

**South Carolina Department of Social Services**  
**Child Welfare Quality Assurance Review: Richland County**  
**Summary Report**

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This summary report describes the results of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) Richland County Quality Assurance Review, conducted April 14-18, 2014. The period under review was October 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

DSS Child Welfare Quality Assurance Reviews are conducted using the *Onsite Review Instrument* (OSRI) finalized by the federal Administration for Children & Families (ACF) in July 2008. This instrument is used to review foster care and family preservation services cases. Thirty cases were reviewed including 15 foster care and 15 family preservation cases.

The OSRI is divided into three sections: safety, permanency, and child and family well-being. There are two safety outcomes, two permanency outcomes, and three well-being outcomes. Reviewers collect information on a number of *items* related to each of the outcomes. The ratings for each *item* are combined to determine the rating for the outcome. Outcomes are rated as being substantially achieved, partially achieved, not achieved, or not applicable. The *items* are rated as *strength*, *area needing improvement*, or not applicable. Ratings for each of the outcomes are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Child Welfare QA Onsite Reviews – Ratings by Outcome**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Substantially Achieved</b>	<b>Partially Achieved</b>	<b>Not Achieved</b>
<b>Safety 1</b> <i>Children Are, First and Foremost, Protected from Abuse and Neglect</i>	75% (6)	25% (2)	0% (0)
<b>Safety 2</b> <i>Children are Safely Maintained in their Homes whenever Possible and Appropriate</i>	20% (6)	17% (5)	63% (19)
<b>Permanency 1</b> <i>Children have Permanency and Stability in their Living Situations</i>	7% (1)	67% (10)	26% (4)
<b>Permanency 2</b> <i>The Continuity of Family Relationships and Connections is Preserved for Children</i>	13% (2)	74% (11)	13% (2)
<b>Well-Being 1</b> <i>Families have Enhanced Capacity to Provide for their Children's Needs</i>	0% (0)	50% (15)	50% (15)
<b>Well-Being 2</b> <i>Children receive Appropriate Services to meet their Educational Needs</i>	69% (11)	6% (1)	25% (4)
<b>Well-Being 3</b> <i>Children receive Adequate Services to meet their Physical and Mental Health Needs</i>	36% (9)	24% (6)	40% (10)

Results for outcomes and *items* are reported by the number of cases and the percentage of total cases given each rating. In addition, the percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each *item*. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *areas needing improvement*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the *percentage of strengths*.

**SECTION I: REVIEW FINDINGS**

***Safety Outcome 1: Children Are, First and Foremost, Protected from Abuse and Neglect***

Two *items* are included under Safety Outcome 1. Ratings for the two *items* are shown in Table 2.

**Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated and face-to-face contact with the child made, within the timeframes established by agency policies or State statute.

**Table 2.**

Rating	Item 1	Item 2
<i>Strength</i>	20% (6)	23% (7)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	7% (2)	0% (0)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	73% (22)	77% (23)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>75% (6)</b>	<b>100% (7)</b>

**Item 2: Repeat maltreatment**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if any child in the family experienced repeat maltreatment within a 6-month period.

***Safety Outcome 2: Children are Safely Maintained in Their Homes Whenever Possible and Appropriate***

Two *items* are included under Safety Outcome 2. Ratings for the *items* are shown in Table 3.

**Item 3: Services to family**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children’s entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

**Table 3.**

Rating	Item 3	Item 4
<i>Strength</i>	23% (7)	23% (7)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	50% (15)	77% (23)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	27% (8)	0% (0)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>31.8% (7)</b>	<b>23.3% (7)</b>

**Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

***Permanency Outcome 1: Children Have Permanency and Stability in Their Living Situations***

Six *items* are included under Permanency Outcome 1. Ratings for the *items* are shown in Table 4.

**Item 5: Foster Care reentries**

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether children who entered foster care during the period under review were re-entering within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.

**Item 6: Stability of foster care placement**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interest of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goal(s).

**Item 7: Permanency goal for child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

**Item 8: Reunification, guardianship or permanent placement with relatives**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review, to achieve reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner.

**Item 9: Adoption**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made, or are being made, to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner.

**Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA)**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure:

- That the child is adequately prepared to make the transition from foster care to independent living (if it is expected that the child will remain in foster care until he or she reaches the age of majority or is emancipated).
- That the child, even though remaining in foster care, is in a “permanent” living arrangement with a foster parent or relative caregiver and that there is a commitment on the part of all parties involved that the child remain in that placement until he or she reaches the age of majority or is emancipated.
- That the child is in a long-term care facility and will remain in that facility until transition to an adult care facility.

Table 4.

Rating	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
Strength	20% (6)	20% (6)	7% (2)	10% (3)	7% (2)	3% (1)
Area needing improvement	0% (0)	30% (9)	43% (13)	20% (6)	13% (4)	7% (2)
Not Applicable	80% (24)	50% (15)	50% (15)	70% (21)	80% (24)	90% (27)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)
% Strengths	100% (6)	40% (6)	13.3% (2)	33.3% (3)	33.3% (2)	33.3%(1)

**Permanency Outcome 2: The Continuity of Family Relationships and Connections is Preserved for Children**

Six items are included under Permanency Outcome 2. Ratings for the items are shown in Table 5.

**Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that the child’s foster care placement was close enough to the parent(s) to facilitate face-to-face contact between the child and the parent(s) while the child was in foster care.

**Item 12: Placement with siblings**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

**Item 13: Visiting with parents & siblings in foster care**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father, and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child’s relationship with these close family members.

**Item 14: Preserving connections**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child’s connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, tribe, school, and friends.

**Item 15: Relative placement**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

**Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

Table 5.

Rating	Item 11	Item 12	Item 13	Item 14	Item 15	Item 16
<i>Strength</i>	30% (9)	20% (6)	3% (1)	30% (9)	10% (3)	7% (2)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	10% (3)	10% (3)	43% (13)	20% (6)	40% (12)	36% (11)
Not Applicable	60% (18)	70% (21)	54% (16)	50% (15)	50% (15)	57% (17)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>75% (9)</b>	<b>66.7% (6)</b>	<b>7.1% (1)</b>	<b>60% (9)</b>	<b>20% (3)</b>	<b>15.4% (2)</b>

**Well-Being Outcome 1: Families Have Enhanced Capacity to Provide for Their Children’s Needs**

Four items are included under Well-Being Outcome 1. Ratings for the items are shown in Table 6.

**Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents, and foster parents (both at the child’s entry into foster care [if the child entered during the period under review] or on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency’s involvement with the family, and provided the appropriate services.

**Item 18: Child & family involvement in case planning**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

**Item 19: Caseworker visits with the child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child and promote achievement of case goals.

**Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the children are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children and promote achievement of case goals.

**Table 6.**

Rating	Item 17	Item 18	Item 19	Item 20
<i>Strength</i>	3% (1)	10% (3)	43% (13)	3% (1)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	97% (29)	90% (27)	57% (17)	90% (27)
Not Applicable	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (2)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)	100% (30)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>3.3% (1)</b>	<b>10% (3)</b>	<b>43.3% (13)</b>	<b>3.6% (1)</b>

**Well-Being Outcome 2: Children Receive Appropriate Services to Meet Their Educational Needs**

One *item* is included under Well-Being Outcome 2. Ratings for the *item* are shown in Table 7.

**Item 21: Educational needs of child**

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children’s educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

**Table 7.**

Rating	Item 21
<i>Strength</i>	37% (11)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	16% (5)
Not Applicable	47% (14)
Total	100% (30)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>68.8% (11)</b>

**Well-Being Outcome 3: Children Receive Adequate Services to Meet Their Physical and Mental Health Needs**

Two *items* are included under Well-Being Outcome 3. Ratings for the *items* are shown in Table 8.

**Item 22: Physical health of child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the child, including dental health needs.

**Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the child(ren).

**Table 8.**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Item 22</b>	<b>Item 23</b>
<i>Strength</i>	40% (12)	23% (7)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	33% (10)	40% (12)
Not Applicable	27% (8)	37% (11)
Total	100% (30)	100% (30)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>54.5% (12)</b>	<b>36.8% (7)</b>

**Table 9. Richland County *Percent of Strengths* on 23 Quality Assurance Items Across Three Reviews**

Item	September 2012 (PUR 7-1-2011 to 6-30-2012)	October 2013 (PUR 10-1-2012 to 9-30-2013)	April 2014 (PUR 10-1-2013 to 3-31-2014)
1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations	40.0%	62.5%	75.0%
2. Reoccurrence of Maltreatment	75.0%	83.3%	100.0%
3. Services to Family	36.4%	35.0%	31.8%
4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	55.0%	43.3%	23.3%
5. Foster Care Re-Entries	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	90.0%	40.0%	40.0%
7. Permanency Goal for Child	20.0%	46.7%	13.3%
8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Perm. Placement with Relatives	50.0%	50.0%	33.3%
9. Adoption	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	66.7%	50.0%	33.3%
11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	100.0%	100.0%	75.0%
12. Placement with Siblings	66.7%	50.0%	66.7%
13. Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	50.0%	25.0%	7.1%
14. Preserving Connections	77.8%	53.3%	60.0%
15. Relative Placement	62.5%	20.0%	20.0%
16. Relationship of Child in Care with Parent	25.0%	45.5%	15.4%
17. Needs and Services for Child, Parents, and Caregivers	40.0%	30.0%	3.3%
18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	41.2%	35.7%	10.0%
19. Worker Visits with Child	65.0%	60.0%	43.3%
20. Worker Visits with Parents	14.3%	8.7%	3.6%
21. Educational Needs of the Child	83.3%	78.6%	68.8%
22. Physical Health of the Child	54.5%	43.5%	54.5%
23. Mental Health of the Child	88.9%	57.9%	36.8%

## SECTION II: FOSTER HOME LICENSE REVIEW

As part of the Quality Assurance Review Process in Richland County, ten Foster Home Licenses were randomly selected from the list of all licenses issued for the county during the period under review. These licenses are reviewed using the *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Foster Home License Review Instruments*. There is one instrument for issuance of initial licenses and another instrument for the renewal of licenses. Each instrument contains a section of deficiencies, namely agency oversight, data entry, and qualitative issues. Deficiencies noted in this section may not invalidate the license but still require attention and correction by county management. Each instrument includes the appropriate agency, state, and federal requirements.

Initial License review criteria include the following *items*:

- applications
- autobiography information
- financial information
- child factor's checklists
- initial home assessment studies
- references
- information related to firearms and ammunition in the house
- pet vaccination information
- background checks
- convictions
- required trainings
- medical reports
- fire inspections/re-inspections
- Disaster preparedness plans
- DHEC/Lead inspections
- alternative caregiver forms
- Central registry check on alternative caregiver, if applicable
- a review of any conflicts noted between file documents and CAPPS
- Discipline agreements
- Completion of the 1513 and issued prior to the license being issued
- Guidelines regarding in-ground swimming pools

Renewal License review criteria include the following *items*:

- convictions
- training hours
- medical reports if a new household member has been added or if there is a change in foster parent's medical status
- updated home studies
- discipline agreements
- fire inspections and drills
- quarterly home visits
- disaster preparedness plans
- FBI checks, if applicable
- Guidelines regarding in-ground swimming pools
- 1513 completed prior to issuance of the license
- Any amendments to the license, if applicable
- Documentation regarding if there are more than five children in the home
- annual firearms location update
- information concerning the alternative caregivers
- safety checks of alternative caregivers
- a review of child protective service allegations
- pet vaccination information
- a review of any regulatory infractions
- a review of any conflicts noted between file documents and CAPSS

Possible *deficiencies* found in Initial and Renewal cases include:

- updated home studies
- discipline agreements



- fire drills
- quarterly home visits
- disaster preparedness plans
- information concerning the alternative caregivers
- discipline agreements
- disaster preparedness plans
- alternative caregiver forms
- applications
- autobiography information
- financial information
- child factor's checklists
- initial home assessment studies
- references

Areas noted as having occurred as required on the assessment are rated as *strengths*. Those *items* that were not met are rated as an *area needing improvement (ANI)*. If the issue is not applicable, it is rated N/A.

