

Screening and Assessment of Caregivers and Care Providers in Contracted Care Settings Policy

Effective Date of Policy:

April 1, 2018

Amendment Date of Policy:

September 15, 2023

Policy Statement:

Caregivers and care providers can be approved to provide care for children and youth residing in contracted care settings after they successfully complete the screening and assessment process.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) screens the applicant, and any other adult who will have significant and unsupervised access to a child/youth residing in a contracted care setting (as per the definition in this policy), to determine whether they may pose a risk to a child/youth.

The Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS) service provider/contracted agency conducts a thorough assessment to determine if the applicant is capable of caring for children/youth and meeting their needs.

Definitions

Applicant: a person applying to be a SHSS care provider or contracted agency caregiver in a contracted care setting.

Child/youth residing in a contracted care setting means:

- children/youth in care residing in a staffed resource or sub-contracted family care home; and
- children/youth receiving services in an SHSS care setting, whether they are in care, not in care, or in an out-of-care arrangement, consistent with the SHSS policies.

Contracted agency: an agency that has a contract with a Director under the *Child and Family Community Service Act (CFCSA)* to provide care services to children/youth in care but does not include an SHSS service provider.

Contracted agency caregiver: includes a sub-contracted family care home caregiver and/or staffed resource caregiver, including child-care workers or support workers who provide care or support for children in care more than 4 hours per week, but does not include SHSS care providers. *(Note: this term does not apply to those already screened and assessed to work with children under other ministry programs such as Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) services, licensed childcare, or support service agreements).*

Contracted care setting: any place of service where care is provided to children and youth consistent with this policy, inclusive of SHSS care settings, staffed resource homes, and sub-contracted family care homes.

SHSS care provider: care providers employed by a SHSS service provider to provide day-to-day care and control of children/youth residing in a SHSS care setting. For the purposes of this policy, this also includes childcare workers or support workers who provide care or support for more than 4 hours per week to children/youth residing in a SHSS care setting. *(Note: this term does not apply to those already screened and assessed to work with children under other ministry programs such as CYSN services, licensed childcare, or support service agreements).*

SHSS service provider: specialized, bed-based service providers delivering one or more SHSS services on behalf of the Province. SHSS service providers provide contracted care but are distinguished from contracted agencies (per the definition in this policy) because of their distinct SHSS contracts, accountabilities, and service expectations. SHSS service providers can provide care for children/youth in care, not in care, and/or in an out-of-care arrangement, consistent with the SHSS policies.

Significant and unsupervised access includes:

- any adult (18 years of age and over) who resides or is visiting/staying overnight for more than 30 days in the sub-contracted family care home where the child/youth lives; and
- any adult in an intimate partner relationship with the caregiver who regularly visits/stays in the sub-contracted family care home where the child/youth lives.

Staffed resource caregiver: means a caregiver who is employed in a staffed resource managed by a contracted agency to provide day-to-day care and control of children/youth in care, in the resource and/or out in the community. This includes those employed by the agency on a relief basis, but does not include SHSS care providers.

Sub-contracted family care home caregiver: means a caregiver who has a contract with a contracted agency to provide day-to-day care and control of children/youth in care in their own home or an agency provided home that is their residence. This includes those employed by the agency or employed by the sub-contracted family care home caregiver to provide relief or temporary care overnight.

Outcomes

- A child/youth residing in a contracted care setting is safe and their rights under s. 70 of the CFCSA are respected (regardless of whether the child is in care).
- A child/youth residing in a contracted care setting is cared for by SHSS care providers/contracted agency caregivers who support their developmental, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and physical needs.

- A comprehensive screening and approval process is completed on a SHSS care provider/contracted agency caregiver.
- A comprehensive screening process is completed on any adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child/youth residing in a sub-contracted family care home.

Standards

- 1.1 MCFD screens an applicant, and any other adult who will have significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child/youth residing in a sub-contracted family care home, to determine whether they may pose a risk to the child/youth.
- 1.2 MCFD considers the following information gathered through the screening process:
 - Verification that the applicant is 19 years of age or older;
 - An Initial Record Review and Detailed Record Review (IRR/DRR) of child welfare records;
 - A verified out of jurisdiction child welfare check from each jurisdiction outside British Columbia where the applicant, or any other adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child/youth residing in a sub-contracted family care home, resided for six months or more since the age of 18;
 - A combined criminal record check that includes a consolidated criminal record check (CCRC) and a *Criminal Records Review Act* (CRRRA) check, obtained by submitting a completed Consent for Disclosure of Criminal Record Information form CF0622B to the HUB; and
 - A verified out of jurisdiction criminal record check from each jurisdiction outside of Canada where an applicant, or any other adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child/youth residing in a sub-contracted family care home, resided for six months or more since the age of 18.
- 1.3 The SHSS service provider/contracted agency assesses an applicant to determine if they are capable of caring for a child/youth.
- 1.4 The SHSS service provider/contracted agency considers the following information gathered through the assessment process:
 - Three reference checks;
 - A thorough interview; and
 - For an applicant for a sub-contracted family care home, a home visit and a medical opinion from a licenced physician.

