

SUMMARY: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW Of a Critical Injury of Children Known to the Director

Circumstances of the Critical Injuries

The review included an examination of case files and a discussion with the involved staff for two Indigenous children who were critically injured from witnessing their care provider overdose on illicit drugs. The Director was providing services to the children and their family at the time of the critical injury in relation to concerns of neglect by their parent.

Findings

Prior to the time period under review, the children had been in the care of the Director. After extensive assessment and planning that addressed safety, family and cultural stability, a court order transferred custody of the children to an extended family member, and the parent was supported to address concerns so that the children could return to the parent's care.

The extended family member's court ordered temporary custody of the children included conditions for the family member to address the children's needs. Numerous child neglect reports about the extended family placement prompted the provision of extensive supports yet, the reports about the children being neglected continued and they were not brought into the care of the Director.

Two Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) were involved with the children and their family. One SDA assessed the concerns regarding the children's safety and well-being, and the other SDA supported their placement with the extended family member. There was limited collaboration between the two SDAs. The absence of joint case management and not reviewing historical case records contributed to the reports of the children's neglect being assessed as isolated incidents, which affected safety planning.

Prior to the case review being finalized, the staff from one of the SDAs received information and guidance on how to interpret and apply the Case Transfer Policy. This SDA also contracted with an Elder to give support and guidance to staff who provide services to Indigenous children.

Actions

The Ministry's Quality Assurance Team facilitated a discussion with the SDA leadership of both areas, resulting in an action plan to: develop a guiding document on how to

conduct joint case management between the two SDAs; review with team leaders the need to clarify roles when there are multiple staff and multiple SDAs involved in a case; and discuss with team leaders how to work with an extended family when they do not follow the conditions of a court order.

The review was completed in February 2019. The above action plan is due for full implementation in July 2019.