



State of South Carolina

Department of Social Services

Policies and Guidelines: Child Welfare Services

Title	Recognizing and Serving Child Trafficking Victims
Document No.	1600
Amendment No.	1600-26.2
Authority	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (P.L. 115-271); Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (P.L. 114-22); Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (P.L. 113-183); 42 USC Section 671(a)(35)(B), S.C. Code Section 63-7-20(6)(b); S.C. Code Section 63-11-2400 through 2420, and S.C. Code Section 16-3-2010
Standards	Guiding Principles and Standards (GPS) Practice Model
Application	All Child Welfare Programs
Purpose	
To explain policies and guidelines for the identification and assessment of youth who are known, or suspected of being sex or labor trafficking victims and promoting a safety network through internal and external engagement that supports and provides trauma-informed services that create stability for the victim youth and families impacted by child trafficking.	
Policy Statement	
Child Welfare Services (CWS) staff identify and assess incidents involving youth who are known or suspected to be victims of human trafficking. CWS staff respond to cases of human trafficking, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking, involving persons under the age of eighteen regardless of the identity of the perpetrator. Identifying a youth as a victim of human trafficking does not create a presumption that the parent, guardian, or person responsible for the youth's welfare abused, neglected, or harmed the youth. Intake case managers shall inform law enforcement within 24 hours of accepting a report of human trafficking for investigation. CWS case managers coordinate with law enforcement, juvenile justice, and service providers to provide comprehensive services for youth who are human trafficking victims.	
Policy Administration	
The Division of Child Welfare Services' Office of Safety is the owner of this policy. The Safety Director, or designee, shall review this policy annually from the date published in the Child Welfare Services Policy Manual, or as needed due to changes in law or practice.	
Policy Guidelines	
A. Investigations Responsibilities	1. When a report alleging human trafficking is accepted for investigation based on the criteria outlined in Policy 200: Child Welfare Services Intake, initial contact shall be completed within the assigned response timeframe. Report the allegations to local law enforcement within 24 hours of accepting the report. 2. Investigations shall be completed in accordance with Policy 301: Child Welfare Services Investigations.

Subject: Recognizing and Serving Child Trafficking Victims

- a. Investigations case managers must assess the family using the Family Advocacy and Support Tool (FAST) and [DSS Form 1544: Child Trafficking Screening Tool](#). The assessment shall include all household members and individuals listed on the intake report. Reference [Work Aid 16.2 Trafficking Screening Tool](#).
- b. Verify that a report was made to law enforcement within 24 hours of accepting the report in accordance with [Policy 301: Child Welfare Services Investigations](#). Coordinate all aspects of the investigation with law enforcement.
- c. Case managers conduct minimal fact-finding interviews with suspected trafficked youth using [DSS Resource 1539: Questions to Consider](#). When assessing for all other safety and risk concerns utilize [Work Aid 3.4: Conducting Interviews](#).
- d. The youth may not self-identify; however, case managers gather information to determine whether an exchange or anything of value was given, promised, or received. A youth is a victim of human trafficking if a person recruited, enticed, solicited, isolated, harbored, transported, provided, obtained, or attempted to obtain a youth for the purpose of sex trafficking or labor trafficking, through any means or if any person benefited from a business venture that engaged in such activities.
- e. In the investigation of any known or suspected crime against a youth, a multi-disciplinary team must follow the [S.C. Child Abuse Response Protocol](#) developed by the S.C. Children's Justice Act Task Force and the S.C. Network of Children's Advocacy Centers. Thus, case managers shall reference the [South Carolina Child Abuse Response Protocol](#) for all cases suspected or confirmed of human trafficking to promote a multidisciplinary approach throughout agency involvement.
- f. If attempts to make initial contact within the assigned timeframe are unsuccessful, conduct concerted efforts throughout the investigation to locate the family as outlined in [Work Aid 3.2: Concerted Efforts to Locate Families](#).
- g. If the youth is a resident of another state, notify the appropriate regional Anti-Trafficking Coordinator to coordinate the youth's return home and services.
- h. Case managers shall document in CAPSS via the "Characteristic" section of the "Person" screen if the youth was not initially identified as a victim of child trafficking.
- i. Complete case consultation using [Work Aid 16.21: Case Consultations for Trafficked Youth](#).

