

Evidence Sheet: Kingston Children's Services Training Deficiencies

The Claim vs. Reality

Mr Ian Dodds (Executive Director, Kingston Children's Services) claimed:

"The London Safeguarding Children Procedures are the overarching procedures that social workers follow. The procedures include practice guidance and the sections on domestic abuse and family contact are the most relevant to consider." (*Email to Sir Ed Davey MP, 15 January 2025*)

The Reality:

Search results from London Safeguarding Children Procedures:

- "alienat" - 0 results
- "alienation" - 0 results
- "parental alienation" - 0 results

The procedures contain **no guidance whatsoever** on alienating behaviours.

What Mr Dodds Actually Admitted

First Response (15 January 2025):

"Achieving for Children does not have a practice framework or any measures in place that are specific to cross-allegations of domestic abuse and parental alienation."

Second Response (4 February 2025):

"I have searched the Research in Practice database this afternoon" (*He had to search while writing his response*)

"This will cover cross-allegations of domestic abuse and parental alienation **albeit not in any significant depth**"

"I do not currently see the need to develop a specific protocol on this issue"

The "Family Contact" Section - What It Actually Says

Section 18 of the Domestic Abuse procedures focuses on:

- Protecting mothers from violence during contact (18.2)
- Preventing abusive partners from locating victims (18.2)
- Risk assessments for domestic abuse victims (18.6-18.7)
- Supervised contact for abuse cases (18.10)

It contains zero content about:

- Alienating behaviours
- Psychological manipulation of children
- Unjustified resistance to contact
- Any related concepts

National Context

Family Justice Council (December 2024):

"Where found the harm of Alienating Behaviours to a child can be significant and enduring, akin to other forms of emotional/psychological child abuse"

Cafcass:

- Mandatory training for all Family Court Advisors
- 23-page comprehensive guidance
- Updated July 2025 to align with FJC

Kingston:

- No framework
- No meaningful training
- No plans to develop
- False claims about existing procedures

The Timeline

- 9 January 2025: Sir Ed Davey investigates

- **15 January 2025:** Dodds admits no framework exists
- **4 February 2025:** Dodds reveals training "not in any significant depth"
- **6 February 2025:** Evidence provided to Sir Ed
- **17 June 2025:** Final deadline given to Sir Ed
- **24 June 2025:** Deadline passes - no action taken

Key Facts

1. Kingston has **no framework** for identifying behaviours that can harm children
2. Their Executive Director **made false claims** about existing procedures
3. When caught, he stated he sees "**no need**" to develop proper protocols
4. This is despite national recognition of potential harm "**akin to child abuse**"
5. The local MP took **no action** after discovering these deficiencies

Sources: Email correspondence between Sir Ed Davey MP and Ian Dodds (Jan-Feb 2025); London Safeguarding Children Procedures; Family Justice Council Guidance (Dec 2024); Cafcass Guidance (July 2025)

From: Ian Dodds

Sent: 4 February 2025 16:32

To: "DAVEY, Edward" <edward.davey.mp@parliament.uk>

Subject: Re: FW: Parental Alienation (Case Ref: ED61520)

Dear Sir Ed

In response to the additional questions raised by .

1. I have answered this question in my original email - the sections on domestic abuse and family contact.

2. I have searched the Research in Practice database this afternoon and there are a number of articles and resources which include alienating behaviours. It is a subscription service and so I cannot provide links to the database. There are also references and links to other resources including a useful resource produced by [CAFCASS](#). Social workers will also have access to the Family Justice Council's recent guidance on responding to a child's unexplained reluctance, resistance or refusal to spend time with a parent and allegations of alienating behaviour to support their assessments and interventions. The use of research and evidence is an integral part of a social work assessment and this is monitored through casework supervision and the sign-off of social work assessments by managers.

3. I consider the current frameworks and guidance provided to social workers to be sufficient to enable social workers to identify and respond to alienating behaviours. I do not currently see the need to develop a specific protocol on this issue.

I hope this answers your questions.

Yours sincerely

Ian Dodds

Executive Director of Children's Services

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On Mon, 3 Feb 2025 at 11:40, Ed Davey <edward.davey.mp@parliament.uk> wrote:

Dear Ian Dodds,

Thank you for your response in regard to parental alienation.

Your response was forwarded to _____ who raised the original query. Please see below, his comments for your further consideration.

Thank you once again, for your much appreciated assistance on this topic. I look forward to your response.

