviour in order to do so. A Judge could make a court order for a parent to attend and there was no charge to that parent for doing so.

In April 2022, Cafcass England informed all programme providers that they would no longer be funding these programmes as part of Child Arrangement Order proceedings. The Ministry of Justice confirmed this decision and said: *“From 30th June 2022, Cafcass [England] will not be able to process any court ordered DAPPs and alternative arrangements will be provided”*.

At present, no alternative arrangements have been confirmed and there are **no Cafcass approved providers** in England to deliver programmes.

Why can't I self-refer to a DAPP?

Respect is aware that a number of parents have been advised to self-refer to a Respect-accredited DAPP in their area, however this is not currently possible. The reason for this is that accredited programme providers need information-sharing and safeguarding agreements in place to appropriately safeguard children in such proceedings. Without this, programme providers have no way of reporting back to the court and Cafcass on the progress of the parent doing the programme, for the Judge's consideration.

Providers of DAPPs also need to receive funding to complete their work which includes suitability assessments, delivering the programme and (ex)partner support services, and completing mid-way and final reports on progress. Without this, the providers cannot do their work safely or effectively and doing so would put them in breach of the Respect Standards (3rd Edition), which they are accredited against.

I've been told to self-refer myself to a programme: What should I do now?

You should show this letter to your solicitor, Family Court Advisor (FCA) and/or the Judge in your case and explain that self-referrals to Respect-accredited programmes are not currently possible. Your Cafcass England FCA may be able to advise on alternative options.

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I feel desperate: what should I do?

We recognise that many parents are currently experiencing significant delays with progressing their case through the family court system, and that the removal of the DAPP when this is required to re-establish contact with your child/ren with no current solution in place is difficult

In the first instance we would encourage you to speak to your solicitor or your Family Court Advisor and/or the Judge in your case and show them this letter to discuss your options.

We encourage you to seek support from the following services who can help you manage your emotional and mental well-being:

- The Samaritans - <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>
- NHS services - <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/>
- Mind - <https://www.mind.org.uk/>
- Sane - <https://www.sane.org.uk/how-we-help>
- CALM - <https://www.thecalmzone.net/get-support>
- SP-UK - <https://www.spuk.org.uk/>

What are Respect doing about this situation?

Respect have written to the Ministry of Justice and Justice Minister and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, setting out our concerns about the impact of this decision and the risk and safety concerns associated with self-referral pathways.

We continue to liaise with both of these agencies, as well as the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, about our concerns and you can check our website for updates on this issue: www.respect.uk.net.