Note: Investigations conducted by Out of Home Abuse and Neglect (OHAN) case managers follow the guidelines above and are supported by [Policy 1300: Out of Home Abuse and Neglect Investigations](#).

Subject: Recognizing and Serving Child Trafficking Victims

B. Family Preservation Responsibilities	Family preservation case managers shall follow policies and guidelines outlined in the family preservation policies for case management and treatment protocol guidance: 1. Case managers shall monitor service progress, identify service gaps, and strategize possible referrals to new providers. 2. The case manager shall recognize the impact trauma may have on the youth by applying trauma-informed services. 3. Case managers shall continue to assess for signs of revictimization. Refer to the Child Trafficking Screening Tool to identify any indicators of child trafficking. 4. Case managers shall complete, at a minimum, monthly face to face contact with the identified victim using the Service Intensity Chart and FAST assessment. 5. Case managers shall identify a safety plan and discuss it at every visit with the victim. 6. If a youth was not initially identified as a human trafficking victim, in the CAPSS "Characteristic" section of the "Person" screen at case opening, case managers shall document this identification in CAPSS. 7. Case managers shall continue engagement with law enforcement throughout the life of the case. 8. If new concerns or incidents of trafficking arise, the case manager shall notify their team leader, complete a new intake for trafficking, and report to law enforcement within 24 hours. 9. Reference Work Aid 16.21: Case Consultations for Trafficked Youth for case consultation procedures.
C. Foster Care and Adoptions Responsibilities	1. Foster care and child welfare permanency specialist case managers shall follow policies and guidelines outlined in Chapter 5: Foster Care for case management and treatment protocol guidance. 2. Case managers shall: a. Review the "Person" screen to make sure the youth is identified as a human trafficking victim. If not, the case manager shall document this identification in CAPSS in the "Person" screen in the "Characteristic" section; b. Utilize the CANS to assess for level of care and appropriate services; c. Assess all placement options, giving priority to kinship placements; d. Collaborate with the Department of Juvenile Justice, Child Advocacy Center (CAC), South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED), and other provider agencies staff that support the youth to enhance service identification and coordination; and

Subject: Recognizing and Serving Child Trafficking Victims

	e. Follow all court orders. 3. If new concerns or incidents of trafficking arise, the case manager shall notify their team leader, complete a new intake for trafficking, and report to law enforcement within 24 hours. 4. Reference Work Aid 16.21: Case Consultations for Trafficked Youth for case consultation procedures.
D. Team Leader Responsibilities	1. The CWS team leader shall contact the Anti-Trafficking Unit whenever a case consultation is needed and complete the following: a. Provide support and guidance throughout the life of the case; b. Follow up with the case manager to confirm local law enforcement was notified; c. Confirm with the case manager that the S.C. Child Abuse Response Protocol is being followed; d. Conduct all case consultations in accordance with policy; e. Participate in interagency staffings and multidisciplinary team meetings; f. Review DSS Form 1544: Child Trafficking Screening Tool for next steps; and g. Review the FAST, specifically additional items for the victimization/exploitation indicator, and the CANS Commercially Sexually Exploited Module. 2. If new concerns or incidents of trafficking arise, the team leader shall confirm a new intake is reported and law enforcement notified.
E. Abducted and Runaway Youth	1. Family preservation, foster care, and permanency specialists shall complete the following steps if a youth known or suspected of being a human trafficking victim is abducted, missing, or runs away: a. Immediately, but no later than 24 hours after being informed a youth is missing or has run away, report to law enforcement for entry into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database of the FBI, and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). To the extent possible, the report to law enforcement shall include: i. A photo of the youth; ii. A description of the youth's physical features, such as height, weight, sex, ethnicity, race, hair color, and eye color; and iii. Endangerment information, such as the youth's pregnancy status, prescription medications, suicidal tendencies, vulnerability to being trafficked, and other health or risk factors. b. Maintain regular communication with law enforcement and the NCMEC in efforts to provide a safe recovery, including