With best wishes,

Ed Davey

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From:

: 16 January 2025 16:55

To: DAVEY, Edward

Subject: Re: FW: Parental Alienation (Case Ref: ED61520)

Dear Sir Ed,

Thank you for obtaining AfC's response regarding their approach to alienating behaviours. Their reply reveals concerning gaps in their service provision. AfC states they rely on "The London Safeguarding Children Procedures" as their overarching framework. However, having carefully reviewed these procedures, I find no specific guidance on identifying or addressing alienating behaviours. This is a significant oversight that AfC appears to be using to justify their lack of specific

protocols.

Their response mentions access to "Research in Practice" resources but provides no detail on how - or whether - staff actually use these materials. More concerning is their admission that their domestic abuse training covers alienating behaviours "albeit not in any significant depth." This casual dismissal of such a serious child welfare issue is troubling.

While they reference "individual and group supervision for social workers," without specific frameworks or training, this supervision can only rely on personal experience rather than evidence-based approaches - precisely the issue highlighted as problematic by the President of the Family Division's 2021 memorandum.

Since AfC's response, the Family Justice Council has released their guidance on alienating behaviours. I am currently drafting an open letter to the President of the Family Division highlighting a serious concern: the guidance misquotes evidence to argue that alienating behaviours are "relatively rare", when the cited research (particularly the Lost Dads study) actually found that about one-third of fathers reported experiencing parental alienation. Such misrepresentation of evidence in official guidance risks further embedding the institutional minimisation we see in AfC's response.

Given this context, would you consider:

1. Asking AfC to identify which specific sections of the London Safeguarding Children Procedures they believe address alienating behaviours?
2. Requesting details of what "Research in Practice" materials they use and how staff implementation is monitored?
3. Questioning why they consider it acceptable to have no specific framework for such a serious child welfare issue?

Their response effectively confirms they lack the necessary tools and training to support families through these complex situations.

Yours sincerely,

From: Ian Dodds
Sent: 15 January 2025 12:03
To: DAVEY, Edward
Subject: Re: Parental Alienation (Case Ref: ED61520)

Dear Sir Ed

Thank you for your email about parental alienation on behalf of your constituent.

Achieving for Children does not have a practice framework or any measures in place that are specific to cross-allegations of domestic abuse and parental alienation. The [London Safeguarding Children Procedures](#) are the overarching procedures that social workers follow. The procedures include practice guidance and the sections on domestic

abuse and family contact are the most relevant to consider. Practitioners also have access to specific practice guidance from our subscription to the organisation Research in Practice, which include specific guidance on this and related issues, as well as links to relevant case law. There are domestic abuse specialists for victims and perpetrators within our Families First service who are able to provide consultation and advice to social workers and other practitioners in relation to all aspects of domestic abuse. There is also individual and group supervision for social workers and practitioners to reflect on specific casework and seek guidance.

A training course on domestic abuse is provided to professionals working with children through the Safeguarding Children Partnership. This will cover cross-allegations of domestic abuse and parental alienation albeit not in any significant depth. Achieving for Children provides training courses for social workers and other professionals on parental conflict, domestic abuse and working with men (in partnership with the Fatherhood Institute) which are also relevant to this theme. There was a whole-service training event for social workers on domestic abuse on 10 December 2024 as part of our ongoing commitment to developing our practice, and a new levelled training programme on domestic abuse in partnership with Refuge is currently being designed to be rolled out in April 2025. This should also cover this issue.

Yours sincerely

Ian Dodds
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On Thu, 9 Jan 2025 at 15:39, Ed Davey
<edward.davey.mp@parliament.uk> wrote:

Dear Ian Dodds,

RE: PARENTAL ALIENATION

I am writing to you in regard to some casework I have received relating to parental alienation and AfC policy/guidelines in this context.

I would therefore, be grateful for your advice on the following:

1. Does AfC have a framework to support families directly affected by alienating behaviours?
2. Would you be able to let me know the nature of the training staff receive to enable them to handle these specific cases?

I understand that the Family Justice Council (FJC) established a working group "Responding to Allegation of Alienating Behaviour" to develop clear guidance for professionals and the judiciary. They are yet to publish a final report on their findings.

Given this, would you be able to advise me as to whether AfC has implemented any formal interim measures to deal with such cases?

Thank you for your assistance with this. I look forward to your response.

With best wishes,

Ed Davey

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