

Quality Assurance/Continuous Quality Improvement

Department of Children and Families



Southeast Region
Circuits 15-17-19

Annual Quality Management (QM) Report 2016/2017

Introduction

1. A description of QA/CQI staff resources:

The Department of Children and Families Quality Assurance Unit is managed by the SER Family Safety Program Office and covers Circuits 15-17 and 19. There is one Family Services Program Manager who over sees the Program Office and all its components.

Currently there is one Quality Assurance Manager, four Certified Child Safety Protection Experts (CCSPE's), one Child Fatality Protection Specialist (CFPS) and three Family Safety Specialists (FSS).

The 4 CCSPE's conduct Decision Support Team (DST) reviews for investigations identified as meeting criteria for Rapid Safety Feedback (RSF). All 4 CCSPE's, including the QA manager, have been certified as "experts" in the Florida Safety Decision Making Methodology (FSDMM). They also provide individual/group coaching, mentoring, training, consultation and pre-service training as needed or requested. The Decision Support Team [DST] was instituted by Secretary Carroll as a means for providing assistance to operational staff by the certified methodology experts. In the SER the 4 CCSPE's are available for consultation at the onset of the investigation to assist with safety decision making and guidance with regard to "fidelity" to the FSDMM practice model.

The CFPS oversees all of the Regions child death investigations and also contributes as a QA reviewer and writer of Mini-CIRRT reports. The CFPS also provides training and performs various QA reviews.

The three FSS positions act as the Regions "Operation Review Specialists" (ORS) and contribute by writing Mini-CIRRT reports and QA reviews on various levels. They are all on a path to FSDMM "proficiency." There is one "Green Belt" FSS and another "Yellow Belt" in process. This spawns from the lean six sigma training offered in the Region. The FSS of the Region also provide technical assistance to Operational staff and deliver various training when requested. The FSS Staff are also closely linked with the Regions Community Base Care agencies (CBC) and recently participated as co-reviewers with the CBC in the Children and Families Services Review (CFSR). The QA Unit also oversees and tracks the

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) issued by the Federal agency resultant to the most recent CFSR review.

2. A description of regional geographic:

- The Southeast Regions is comprised up of three (3) Circuits: 15 (Palm Beach County), 17(Broward County), and 19 (St. Lucie, Martin, Indian River and Okeechobee Counties).
- **Circuit 15:** Palm Beach County has nineteen (19) CPI units and an “Intake Receiving Unit.” There are also several specialized units that handle various investigations meeting certain criteria. One unit named “Special Victim’s Unit” (SVU) that handles child death and serious maltreatment reports. There is an “Institutional” unit handling various facility abuse/neglect, an “Out of Town Inquiry” (OTI) unit handling out of county/region requests and three units that cover weekend investigations.
- **Circuit 17,** Child Protective Investigations is the responsibility of the Broward Sheriff’s Office (BSO) and their quality assurance activities are defined in a legislative grant and consist of yearly statewide Peer Reviews. While SER staff participates in these reviews, they do not have primary responsibility or oversight. The Broward Sheriff’s Office has twelve (12) CPI Squads and an Analytic Unit;
- **Circuit 19** has seven (9) CPI units that cover their four (4) counties.

3. Number of Intakes received each month: Please refer to Attachment below.

Column1	C15 Intakes Received	C17 Intakes Received	C19 Intakes Received	RSF rcvd
Jul-16	724	1039	404	41
Aug-16	836	1072	474	55
Sep-16	1053	1234	532	47
Oct-16	947	1107	526	41
Nov-16	1014	1162	537	32
Dec-16	928	1098	503	34
Jan-17	934	1105	521	28
Feb-17	950	1190	532	25
Mar-17	987	1265	511	29
Apr-17	1035	1102	524	37
May-17	1127	1377	576	32
Jun-17	771	992	446	28
Totals	11306	13743	6086	429

RSF received totals are taken from SER internal tracking sheet keep by the CCSPE’s in a DCF share drive. C-17 is not calculated in this table as they are not tracked by our Region due to their grant status and not required to report. Also, Reports generated from FSFN and Qualtric [and formerly the portal] are not consistent in generating

numbers. To my knowledge FSFN does not count investigations where a child may have turned 4 at the time the report is being run, whereas the child was under 4 when our review was completed. We do not perform reviews on “shelter” cases and we also consider all prior reports on a family. We were told by OCW that any priors on the family [outside of screen-outs by the hotline] including institutional and adult cases are considered. FSFN may not identify RSF cases disqualified due to “streamlined” investigation of other reports, patently unfounded or no jurisdiction investigations.