- 1.5 To ensure valid screening of the SHSS care provider/contracted agency caregiver and any adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child/youth residing in a sub-contracted family care home, the SHSS service provider/contracted agency:
- obtains and provides an updated consent form to MCFD every three years to conduct a combined criminal record check; and
 - requires the SHSS care provider/contracted agency caregiver to report any criminal charges that they, or any other adult with significant and unsupervised access to the child/youth, incur while employed.

Procedures

1. *Screening Process Completed by MCFD*

- To enable MCFD to conduct the screening process, the SHSS service provider/contracted agency provides MCFD, on behalf of the applicant and any adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child/youth residing in a sub-contracted family care home, with:
 - a Consent for Prior Contact Check: Initial Record Review and Detailed Record Review (Form CF0623B);
 - a Consent for Disclosure of Criminal Record Information form (CF0622B) for a combined criminal record check; and
 - a criminal record check from any jurisdiction outside of Canada, in which they resided for six months or more since the age of 18.
- MCFD considers the information gathered and determines if the applicant or any adult with significant and unsupervised access to a child/youth, may pose a risk to a child/youth.
- An out of jurisdiction child welfare check must be completed when the applicant has lived outside of British Columbia for a period of six months or more since the age of 18. If child welfare records cannot be obtained from a jurisdiction outside BC for an applicant, or if records cannot be obtained in a reasonable period of time, an exception can be made to this process. This exception must be approved by the HUB Director of Operations and documented along with the screening outcome. If the exception is needed regarding a jurisdiction outside of Canada, written verification from International Social Service Canada (ISSC) stating records cannot be obtained should also be included.
- If the applicant cannot obtain a criminal record check from another jurisdiction, or if records cannot be obtained in a reasonable period of time, an exception can be made if the SHSS service provider/contracted agency obtains the following documentation from the applicant and provides it to MCFD:
 - A signed written statement from the applicant stating:

- what efforts they made to obtain their criminal record check;
- why records cannot be obtained; and
- whether the applicant was convicted of a criminal offence in that jurisdiction.
- Any corroborating documentation from the applicant.
- MCFD documents the exception to obtaining a criminal record check from another jurisdiction along with the screening outcome.
- MCFD documents and communicates the decision to the SHSS service provider/contracted agency by providing a “screened in” or “screened out” response in the ICM Service Provider Portal.
- The SHSS service provider/contracted agency can commence their assessment process prior to receiving a “screened in” response from MCFD. However, the SHSS service provider/contracted agency cannot approve the applicant until they have received a “screened in” response.

2. Screening Process Completed by SHSS Service Provider/Contracted Agency

a. Sub-contracted Family Care Home Caregiver

i. Conducting Reference Checks

- The contracted agency conducts reference checks on the applicant.
- If the contracted agency is conducting a Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) assessment, it follows the process for conducting reference checks set out in www.SAFEhomestudy.org.
- If the contracted agency is not conducting a SAFE assessment, it obtains three references that:
 - include an opinion regarding the applicant’s ability to provide care to a child/youth;
 - may be verbal or written. If verbal, the contracted agency documents the information provided; and
 - one reference is from the applicant’s most recent employer. If the applicant cannot provide this reference, the contracted agency documents the reason why.

ii. Assessing Applicants Applying to be Sub-Contracted Family Care Home Caregivers

- If the contracted agency is licensed to use SAFE, the contracted agency uses SAFE to assess an applicant applying to be a sub-contracted family care home caregiver, following the process set out in www.SAFEhomestudy.org.

