



State of South Carolina
Department of Social Services

Work Aid 13.1: Safety Response and Monitoring

Supplemental to DSS Child Welfare, [Chapter 13 Out of Home Abuse and Neglect \(OHAN\)](#)

DSS Policy: [1300 Investigation of Foster Homes, Residential Institutions and Child Care Facilities](#)

A. Safety Response Team Members	1. DSS Directors of Child Welfare Operations, Safety Management, Permanency Management, and Child Health and Well-Being. 2. The Director of Child Welfare Licensing. 3. The Director of OHAN and OHAN supervisors. 4. The Director of Contract Monitoring when a contract is in existence with the provider. 5. The Safety Response Coordinator 6. The DSS Supervisor and Licensing Consultant when reviewing congregate care agencies. 7. The DSS Supervisor and Licensing Consultant when reviewing foster homes managed by child placing agencies. 8. The DSS Foster Home Licensing Support worker when reviewing foster homes managed by DSS. 9. The OHAN Investigator(s) assigned to the investigations being reviewed. 10. DSS Staff from the county or region may be invited as deemed appropriate for the foster home or facility being reviewed.
B. Safety Response Initial Team Meeting Criteria	1. OHAN reviews six months of referral data to identify providers who have received three accepted reports of abuse or neglect during that six-month period. 2. The Safety Response Coordinator monitors all critical incident reports received from providers and if a trend is observed, refers the provider for review by the Safety Response Team. Identified providers are then added to the Safety Response and Monitoring Team meeting schedule. 3. The Response Coordinator staffs the referral. 4. If the team coordinator issues a corrective action plan to a provider, a copy of the corrective action plan is provided to the Safety Response

	Coordinator. The Safety Response Coordinator staffs the corrective action plan with the Director of OHAN who then determines if the provider will be referred for review by the Safety Response Team.
C. Ongoing Team Meeting Criteria and Objectives	1. Identified members meet twice monthly to discuss providers who meet the established criteria in Section B. One meeting during the month is specific to foster homes and the second meeting is specific to group homes. a. Meetings focus on recent observations of safety concerns on provider campuses or in foster homes as well as the collective impact of OHAN referrals on the overall safety of children placed with the provider. b. Participants share relevant experiences, case documentation, and reports relevant to the concerns discussed. c. When immediate action is needed, the team identifies and develops a plan for appropriate next steps, including, but not limited to collection of additional information; follow-up visits to address concerns with provider leaders; a meeting between provider leadership and DSS leadership to discuss problematic practices or policies; provision of targeted coaching or technical assistance; suspension of admissions; or any combination of steps. 2. The team cumulatively tracks providers reviewed, determinations made, and actions taken to respond to identified concerns. 3. Every six months, the team reviews a summary of concerns staffed and actions taken to confirm follow-through with recommendations and resolution of noted concerns. The team follows up with providers to address outstanding concerns. 4. Every six months, the team reviews 12 months of referral information to assess trends that might be missed in a shorter timeframe. The team shares trends with applicable providers during individual meetings and identifies proactive measures to further improve quality services. 5. As the process is implemented, the team continually evaluates the need for changes and improvements to include identification of additional referral sources, tracking, outcome data, and contributing factors.
D. Safety Response Contact and Monitoring Criteria	1. The Director of Permanency Management or designee contacts providers to discuss safety responses to the issues that have been reported. 2. If contact with a parent or caregiver is needed and the provider is being investigated by OHAN, OHAN will make the contact. If the provider is not being investigated by OHAN, the Director of Permanency Management or designee will identify a SCDSS staff member to make the notification. 3. If the Safety Response Team determines all children residing with the provider need to be interviewed, the following steps occur:

	a. CPS Investigations conducts interviews within 24 hours using standardized interview questions. If during the interviews a child or youth states they do not feel safe remaining in the provider's care, the following occur: i. If the child or youth is the identified victim or sustained injuries due to the incident, a new placement is identified, and the child or youth is moved within 24 hours. ii. If any child or youth not directly involved in the incident does not feel safe, a permanency staffing occurs within two business days to determine placement needs. b. CPS Investigators submit a written summary of the interviews within 24 hours of completion. c. CPS Investigators will make a referral to the Intake HUB immediately if allegations of abuse or neglect are disclosed in the interviews. 4. The Safety Response Team or Director of Permanency Management determines whether to suspend placements with a provider based on the following criteria: a. Lack of response from the provider; b. Severity of allegation of abuse or neglect; c. Frequency of allegation of abuse or neglect; d. Duration of allegation of abuse or neglect; e. Systemic problems; and f. Concerns identified from other involved parties. 5. The Safety Response Team or Director of Permanency Management determines whether to lift or adjust placement suspensions after considering the following: a. Outcome of the OHAN investigation; b. Whether new OHAN reports have been received; c. Corrective Action Plan compliance; d. Implementation of new or additional measures for sustainability of programming; and e. Readiness for gradual increase of census.
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