Additionally, the percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for each *item*. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Results of the review are noted in Table 10.

## Foster Home Licensing Findings for Richland County

**Initial License Cases.** Three foster care issuances for initial/standard license were reviewed. One of the cases reviewed was rated as *ANI* because all of the licensing requirements were not met prior to authorization of the license renewal. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* for the one case include:

### Fire Safety

- Documentation did not verify the fire marshal conducted a fire inspection.

**Renewal License Cases.** Six of seven cases reviewed were rated as *ANI* because all of the licensing requirements were not met prior to authorization of the license renewal. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* for six cases include:

**Table 10. Summary of Ratings for Initial and Renewal Cases.**

Rating	Initial	Renewal
<i>Strength</i>	2 (66.7%)	1 (14.3%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	1 (33.3%)	6 (85.7%)
Total	3 (100%)	7 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>2 (66.7%)</b>	<b>1 (14.3%)</b>

### Background Checks:

- Central registry, SLED, sex offender registry checks, and/or FBI checks were not completed or were completed in an untimely manner.

### Fire Safety:

- All annual records for fire inspection verification were not located in the case file.

### Firearms:

- Documentation was unclear regarding whether there were firearms in the home, if they were stored appropriately, and if ammunition was stored separately.

### Training:

- The required 28 hours of training were not completed or could not be verified.

### Pet Vaccination Records:

- Pet vaccinations were not up-to-date or not on file.

**Deficiencies found in Initial and Renewal Cases.** Deficiencies were noted for nine of the ten files reviewed. Issues identified by the reviewers include:

### Initial Case Deficiencies

#### Safety:

- The Disaster Preparedness Plans were unsigned or updated in an untimely manner.

#### Training:

- Verification that the foster parents signed a Discipline Statement prior to the issuance of their license was unavailable.

## **Renewal Case Deficiencies**

### **Fire Drills:**

- Records did not include verification that fire drills were conducted within 24 hours of a child's placement.

### **Safety:**

- All Discipline Agreements were not located in the case file or were not signed.
- There was no documentation of quarterly home visits.
- All Disaster Preparedness Plans were not located in the case file.

### SECTION III: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE NO ACTION REPORTS REVIEW

A review of ten no action reports was completed to determine whether no action was taken on reports according to agency policy and procedures. The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports on which no action was taken by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review No Action Reports Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and eleven questions regarding the no action decisions and processes (see Table 11).

**Table 11. Summary of Item Ratings for No Action Reports Review**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	0	10	0	10
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	8	2	0	10
3a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	9	1	0	10
3b. Explanation given why allegation did not meet legal definition of maltreatment	4	4	2	10
4. Safety factors documented on Intake Assessment not discovered by intake worker	1	9	0	10
5. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	8	0	2	10
6a. Risk Matrix results included statements contradictory to allegation	5	3	2	10
6b. Risk Matrix results failed to include all statements that support allegation	3	5	2	10
7. Contact with necessary collaterals prior to screen-out decision	6	3	1	10
8. Another intake referral on same perpetrator and/or child within 12 months	1	9	0	10
9. Intake Supervisor ensured consultation with another supervisory-level authority	0	1	9	10

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 12.

**Table 12. Summary of Ratings for No Action Reports Review**

Rating	Was no action on this case according to agency policy?
<i>Strength</i>	3 (30%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	7 (70%)
Total	10 (100%)
% <i>Strengths</i>	<b>3 (30%)</b>

Seven of ten cases were inappropriately deemed to be no action per agency policy and procedure. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- The Risk Assessment was not utilized to make an appropriate decision to have a No Action on the intake.
- The maltreatment tab in CAPSS was not thoroughly completed, and no explanation was provided.
- The intake CPS assessment and the maltreatment tab provided inconsistent information or were contradictory.

- There was a lack of information and/or documentation to support results of the Risk Matrix.
- The intake worker indicated that the allegation met the legal definition of maltreatment, but the agency failed to accept the report.
- All appropriate collateral contacts were not made.
- There was a failure to search the CAPSS system for all reports on the family, identify safety factors, and thoroughly complete the Risk Assessment.

