



The Data Protection and Use Policy in action

A service user's journey



SCENARIO James and Janis are separating. They have 2 kids. During the last few months James became more hurt, confused and angry. The police were called during arguments. The last time James hit a hole in the wall and pushed Janis, who fell into a coffee table. The kids were in their rooms. James adores his kids and wants to share care of them but doesn't feel confident as a parent.

James and Janis are going through the Family Court around care of the children. James self-refers to the 'Kids First' parenting programme run by City Centre Social Services (CCSS). This map shows his journey in terms of data and information, and the difference that thinking about DPUP could make to his experience.

Before applying DPUP's advice

Action

James fills in a form that says "We will share your information with relevant agencies". The programme co-ordinator doesn't mention it and James doesn't know what to ask.

"How much of what I say will end up with the police? Can I trust these people? Maybe I shouldn't do this if it will make things worse."

James talks about being a parent and things he finds tough. Everyone is given ideas to try at home and talk with the group about. Their stories and experiences are written up on big posters and the facilitator takes notes.

"Who gets to see all this? Does she write my name next to stuff I say? Why? Someone might find out what I say and think I'm a bad dad!"

James' lawyer tells him the Court wants to know how he's going on the course. James asks the facilitator about it, he wants to know what will be said and wants a say. The facilitator says it's not up to her — he should talk to someone else.

"She should know and help me. She's the one who records everything! I'm so frustrated. It's too risky to keep coming here."

His lawyer gives him a copy of the report from CCSS and he sees mistakes. It mentions alcohol use as a problem, but James doesn't drink. He wants this corrected and the Court to be told. He doesn't know what the process is for getting this fixed.

"Someone must have stuffed up! Maybe they want me to lose my kids! Why? I'm so angry — this could be really bad. I can't trust them."

When James finishes the course he wants a copy of his information in case he needs it later on. CCSS tell him he must do a Privacy Act request — James assumes that means his lawyer has to do it.

"This is so stressful — I can't afford a lawyer. It's my information so why is it so hard to get it? I'm not doing anything like this again."

Thinking / feeling

Action

The form James fills in says the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) (the programme funder) is only told how many people attend, gender and number of kids they care for. Information that can show who he is doesn't go to MSD, and is only shared with his agreement unless Oranga Tamariki, police or the Courts ask for it.

The co-ordinator asks if he has any questions. He asks if he'll get a say about what is shared. He will unless staff think it will put his kids at risk.

The facilitator begins with discussion and agreement from the group on how information will be handled. They decide that anything on the walls will be done on Post-it Notes that can be taken away by participants or thrown in the document destruction bin.

At regular intervals, the facilitator shows the participants the notes they make.

After applying DPUP's advice

James' lawyer tells him the Court wants to know how he's going on the course.

Collectively the CCSS team and James talk about the response. James would rather some information isn't shared but understands why CCSS needs to. Overall he thinks it's fair and balanced.

James realises something is wrong in the report to the Court — it says he has a drinking problem, but he doesn't drink. He tells the facilitator who arranges for him to talk with the manager that afternoon.

CCSS urgently works out what happened. They send a corrected version to the social worker, the lawyer and to James.

When James enrolled he was told he can ask to see any notes about him and ask for corrections. All he has to do is ask the facilitator.

CCSS has a policy of proactively giving clients copies of their information at the end of the programme regardless of any request.

"I'm really confident about this, I know I can have a say in what happens with my notes. I can't wait to get started — it's going to be good for me."

"It feels so easy to talk about the hard stuff here because I know it's safe."

"I'm grateful the facilitator helped me so fast. They've respected me, even if we don't agree on all the info. I'm relieved there won't be any surprises for me in Court."

"It's reassuring to know they took this so seriously, worked out what went wrong and made it right. It makes me trust them even more."

"Wow — it's cool to have proof of how far I've come. Some of this is hard to read — but it's my story, not just stuck on a computer somewhere."