Subject: Recognizing and Serving Child Trafficking Victims

	sharing information pertaining to the youth's recovery and circumstances related to the recovery. c. Send an email alert to childtrafficking@dss.sc.gov. The email should include the following information (if applicable): - Youth's name; - Age; - Date missing (estimated); - Last location known; and - Family Case ID number (if applicable). d. Obtain NCIC number of the youth; e. Follow up with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC); and f. Reach out to the Anti-Trafficking Unit if assistance is needed to contact NCMEC. 2. See Policy 580: Missing or Abducted Children Response for more information. 3. Investigations and family preservation case managers shall assist parents or caregivers through the process for reporting a missing or suspected sex or labor trafficked youth.
F. Recovery Process for Youth Impacted by Trafficking	1. The case manager shall determine immediately if a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) exam should be conducted. Reference Work Aid 16.1: Referral for SANE Exam. 2. Upon recovering a youth who has been previously identified as a survivor of trafficking or if there are trafficking concerns, the case manager shall complete DSS Form 1544: Child Trafficking Screening Tool and notify the DSS Anti-Trafficking Unit of the youth's recovery status by sending an email to childtrafficking@dss.sc.gov. The email must include the following: - Youth's name; - Age; - Date of recovery; - Location of recovery; and - Family Case ID (if applicable, notify law enforcement, if not already notified).
G. Youth Who Are Not Citizens or "Qualified Aliens"	In addition to the following the guidelines outlined in this policy, the case manager shall reference Policy 1645: Service Needs of Non-Citizen Minors and engage the Regional Non-Citizen Advocates for additional guidance.
H. Case Closure	1. All cases must be staffed with the county attorney before the end of the investigation time frame and case determinations must be completed in accordance with agency policies and guidelines within 45 days, with the possibility of a 15-day extension upon a showing of good cause. 2. For indicated cases, under the determination tab, maltreatment shall be selected for Sex Trafficking or Labor Trafficking,

Subject: Recognizing and Serving Child Trafficking Victims

	or both, as applicable. 3. When a case has been indicated, it transfers in accordance with policy to family preservation services or foster care if the minor entered custody. 4. Case managers shall reference the following for case closure protocol: a. Policy 401: Case Closure and Ending Family Preservation Services; and b. Policy 560: Termination of Foster Care Services.
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Forms and Related Documents	DSS Resource 1539: Questions to Consider DSS Form 1544: Child Trafficking Screening Tool DSS Form 3062: Team Leader Case Consultation South Carolina Child Abuse Response Protocol DSS Poster 37159: Identifying and Serving Child Trafficking Victims
Related Management Reports	N/A

Glossary	
At-Risk: means individuals who present with conditions associated with vulnerability to human trafficking, including but not limited to: • Exposure to forms of violence, including child abuse, sexual abuse, interpersonal violence, sexual assault, community violence, and gang violence. • Disconnection from stable support networks, including chronic runaway youth, unaccompanied minors, homeless youth, and people displaced by natural disasters. • Placement instability. • Untreated or undertreated mental health conditions or substance use disorders. • Educational disengagement, truancy, or chronic absenteeism. • Involvement with the juvenile justice system. • Caregiver related risk factors, including domestic violence, substance use disorders, or a caregiver's own history of exploitation. Sex Trafficking: means the soliciting, transporting, patronizing, providing, enticing, recruiting, harboring, or transporting of a person into a commercial sex act for the benefit of another person. For youth under the age of 18, force, fraud, coercion, or inclusion of a third party are not required. No youth under the age of 18 can consent to commercial sex. Labor Trafficking: includes 1) forced labor: any type of labor or services performed or provided by a person rendered through another person's coercion of the person providing the labor or services; 2) involuntary servitude: a condition of servitude induced through coercion; or 3) debt bondage: the status or condition of a debtor arising from a pledge by the debtor of his personal services or those of a person under his control as a security for debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied toward the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined or if the principal amount of the debt does not reasonably reflect the value of the items or services for which the debt was incurred.	

Subject: Recognizing and Serving Child Trafficking Victims

Commercial Sex Act: any sex act for which anything of value is given, promised, or received, directly or indirectly, by any person.

Minimal Fact-Finding Interviews: interviews that address allegations by gathering just enough information to determine the next steps without compromising the integrity of the youth's testimony, with the goal of minimizing trauma to the youth and to avoid multiple interviews.

Critical Juncture: critical points in a case which include, but are not limited to, the following: failure of safety service, new allegations, decision to return youth to their home, escalation of safety concerns, or need for court involvement.

Noncitizen: a person who is not lawfully present within the United States because the person is not a United States citizen as demonstrated by the lack of a U.S. Birth Certificate, U.S. Passport, or Certificate of Citizenship/Naturalization or who is not a "qualified alien" as defined in 8 USC Section 1641(b) and (c).