## SECTION IV: FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES REVIEW

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether the report was referred to Family Support Services according to agency policy and procedures. The report was randomly selected from the list of reports referred to a Community-Based Prevention Services Provider by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Screen-Out Report Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and twelve questions regarding the referral to the Family Strengthening Services (FSS) Community-Based Prevention Services Provider and processes (see Table 13).

**Table 13. Summary of Item Ratings for Assessment**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	1	4	0	5
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	5	0	0	5
3a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	4	1	0	5
3b. Explanation for “no” in maltreatment tab	1	3	1	5
4. Existing Safety Factors not seen by intake worker or documented	2	3	0	5
5. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	5	0	0	5
6a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	5	0	0	5
6b. Did results fail to include statements to support allegations made by reporter	3	2	0	5
7. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services	1	3	1	5
8. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	1	4	0	5
9. Family received community-based prevention services	1	0	4	5
10. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 14.

**Table 14. Summary of Ratings for Family Strengthening Services Review**

Rating	Was this case referred according to agency policy?
<i>Strength</i>	0 (0%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	5 (100%)
Total	5 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>0 (0%)</b>

All five cases reviewed were determined to be inappropriately referred by agency policy and procedure. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- There was no documentation to indicate that the agency made collateral contacts assessing the welfare of the child.
- Documentation indicated that the allegation failed to meet the legal definition of child maltreatment, but no explanation was provided.

- The Risk Matrix included statements that could not be verified or were contradictory to the allegations made by current and previous reporters.
- The agency failed to identify all safety factors and/or risk factors related to the intake.

**SECTION V: VOLUNTARY CASE MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether the reports were referred to Voluntary Case Management according to agency policy and procedures. The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports referred to a Community-Based Prevention Services Provider by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Screen-Out Report Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and ten regarding the referral to the Voluntary Case Management (VCM) Community-Based Prevention Services Provider and processes (see Table 15).

**Table 15. Summary of Item Ratings for Assessment**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	0	5	0	5
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	5	0	0	5
3a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	5	0	0	5
3b. Explanation for allegation not meeting the legal definition of maltreatment	4	1	0	5
4. Existing Safety Factors not seen by intake worker or documented	0	5	0	5
5. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	5	0	0	5
6a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	3	2	0	5
6b. Risk Matrix did not include statements that supported allegations	2	3	0	5
7. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services	1	2	2	5
8. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	0	5	0	5
9. Family received community-based prevention services	0	0	5	5
10. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	4	1	0	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 16.

**Table 16. Summary of Ratings for Screen-Outs Review**

Rating	Was this case referred according to agency policy?
<i>Strength</i>	1 (20%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	4 (80%)
Total	5 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>1 (20%)</b>

Four cases were determined to be inappropriately referred by VCM agency policy and procedure. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- The Risk Matrix included statements that were not supported by the report.
- The agency failed to contact all collaterals.
- All safety factors related to the intake were not identified.
- No explanation of where the information for the risk assessment came from was provided, and all risk assessments pertaining to the intake were not documented.



## SECTION VI: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES UNFOUNDED REPORTS REVIEW

Five unfounded reports were reviewed to determine whether the reports were unfounded in accordance with agency policy and procedures. The five unfounded reports were randomly selected from the list of all reports unfounded by the county during the period under review. The review was conducted using the *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Unfounded Report Instrument*. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and items regarding three primary areas (see Table 17):

- Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment,
- Repeat maltreatment, and
- Risk assessment and safety management.

**Table 17. Summary of Item Ratings for Unfounded Review**

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
1A. Investigation not initiated in accordance with timeframes and requirements	4	1	0	5
1B. Face-to-face contact not made in accordance with timeframes and requirements	5	0	0	5
1C. Delays in investigation initiation or face-to-face contact beyond control of agency	0	5	0	5
2A. At least one substantiated or indicated maltreatment report	0	5	0	5
2B. One substantiated or indicated maltreatment report within six months before or after	0	0	5	5
2C. Repeat maltreatment involving the same or similar circumstances	0	0	5	5
3A. Initial assessment of risk to the children and family in the home	3	2	0	5
3B. Ongoing assessment(s) of risk to the children and family in the home	0	5	0	5
3C. Safety concerns that were not adequately or appropriately addressed by the agency	5	0	0	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each decision to unfound. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 18.