- If the contracted agency is not licensed to use SAFE, the agency assesses if the applicant is capable of caring for a child/youth by conducting the following:
 - a home visit, to ensure the physical environment meets the environment of care requirements in the [Standards for Foster Homes](#);
 - interview(s) with the applicant; and
 - requiring a medical opinion from a licensed physician.
- When conducting the interview of the applicant, the contracted agency covers their:
 - approach to caregiving children/youth (e.g., communication style, conflict resolution skills and appropriate discipline techniques);
 - resilience and ability to manage transitions;
 - education and employment history;
 - motivation for caregiving and availability;
 - knowledge of and attitudes towards cultural, social and spiritual diversity, especially related to Indigenous people and their distinct history;
 - previous caregiving experience;
 - family relationships and history (e.g., extended family, current and/or ex-spouse, children);
 - family dynamics (e.g., parenting styles, communication patterns, discipline, difficulties with applicant's children);
 - physical and social environment;
 - social supports and community involvement;
 - personal history (including childhood) and life changes;
 - emotional and psychological health;
 - history of any type of violence, abuse and criminal activity; and
 - health, mental health and addictions.
- When obtaining a medical opinion from a licensed physician:
 - The contracted agency provides the applicant with a form, requesting a licensed physician to provide a medical opinion on whether they are medically fit to provide care to children/youth.
 - If the physician notes any health concerns, the agency discusses the concerns with the applicant and requests further information from the physician, if necessary.

b. SHSS Care Provider or Staffed Resource Caregiver

i. Conducting Reference Checks

- The SHSS service provider/contracted agency conducts three reference checks on the applicant that:
 - include an opinion regarding the applicant's ability to provide care to a child/youth;
 - may be verbal or written. If verbal, the SHSS service provider/contracted agency documents the information provided; and
 - one reference is from the applicant's most recent employer. If the applicant cannot provide this reference, the SHSS service provider/contracted agency documents the reason why.

ii. Assessing Applicants Applying to be SHSS Care Providers/Staffed Resource Caregivers

- The SHSS service provider/contracted agency conducts an interview with an applicant applying to be a SHSS care provider/staffed resource caregiver that covers their:
 - approach to caregiving (e.g., communication style, conflict resolution skills and appropriate discipline techniques);
 - resilience and ability to manage transitions;
 - education and employment history;
 - motivation for caregiving and availability;
 - knowledge of and attitudes towards cultural, social and spiritual diversity, especially related to Indigenous people and their distinct history; and
 - previous caregiving experience with children/youth.

3. Decision to Hire an Applicant to Work in a Contracted Care Setting

- After receiving a "screened in" response from MCFD, the SHSS service provider/contracted agency may finalize their assessment process and employ an applicant in order for the applicant to participate in activities such as orientation, training and job shadowing in the contracted agency or SHSS service area.
- The applicant cannot be unsupervised (i.e., alone in a room) with children/youth until the applicant's combined criminal record check has been cleared.
- After all components of the screening and assessment have been completed and the SHSS service provider/contracted agency approves the applicant, the SHSS service provider/contracted agency must submit a self-report-audit-tool (SRAT) questionnaire within 30 days of the SHSS care provider/contracted agency caregiver's first unsupervised shift caring for children and youth.

- If the applicant is not hired as a result of a 'screened out' response, the SHSS service provider/contracted agency advises the applicant that they may contact the Ombudsperson if they are unsatisfied with the screening and assessment process.

4. *Renewing a SHSS Care Provider/Contracted Agency Caregiver's Combined Criminal Record Check*

- SHSS care providers/contracted agency caregivers are required to report any criminal charges or convictions laid against them, or any adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child/youth residing in a sub-contracted family care home, to the respective SHSS service provider or contracted agency.
- If a SHSS care provider/contracted agency caregiver, or any adult with significant and unsupervised access (as per the definition in this policy) to a child/youth residing in a sub-contracted family care home, reports an outstanding charge or conviction of a crime, the SHSS service provider/contracted agency will:
 - Submit to MCFD a new completed Consent for Disclosure of Criminal Record Information form (CF0622B) for a combined criminal record check of that SHSS care provider/contracted agency caregiver and/or any adult with significant and unsupervised access to a child/youth residing in a sub-contracted family care home.
 - If the SHSS care provider/contracted agency caregiver has a charge or conviction for a relevant offence under the CRRA, submit to the Criminal Record Review Program, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the SHSS care provider/contracted agency caregiver's consent for a new combined criminal record check.
- If a SHSS care provider/contracted agency caregiver has been charged or convicted of a crime and fails to meet the requirements of the MCFD screening process, they can no longer work as a SHSS care provider/contracted agency caregiver.
- The SHSS service provider/contracted agency requires that all SHSS care providers/contracted agency caregivers renew a combined criminal record check every three years, by submitting a Consent for Disclosure of Criminal Record Information form (CF0622B) to MCFD.