



PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN & CHILDREN

## STATEMENT

FAMILY JUSTICE COUNCIL GUIDANCE ON RESPONDING TO A CHILD'S UNEXPLAINED RELUCTANCE, RESISTANCE OR REFUSAL TO SPEND TIME WITH A PARENT AND ALLEGATIONS OF ALIENATING BEHAVIOUR (DECEMBER 2024)<sup>1</sup>

The Women's Rights Network welcomes the guidance issued by the Family Justice Council on dealing with allegations of 'parental alienation'. This concept has for far too long been employed as a litigation tactic to silence abuse victims.

It is right that judges should take decisions in cases where alienating behaviour is alleged, not self-styled experts in what the guidance describes as "harmful pseudoscience". It is right that considerations of domestic abuse should always be regarded very seriously, and not countered by alienation. It is right that paid judges should determine whether undue influence has been applied to children, and not magistrates. It is also right to place the voice and needs of children at the heart of decision making, something which the courts so often fail to do.

This guidance has been a long time coming, but consultation has been meaningful and responsive, with major changes made from the draft version. We consider that the final version is strong and robust as a result of the amendments made.

We urge judges, magistrates and barristers in the family courts to take the time to thoroughly absorb this guidance, and take all steps necessary to embed it into practice.

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<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Family-Justice-Council-Guidance-on-responding-to-allegations-of-alienating-behaviour-2024-1-1.pdf>