**Table 18. Summary of Ratings for Unfounded Review**

Rating	Were cases unfounded according to agency policy?
<i>Strength</i>	0 (0%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	5 (100%)
Total	5 (100%)
% <i>Strengths</i>	<b>0 (0%)</b>

Reasons that five unfounded cases reviewed violated agency policy and procedure include:

- Risk assessments with children in the home were inadequate or not ongoing.
- Parents and caregivers were not appropriately assessed.
- The agency failed to make collateral contacts.
- Documentation in the case file or in CAPSS was inadequate.
- Initial contact with the victim child was not made in a timely manner.

## **APPENDIX 1. SUMMARY OF ISSUES CAUSING AREA OF NEEDED IMPROVEMENT (ANI) RATINGS FOR APPLICABLE CASES**

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses that were found in the cases for Richland County during the review conducted April 14-18, 2014. The period under review was October 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

### **Positives:**

*Items 2 (Repeat Maltreatment) and 5 (Foster Care reentries)* were identified as *strengths* of the agency; all applicable cases reviewed were rated as *strength* with no *area needing improvement* (ANI).

### **Concerns:**

The following examines the *items* that had the highest negative ratings.

- *Item 3 (Services to family)* - 15 of 22 (68.2%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to provide appropriate services to the family to prevent the child(ren) from entering foster care. (10 cases)
  - The agency failed to assess the safety-related needs of the maternal grandmother. (1 case)
  - Concerted efforts were not made by the agency to provide timely safety related services to a mother. (2 cases)
  - Concerted efforts were not made by the agency to provide services to a mother to protect the minor children. (2 cases)
  
- *Item 4 (Risk assessment and safety management)* - 23 of 30 (76.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns of the household. (16 cases)
    - The agency failed to address the need of the child(ren). (13 cases)
    - The agency assessed but failed to address the needs of the guardian. (1 case)
    - The mother's home was not assessed for risk and safety. (1 case)
    - The mother was not assessed for risk and safety. (1 case)
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to assess the household on an ongoing basis. (7 cases)

- The risk and safety assessment was not thorough and failed to include an assessment of adult family members who resided in the home. (1 case)
  - The following were not assessed on an ongoing basis:
    - Mother (1 case)
    - Father (1 case)
    - Children (6 cases)
  - Background checks were not conducted on the following individuals:
    - Maternal grandparents and the mother’s paramour (1 case)
    - Father of a newborn (1 case)
- *Item 6 (Stability of foster care cases)* – 9 of 15 (60%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The target child experienced multiple placements during the PUR. (5 cases)  
Cases that provided a specific number of placements included the following totals:
    - Two placements (2 cases)
    - Three placements (1 case)
    - Seven placements (1 case)
  - The target child’s placement at the end of the PUR was a temporary shelter. (2 cases)
  - The agency did not match the target child with a placement that could meet his needs. (1 case)
  - An explanation supporting the placement of a 10 year old child in a group home setting was unavailable. (1 case)
- *Item 7 (Permanency goal for child)* – 13 of 15 (86.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The permanency goal was not established in a timely manner. (6 cases)  
Cases that provided specific reasoning noted the following issues:
    - The agency failed to establish the first permanency goal within 60 days from the date the target child entered into foster care. (1 case)
    - The goal of adoption was not established for 22 months. (1 case)
    - The target child’s permanency goal was “Not Yet Established” in CAPSS during the PUR. (1 case)
  - The permanency goal was not specified in documentation. (3 cases)
  - The permanency goal was not appropriate for the target child. (4 cases)
- *Item 8 (Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives)* – 6 of 9 (66.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the goal of reunification during the PUR. (3 cases)
- The agency did not achieve the goal of reunification in a timely manner. (3 cases)
- *Item 9 (Adoption) – 4 of 6 (66.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve adoption in a timely manner. (4 cases) Cases that provided specific reasoning noted the following issues:
    - The agency did not have an adoption assessment completed until four months after the agency established the concurrent goal. (1 case)
    - The agency did not make concerted efforts to finalize the adoption in 24 months. (1 case)
- *Item 10 (Other planned permanent living arrangement) – 2 of 3 (66.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - Concerted efforts were not made to achieve the goal of other planned permanent living arrangements. (2 cases)
  - Efforts were not made by the agency to provide the target child with an appropriate range of independent living skills. (1 case)
- *Item 13 (Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care) – 13 of 14 (92.9%) applicable cases rated as ANI*
  - The frequency of the visits was not sufficient. (11 cases) Specific members of the family that were impacted include:
    - Mother (9 cases)
    - Sibling(s) (5 cases)
    - Father (6 cases)
  - The quality of the visits was not sufficient. (8 cases) Specific members of the family that were impacted include:
    - Mother (6 cases)
    - Sibling(s) (5 cases)
    - Father (2 cases)
- *Item 15 (Relative placement) – 12 of 15 (80%) applicable cases rated as ANI*