The data we have totals 429 reports received for FY 2016-17 for an average of 35 RSF reviews per month. Also taken into account was a CCSPE out for an extended period of time for a complicated pregnancy [4 months] followed by another that is experiencing a serious health condition needing attention [4 months]. All said the Region has operated for the last several months of this FY with primarily 3 CCSPE’s available for reviews. This works out from anywhere from 9-11 RSF reviews averaged per month per CCSPE.

4. High-level discussion of turnover (regional turnover)

The most recent data indicates a 38.6% turnover rate for the last fiscal year. The SER typically stays within the number one or two spot on the “leaderboard” for having some of the best retention rates as well as filling vacancies as they occur.

Anticipation

Although we have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with both CBC lead agencies “Childnet” and “Devereux” for four preservice training classes, during the past year we have had five which has been critical to keep our vacancy rates as low as possible. Typically, newly hired staff are placed in “OPS” positions until vacancies become available in career service. However, in order to keep OPS costs down, we also overlap staff in career service positions and move them to a vacancy when it becomes available. We also look to hire child welfare case managers who only need to attend half of preservice training and can get into the field quickly and more competently. We utilize social work interns who attend preservice trainings to fulfill their internship hours and have the ability to be hired once they complete training and graduate with their MSW degrees.

Our SER recruiter circulates throughout the region speaking with CPIs, Supervisors and PAs in order to get a better feel for anticipated vacancies as well as discuss issues before they become reasons for resignations. Field support consultants spend time in the preservice classroom with specialty track training but are also in the field working with new investigators and investigators needing additional support throughout the SER.

5. Working relationships w/ CBC(s): The SER QA unit has maintained positive relationships with the CBC agencies throughout the Region. The QA unit has developed a direct relationship with the CBC as QA managers from both DCF and the CBC meet jointly with OCW staff quarterly. DCF QA staff has been cooperating in side-by-side reviews with CBC staff concerning the Regions portion of the CFSR PIP plan. DCF has assumed the leadership and

oversight role of the PIP plan and the Region will soon hire a dedicated staff person to oversee this process. DCF is involved in joint training and support of the CBC since the transition to FSDMM has occurred.

6. Stakeholder involvement

All of the three circuits in the Region is overseen by DCF Circuit Community Development Administrators [CCDA]. These persons work closely with a multitude of community stakeholders and are vital in the decision making of the community projects both involved directly with the CBC's and others with local interest in child safety permanency and well-being. Some of these stakeholders are the judiciary of each circuit, Children's Services Councils, local police departments and Sheriff's offices, the respective school districts for each circuit, local government agencies, Guardian ad Litem programs and other ancillary services that are available throughout each circuit. Many of these stakeholders meet monthly with the DCF circuit CCDA's to report and plan child related initiatives.

Palm Beach County C-15

In October of 2012, ChildNet became the lead agency for Palm Beach County. ChildNet subcontracts with the case management agency "Children's Home Society" who performs the case management services. ChildNet had been installed as the lead agency in Broward County and one of the state's initial community base care organizations. Children's Legal Services is co-located in the Service Center easily accessible to the Investigators communication between legal and the investigators is considered good and email exchanges are frequently used. There were no issues between CLS and operations staff. Children's Legal Services in Circuit 15 is headed by a managing attorney who oversees the 5 supervision attorneys, 14 Attorney's and 13 support staff. Law Enforcement operates under a working agreement with DCF to accompany each CPI during the commencement of each investigation.

Broward County C-17

ChildNet was founded in 2002 to be the CBC lead agency in Broward County. In Feb 2011, ChildNet received accreditation through the Council on Accreditation [COA] for Network Management, Family Foster Care, Kinship Care and Adoptions.

ChildNet" contracts with and provides various case management services. Their offices are located in the same building plaza as BSO and this greatly facilitates the case transfer process. Their staffing compliment includes seven case managers per supervisor. Their staffing compliment includes seven case managers per supervisor. ChildNet has worked very diligently to establish daily operations that service to meet the immediate needs of a child in the Family. They report a rich intake system which includes school transportation to avoid academic disruptions and a speedy EPSDT referral process. The transfer of services process from child protective investigation to services incorporates many best practice features such as joint meetings at the home of a family for smooth transition of family supports and services. One key case practice requirement

that continues to be refined is the completion of the Family Functioning Assessment by child protective investigators at the time of transfer to services.

Four County area: Martin, St. Lucie, Okeechobee and Indian River Counties, C-19

The CBC agency, Devereaux, assumed responsibility as the lead agency for C-19 in July of 2013. Devereaux provides much of their own direct service case management. CLS in Circuit 19 is comprised of 1 managing attorney, 2 supervising attorneys and 9 additional attorneys.

“Broward Sheriff’s Office” (BSO) is one of six counties in the state where child protective investigations are conducted by law enforcement. A BSO major, a captain and a lieutenant oversee a civilian workforce of managers, supervisors, investigators and other civilians. Under optimal operations, all 100 CPI positions are filled. A receiving unit manned by 18 Investigative Aids handle approximately 60 new intakes daily by running the requisite background checks and preparing the case record for an investigation.

