

SUMMARY: FILE REVIEW

Of the Death of a Youth in the Care of the Ministry

A. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (the Ministry) conducted the File Review (FR) to examine the case practice and services provided to the subject youth (the youth).

For the purpose of the FR, Ministry records, policies, standards, guidelines, and legislation were reviewed. In addition, the out of province Child and Family Services Authority files were reviewed. The FR focused on a specific period of Ministry involvement prior to the death of the youth.

B. TERM(S) OF REFERENCE

1. Was the Ministry's assessment and planning, with regard to the youth's safety and well-being, consistent with the relevant legislation, policy and standards?
2. Did the Ministry follow the appropriate policy and guidelines for supporting and monitoring the youth's safety and well-being when the youth was residing outside the province?

C. BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The Ministry had longstanding involvement with the youth and family due to concerns about the youth's mental health, behaviors, parental substance use, and physical harm. The concerns could not be adequately resolved and the youth was brought into Ministry care on two separate occasions. The youth was not Aboriginal, and was in the care of the Ministry through an out of province agreement at the time of death.

D. FINDINGS

1. The assessment and planning for the youth's safety was partially consistent with legislation, policy and standards. The guardianship social worker made a significant connection to the youth. There was a care plan completed for this youth; however, the youth was not involved in the creation of the care plan, aside from noting the youth's desire to move provinces. The assessment of safety for this youth was not in accordance with standards. Several required Reportable Circumstance Reports were not completed. Had the reports been completed,

they could have led to a more fulsome care plan for this youth while residing out of province.

2. The Ministry partially adhered to the *Provincial/Territorial Protocol on Children and Families Moving between Provinces and Territories*. The social worker attempted to have an Interprovincial Agreement in place prior to the youth's relocation; however, the youth was not willing to delay the move to allow for the completion of the agreement. The social worker connected with the receiving province upon the youth's arrival and an Interprovincial Agreement was created that stated a coordinated care plan was to be created and reviewed for this youth every six months; this did not occur. The social worker maintained contact with the youth, and with staff at the shelters the youth frequented. The social worker requested approval to attend the receiving province to meet with the youth, as the receiving province was having difficulty engaging with the youth. A response to this request did not occur prior to the youth's death.

E. ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE

1. A new *Provincial/Territorial Protocol on Children, Youth and Families moving between Provinces and Territories* came into effect on April 1, 2016. This protocol identifies mechanisms for dispute resolution at the local and provincial/territorial levels within a 14-day period, as well as guidance on case management planning, and clarification of roles/responsibilities.
2. The Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for Service Delivery Division clarified that out of province travel requires Deputy Minister approval. In the event staff must travel outside of BC on an urgent basis to ensure the safety of a child, and Deputy Minister approval cannot be obtained prior to travel, Ministry staff may do so and obtain approval afterwards.

F. ACTION PLAN

1. The Director of Practice leads a discussion with the involved management team on the importance of:
 - Case planning and dispute resolution according to the April 2016 Provincial Protocol; and,
 - Care Plans for out-of province children in care using the new ICM documentation.

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