



## CONSULTATION REVIEW STANDARD WORK

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Purpose: Consultation Review provides an independent perspective and practice expertise to guide decision-making and reach timely positive safety and permanency outcomes. Consultation Review is used in complex active DCS cases upon request by DCS Field Operations or OCWI for guidance on safety assessment or permanency planning, or by the DCS Ombudsman for guidance to resolve a complaint. Consultation Review uses a teaming approach to problem-solve in a psychologically safe environment.

Consultation Review may be requested by the DCS Ombudsman; or by the Office of Child Welfare Investigations (OCWI) Chief, OCWI Deputy Chief, a Regional Program Administrator (PA), or a DCS Program Manager (PM).

Consultation Review may be requested when an independent perspective and practice expertise is needed to guide decision-making or resolve a complaint in an active complex DCS case. Complex DCS cases have at least one of the following:

- Extensive history of DCS involvement (repeated reports, dependencies, and/or termination of parenting rights or severances)
- High frequency of transfer between DCS Specialists has interfered with sufficiency of assessment or consistency of decisions
- Parent has an unclear mental health diagnosis that impacts the ability to assess parental functioning and protective capacity
- Parent who has unstable sobriety, with cycles of relapse and recovery
- Best interest questions, such as a parent has no or no recent relationship with child, or competing caregiver options
- Questions related to reasonable efforts and sufficiency of service delivery
- Parent has completed services, but no behavior change has occurred
- Serious injuries to a child and the perpetrator has not been determined
- Young child and decision of whether guardianship or adoption is in the child's best interest
- No adoptive caregiver identified, adoption is in the best interest of the child, but the court will not terminate parental rights
- Motion for termination of parental rights or severance petition has been denied or overturned
- Questions or differing opinions about sufficiency of information collection, accuracy of the safety decision, or whether the safety plan is sufficient and least intrusive
- Safety threats (dangers), safety plan, conditions for return, and/or behavioral change goals are not understood by the parent and lack sufficient detail and clarity
- Young person age 16 or older in out-of-home care does not have an adequate plan to maintain safety and stability upon achieving adulthood and/or exiting DCS care

Consultation Reviews are overseen by Consultation & Research, within the Office of the Director. Consultation Review requests are made to the Executive Consultant to the Director.

Consultation Review does not replace the quality assurance functions of a Program Supervisor, Program Manager or Program Administrator review, Team Decision Making meetings, Case Plan Staffings, the Office of the Ombudsman, or due process through the court system.

### Review Timeframes

If the reason for the request is directly related to a child's safety, the review will begin on the day of the request, and communication with the PA or OCWI Chief or point of contact will occur as quickly and often as necessary until the concern about the child's safety is resolved. If the request is not directly related to a child's safety, timeframes for case review and communication will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

### **Requests by the DCS Ombudsman**

The DCS Ombudsman can request a Consultation Review when the Ombudsman determines independent perspective and guidance by one or more practice experts is needed due to case complexity.

When a citizen/community member communicates a case related complaint to the DCS Director, a DCS Deputy Director, or the Executive Consultant to the Director, the complaint will be forwarded to the DCS Ombudsman who will log and manage the complaint as described in the DCS Policy Manual Chapter 7, Section 17, Complaint Management, and request a Consultation Review if indicated. The DCS Ombudsman is responsible for any communication with the citizen/community member about the complaint and its resolution.

When a request is received from the DCS Ombudsman, the Executive Consultant to the Director will notify the PA or OCWI Chief that a review has been requested. The PA or OCWI Chief will:

- provide information known about the case, such as prior PA/OCWI Chief involvement or high profile status; and
- identify the point of contact, which

The DCS Ombudsman will provide information about previous and current complaints to the DCS Ombudsman involving the family, including date, a summary of the contact, and whether the complaint is open or closed.

### **Requests by the OCWI Chief, a PA, or a PM**

The OCWI Chief, a PA, or a PM can request a Consultation Review whenever it is determined that an independent perspective and guidance by one or more practice experts is needed due to case complexity. Requests from Field Operations and OCWI leaders will not be forwarded to, logged by, and managed by the DCS Ombudsman. The leader making the request will identify the point of contact, which may be the PA or OCWI Chief, PM or OCWI Manager, a Supervision Coach, or the DCS Supervisor responsible for the case.

### **Conducting the Review**

The requester will describe reason for the request, and the practice area or decision point to be explored. The Executive Consultant to the Director will assign a reviewer, who will be a member of the Consultation & Research team with expertise relevant to the practice area to be explored.

A teaming approach is used throughout the review to promote a safe environment for learning, professional growth, and critical thinking.

The lead reviewer will conduct the review as follows:

1. Read available information, such as the Guardian case record.
2. The reviewer determines if input from other practice experts is needed, identify the experts, and define their roles in the review. For example, the case may involve mental health issues, domestic violence, or cultural practices that require knowledge from an expert in that area or culture.
3. The reviewer and other review team members identify gaps in the documented information and a plan for gathering missing information, which may include obtaining additional records or speaking with staff or case participants.
4. If communication with Field Operations staff is necessary to complete the review, the reviewer jointly determines with the Field Operations or OCWI point of contact with whom and how the communication

will occur. If the DCS Ombudsman has an open complaint, the reviewer and Ombudsman coordinate communication with staff. Care will be taken to avoid redundant communication and increased workload for DCS Specialists and DCS Supervisors. If communication with staff will occur, the reviewer and point of contact explains to the staff the purpose of Consultation Reviews, the reason for the particular review, and what the staff can expect during and after the review.

5. The reviewer or another member of the C&R team may attend a meeting, hearing, or other case event if needed to conduct the review or provide guidance to support decision-making. If attendance at a case event is needed, the reviewer jointly determines with the Field Operations or OCWI point of contact when attendance will occur and the role of the reviewer at the event.
6. When there are differences of opinion on a decision, the reviewer gathers and considers information from different points of view and identifies where insufficient information collection or sharing of information may be contributing to the disagreements.
7. When the review is complete, the reviewer discusses the results with the Executive Consultant to the Director to determine the feedback and recommendations to be communicated to the PA, OCWI Chief, or point of contact.

### **Feedback, Coaching, and Action**

Following the review, the reviewer and/or Executive Consultant to the Director communicates the feedback and recommendations to the PA, OCWI Chief, and/or point of contact; and to the DCS Ombudsman if the requester. The participants in this discussion jointly identify any actions to be taken, including:

- if and how practice feedback will be provided to a DCS Supervisor or Specialist,
- whether a Supervision Coach will be involved and how, and
- whether a safety or permanency decision will be reconsidered or changed.

The preference will be for a Supervision Coach to lead case review feedback and learning opportunities with the DCS Supervisor and DCS Program Manager using the coaching process.

If there is a disagreement about whether a safety or permanency decision will be reconsidered or changed, the PA, OCWI Chief, or Executive Consultant to the Director may elevate the disagreement to the DCS Deputy Director of Field Operations or DCS Director who will decide the action to be taken.

If a decision change is being considered and may have legal implications, the DCS General Counsel and/or the Attorney General's Office will be consulted.

### **Resolution**

The reviewer stays informed about case activity until all actions are completed and any practice concerns are resolved. Point of resolution will be determined by the reviewer in consultation with the Executive Consultant to the Director. The reviewer will stay informed about case activity by reviewing documentation in the case record, or communication with the PA, OCWI Chief, or point of contact if the documentation is not thorough and up-to-date.

### **Documentation of the Review**

Consultation & Research will keep a log of Consultation Reviews, including date of request, case name and number, requester name and position, reason for the review, date of review start, review result, actions to be taken, and date of resolution.