The Office of the Attorney General [OAG] provides Children’s Legal Services [CLS] in Broward County through a contract that was renewed last year. There are 30 attorneys, five supervisors for the attorneys and one bureau chief. Caseloads range as low as 68 to a high of 82 for an attorney. Supervising as well as line attorneys carry a caseload and cover six courtrooms [four judicial and two general master dockets]. It is notable that this assignment approach results in the same attorney assigned to a case from the initial judicial action to the termination of court jurisdiction. The most significant change in daily operations that has taken place in the last 18 months offers insight into the protracted delays in the 2013 court case involving a family. Over a year ago, the new bureau chief created a smaller intake unit to cover staffing and this has greatly improved processing time frames. Staffing are held every Tuesday and any identified outstanding issues are rolled onto the agenda for the following week to prevent a case from falling through the cracks.

Subject matter experts:

C-15 and C-19 utilize both domestic violence and substance abuse experts as resources for their investigations. These persons are available for consultation and at times shadowing in the field with the CPI’s. C-17 has “in-house” service experts that collaborate upon request.

4. Seamless QA/CQI of Child Protective Investigations

1. A description of how the region will continue QA/CQI activities related to CPI even during transition:

1. The SER will continue with its DST/RSF review process in both C-15 and C-19. Technical assistance is available for BSO C-117. The SER continues to utilize the FSDMM safety methodology now rolled up into specific CFOP’s. The “Windows into Practice” RSF review instrument continues to be used to rate CPI casework both for safety and for fidelity to the practice methodology model. The statistical information provided from the reviews assists in identifying areas of need. Data is used to select and stratify areas needing improvement. Investigations meeting specific criteria drawn from

“Windows into Practice” are Identified as either tier 1 and 2 and are mandatory for review by the regional CCSPE’s. Monthly leadership meetings are scheduled in order to review the results of the RSF/SCR reviews being completed and address any issues/concerns.

2. Mini CIRRT [Regional Critical Incident Rapid Response Team] reports are also completed by the regional FSS and CFPS. These reports are generated by a child death where there is a prior report of any finding within the past five years. The intent is to try to determine, based upon the Department’s last intervention with the family, if there is anyway to determine if DCF could have made interventions that may have helped to prevent the child death. All Mini CIRRTS are all written by DCF staff, including for the Broward Sheriff’s office.

On the other hand, a CIRRT review is conducted and a report written by a selected statewide team for a child death report that has a prior with “verified” findings within the previous 12 months of the child death case. All of these reports are posted on the Department’s child fatality website.

3. All of the five staff assigned to RSF/SCR reviews have met the requirements set by the State of Florida and are now considered certified as an “expert” in the Safety Practice Methodology. Three FSS staff are currently in the proficiency process and the goal is for them to be “proficient” by the end of December 2017.

5. Other:

1. Special reviews, discretionary reviews, systemic factor reviews planned or needed,

The SER is currently invested in regional reviews of child investigation reports that resulted in the removal of children. The FSS review these cases with a focus on “fidelity” to the practice methodology and to the completeness of the record being transferred to local CBC service providers.

An ongoing electronic review by the CCSPE/FSS with regard to closed investigations that had been subject to the RSF/SCR review process. This is credible due to the high level of proficiency our FSS staff has with the practice methodology. This review allows being able to find if the investigative staff completed follow-up guidance and direction by not only the CCSPE reviews but the CPIS or PA as well. This also helps to determine that attention is given to areas of the methodology that are not always completely satisfied in the RSF/SCR reviews such as the appropriate and complete transfer of cases to services.

2. Strategies that will be used to improve practice,

The SER QA unit CCSPE’s, FSS positions and the CFPS are committed to the ongoing training of operations staff and the development of their proficiency skills with regard to the Safety Practice Methodology as prescribed by the guidelines provided by OCW.

This includes several strategies working directly with operations staff; the following list captures many of these initiatives.

- Participation in unit meetings as requested by CPIS.

- Mentor hours available for all staff by reservation.
- Learning Circles Case de-briefing discussion groups.
- Booster training opportunities for groups targeted towards identified needs.
- Co-training with the CBC and utilization of the regions FSC positions for field work regarding RSF/SCR review cases.

3. QA Reviews.

Many of the Regions quality assurance reviews completed are the result of high profile child welfare cases or child deaths and these cannot be anticipated. As for discretionary reviews and systemic factor reviews, these are continually assessed for and often the result of data provided from the results of the RSF review information.

4. Results of QA/CQI findings:

The results of any and all of our QA/CQI findings, is shared with Regional and Operations management in order to assess current practice trends and progression with achieving quality outcomes as methodology continues to gain traction in the Region.