- The agency failed to make concerted efforts to identify, locate, and evaluate relatives as potential placements for the target child. (12 cases) Potential placements included:
  - Maternal and paternal relatives (8 cases)
  - Maternal relatives (2 cases)
  - Paternal relatives (2 cases)
  
- *Item 16 (Relationship of child in care with parents)* – 11 of 13 (84.6%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote, support, and maintain positive relationships between the child and family. (10 cases) Specific relationships affected include:
    - Child and mother (7 cases)
    - Child and father (3 cases)
    - Child and parents (2 cases)
  - Details of the agency’s efforts were not documented. (1 case)
  
- *Item 17 (Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents)* – 29 of 30 (96.7%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency failed to assess and address needs of members of the family. (24 cases)
    - Mother (6 cases)
    - Father (10 cases)
    - Parents (1 case)
    - Child(ren) (4 cases)
    - Foster parents (2 cases)
    - Father’s paramour (1 case)
  - The foster parent’s assessment was not documented. (1 case)
  - The agency did not provide services to enhance the foster parents’ capabilities to stabilize the target child’s placements. (3 cases)
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to address the needs and provide services for the following people in a timely manner: (3 cases)
    - Mothers (3 cases)
    - Father (1 case)
  - The agency did not provide initial and/or ongoing assessments to continually address the needs of the family. (12 cases)
    - Mothers (6 cases)
    - Fathers (6 cases)

- Target child (1 case)
  - The agency did not make efforts to locate the father. (3 cases)
- *Item 18 (Child & family involvement in case planning)* – 27 of 30 (90%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to involve the following people in the case planning process: (27 cases)
    - Fathers (11 cases)
    - Mothers (7 cases)
    - Parents (8 cases)
    - Target child(ren) (5 cases)
    - Father’s paramour (1 case)
    - Guardian (1 case)
- *Item 19 (Caseworker visits with child)* – 17 of 30 (56.7%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The frequency of the visits was insufficient. (13 cases)
  - The quality of the visits was insufficient. (6 cases)
    - The agency did not visit with the target child(ren) alone for a portion of each visit. (2 cases)
- *Item 20 (Caseworker visits with parents)* – 27 of 28 (96.4%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The frequency and quality of the visits was insufficient. (20 cases)
    - The agency specifically did not meet with the following:
      - Fathers (14 cases)
      - Mothers (14 cases)
      - Parents (1 case)
  - The quality of the visits was insufficient. (13 cases)
    - The agency specifically did not meet with the following:
      - Mothers (7 cases)
      - Fathers (5 cases)
      - Guardian (1 case)
      - Parent (1 case)
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to locate the father. (2 cases)
- *Item 23 (Mental/behavioral health of child)* – 12 of 19 (63.2%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*

- Mental health records were not in case files. (6 cases) Cases that mentioned specific missing records in the file included the following:
  - Progress notes were not in the case file. (1 case)
  - Evidence of direct contact was not found. (1 case)
- Mental/behavioral needs were not assessed or addressed. (6 cases)
- Mental health assessments were not ongoing. (2 cases)