



## **CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

### **Responding to New Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect Involving Children in Open Investigations or Cases**

Policy and Procedure: CWS 09-09 Emergency Response  
Effective Date: 12/14/18

#### **OVERVIEW**

Humboldt County Child Welfare Services (CWS) follows All County Letter (ACL) 17-27, Investigating, Assessing, And Documenting A New Referral of Child Abuse Or Neglect In An Open Investigation or Case. CWS collaborates with Tribes on all referrals and cases that involve a Tribal child.

#### **POLICY**

It is the policy of Humboldt County CWS to work proactively with families, Tribes and other community partners to decrease and eliminate recurrence of child maltreatment. When information is received on an open referral or case, CWS staff arrange timely, coordinated consultation between Emergency Response and the assigned social worker (SW) and/or the assigned social worker supervisor (SWS) in order to utilize the expertise of Emergency Response, as well as the knowledge of the family history and current facts. CWS will make cross reports to Law Enforcement (LE) as per the cross reporting policy and proceed to work collaboratively with Tribe according to the Tribal collaboration policy and identified specific Tribal protocol (Humboldt County).

#### **PROCEDURE**

1. When new allegations of abuse and neglect are received regarding a family in an open investigation:
  - A. The screening social worker creates a new referral record in CWS/CMS.
  - B. The screening social worker completes the Structured Decision Making (SDM) hotline response and response priority tools per established SDM protocol to assess whether new allegations meet the threshold for an in-person response and, if so, the appropriate response priority. The screening social worker will complete and document a thorough CWS history of the family.

Revision Date: 11/16/18

- i. If there is information that report is regarding a Tribal child, follow the [Tribal Collaboration](#) policy and if applicable, any established [Tribal protocols](#) in order to work collaboratively with the Tribe regarding the new report.
- ii. If the subsequent report contains identical information and allegations as a previously received report, the screening social worker processes the referral as a Duplicate Report.
- iii. If the subsequent report contains new information, but the investigating social worker has not yet made a first face-to-face contact with the family (be sure and make contact with the assigned SW or their supervisor to determine if contact has been made but not yet entered in CMS), the screening social worker associates the referrals in CWS/CMS and complete a new hotline response and response priority tool to determine whether response should change.

➤ See [Intake Policy and Procedure](#) for further instructions.

C. Upon confirmation that a client in a report is in an open investigation, the screening social worker will identify the assigned SW and will advise the ER on-duty supervisor, providing all relevant information for review.

- i. If the information in the report does not meet the criteria for a new investigation, the screening social worker contacts the assigned SW and/or SWS to relay the information in the report. The ER SW will address concerns included in the new referral with the family. Interventions provided will be documented in the delivered service log and investigation narrative.
- ii. If the information in the report meets the threshold for a new investigation and is received AFTER an initial safety assessment, but before a risk assessment is completed, and is still in compliance for investigation, the referral can be associated in CWS/CMS. The risk assessment should be completed in the CMS referral record *received first*. When a second safety assessment is completed as a result of new information received, the updated SDM safety assessment should be added to the referral record *received first*.

2. When new allegations of abuse or neglect are received regarding a family with an open case:

- A. The screening social worker will create a new referral record in CWS/CMS.
- B. Upon confirmation that a client in a report is in an open case, the screening social worker will identify the assigned case carrying SW and elicit any additional information relevant to the received referral and add it to the screener narrative. If the case carrying social worker has information that invalidates the report, the screening social worker includes that information in the assessment process.
  - i. If there is information that this is a Tribal child, the screening social worker contacts the identified Tribe and follows the Tribal Collaboration policy and procedure as well as applicable Tribal protocols.
- C. The screening social worker completes the SDM hotline response and response priority tools per established protocol to assess whether new allegations meet the threshold for response and, if so, the appropriate response priority. The screening social worker completes and documents a thorough CWS history of the family.
  - i. If there is information that this is a Tribal child, the SDM hotline tool must be completed with the identified Tribe per the Tribal collaboration policy and applicable protocol.
- D. The screening social worker contacts the assigned case carrying SW and/or SWS to relay the outcome of the SDM Hotline Tools.
  - i. For new reports that do not meet SDM criteria for investigation, the case carrying SW follows up with the family regarding new information CWS has received to establish if there are any additional supports or interventions needed. The concerns as well as any planned follow up will be documented in CWS/CMS in the “contact notebook” section.
    - Please Note: Referrals that meet SDM criteria for investigation **cannot** be evaluated out to the case carrying social worker.
- E. If the information in the referral meets SDM criteria for investigation and is a new incident of abuse or neglect, it will be assigned as a new investigation. The investigating social worker will review all previous CWS history for the family. The case carrying SW and investigating SW, and tribal social worker if applicable, will communicate to determine whether the investigating SW will respond to the family independently or a joint response with the case carrying social worker. The SW’s will coordinate their efforts to ensure the understanding by the family of the social workers’ different roles.

- i. The investigating SW, case carrying SW, and tribal SW if applicable, will continue to communicate and coordinate throughout the investigation to prevent duplication of services.
- F. Prior to closing the referral, the investigating SW will communicate the allegation conclusion and disposition to the case carrying social worker, and provide the opportunity for the case carrying social worker to give feedback regarding the disposition. If the social workers are not in agreement with the decision, the investigating social worker will follow up with the investigating SW's supervisor for further discussion. This should occur prior to the investigation closure in CWS/CMS.
- G. If the disposition of the investigation that has no further intervention is needed beyond current open case, the case carrying SW follows up with the family and tribal social worker if applicable, regarding whether the information in the investigation would warrant amending the case plan to provide additional interventions or supports.