

SUMMARY: FILE REVIEW

Of the Death of a Child Known to the Ministry

A. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (the Ministry) conducted a File Review (FR) to examine case practice regarding the subject child (the child). The purpose of the FR was to: analyze practice in relation to legislation, policies and standards; promote excellence in assessment and planning; and, identify barriers to providing adequate services.

For the purposes of the FR, Ministry records and BC Coroners Service documents were reviewed. The FR focused on a specific period of Ministry involvement prior to the death of the child.

B. TERM(S) OF REFERENCE

1. Was the assessment of the child's safety and well-being, particularly in relation to domestic violence, consistent with relevant legislation, service standards, and policy?
2. Was a service plan developed, implemented, and monitored to adequately address the child's safety and well-being?

C. BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The Ministry had longstanding involvement with the parent's family during the parent's childhood. There were concerns related to domestic violence, parenting capacity, and substance misuse. The parent was living with the great grandparents when the Ministry became involved. However, the child's parent moved out prior to the fatality. The child was in the care of their parent when the fatality occurred. The child was Aboriginal.

D. FINDINGS

1. The assessment of the child's safety and well-being was not consistent with relevant legislation, service standards, and policy. The Ministry did not use the available tools to assess the safety of the child or establish a plan to support the parent prior to the fatality.
2. The Ministry did not develop, implement and monitor an appropriate service plan to address the safety and wellbeing of the child. Service planning was

inadequate as it was not informed by thorough assessments or developed according to existing Best Practices, Standards and Policy regarding Domestic Violence or Safe Sleeping. None of the identified practice concerns were related to the death of the child.

E. ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE

1. Monthly teleconferences occur between the Child Protection Team Leaders (TL) in the service delivery area and the Director of Practice (DOP) and consultants to review:
 - the use of Structured Decision Making (SDM) Tools (one tool per teleconference until all were covered) according to policy;
 - Safe Sleeping Practices;
 - response to cases involving domestic violence (DV) according to policy and best practice; and,
 - DV Guidelines, the revised DV curriculum, and DV Risk Factors.

The power-point presentations used for these teleconferences are saved in the regional electronic data base and are available as a resource to all TLs.

2. A process has been established for TLs to request a presentation regarding SDM tools by a practice consultant for their team at any time.
3. DV Safety Planning training was delivered in the Service Delivery Area as well as online DV Safety Planning training. Completion of this training is mandatory for all child welfare staff in the SDA. Newly hired staff are required to complete this online training as part of their delegation to practice under the *CFCSA*.
4. The involved Local Service Area (LSA) supported one staff member from the district office to attend a 2 day training session on Integrated Case Assessment Teams and Violence Against Women in Relationships; this person is now a resource in the LSA in this regard.
5. The Community Service Manager (CSM) in the involved LSA provides regular consultation for the TL. During these regular consultation meetings the TL reviews all cases that have been identified by the TL, CSM and DOP as critical, and the DOP is consulted as required.
6. The revised DV Guidelines (including Risk and Reintegration of Offending Parents Guidelines, ICAT and Protection Order Registry) were presented to staff provincially via Live Meeting.

F. ACTION PLAN

1. The policy procedures regarding the conclusion of a Family Development Response (FDR) and an Investigation (INV) are revised to ensure that prior to concluding the FDR/INV, all concerns that have been raised in the following stages/circumstances have been addressed:
 - the initial report;
 - any subsequent reports that have been associated as a memo to the same FDR/INV;
 - in collateral checks during the course of the FDR/INV; and,
 - via disclosures by the children or parents during the course of the FDR/INV.

This review was completed in November 2016. The above Action Plan is due for full implementation in June 2017.