

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: CHILDREN'S DIVISION AND CONTRACTED STAFF
FROM: DARRELL MISSEY, DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: Changes to Central Consult Unit (CCU) Protocol

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform staff of changes to the protocol for utilizing CCU and to provide clarification on existing protocols.

Purpose of CCU

The purpose of CCU is to give immediate access to Child Abuse and Neglect team members when their assessment of safety indicates the child needs no further state interaction to remain safe. **ALL safe child abuse/neglect reports must receive a consultation within seven (7) days.** Team members must utilize CCU to fulfill this requirement, even if the case is not ready for closure. If the case is not ready for closure, the CCU specialist will identify the next steps and will issue a Need More Information (NMI).

Who May Utilize CCU

The tenure requirement for utilizing CCU has been lifted. Once team members have completed CWPT, they may begin utilizing CCU. However, new team members or team members new to completing child abuse/neglect reports should have their supervisor, mentor, or OJT specialist present the first few times they call CCU for case consultation. This will assist team members in being prepared for consultation and the process, as well as to help identify areas in which new users may need further coaching.

In order to be able to conduct a thorough consultation, the team member that assured safety of the child and is actively working report should be the person calling into the CCU. Just like case consultation with a local supervisor, a *thorough* consultation with CCU requires dialogue about the steps taken in the report, observations, information obtained, how safety was assured, and why it is believed that the children are safe. This is information that is not always readily apparent simply by reviewing case notes.

Case aides are not eligible to call in to the CCU. Case aides should not be utilized to assure safety and are not expected to have a complete understanding of Children's

Division investigative policies. However, case aides may be utilized to help complete certain NMI's to prepare the case for closure.

Changes and Clarification to Types of Cases Appropriate for CCU

In addition to Investigations/Family Assessments/Juvenile Assessments/Newborn Crisis Assessments with a SDM Safety Assessment outcome of 'Safe', inappropriate reports, and located out of state reports, CCU will begin staffing conflict of interest/employee reports (as long as the Safety Assessment is 'Safe').

For Preponderance of Evidence (POE) reports, team members should not utilize CCU for consulting cases when it is believed at the time of the call that a POE finding is the likely outcome. However, it will often be too early in the investigation to know the conclusion outcome. In these situations, team members would utilize CCU to ensure timely consultation within the seven (7) calendar days policy requirement for safe cases.

With the changes being made to the SDM Safety Assessment in FACES ([CD22-23](#)), CCU will staff safe cases when a report is received on a child already in alternative care (i.e. were not removed as a result of the hotline being staffed).

Lifting of Documentation Requirements

If team members call within 72 hours of the report date/time, CCU Specialists will enter all of the documentation—including the initial contact with the victim and non-victim children and the Safety Assessment.

Reminder: The report does not have to be ready for closure to utilize CCU. The initial contacts with the victim and non-victim children and the Safety Assessment must still be entered within seventy-two (72) hours per current policy.

If the report is not called in for a consult within 72 hours through CCU, the initial contacts with the victim and non-victim children and Safety Assessment should be entered locally. If you enter the initial child contacts and Safety Assessment locally, a call still must be made within 7 days on all CCU qualifying cases.

CCU will enter the Risk Assessment any time a call is made to CCU. The Risk Assessment will be entered when the report is ready for case closure at the time of the call with CCU.

Utilizing the Conclusion Approval/Administrative Review Information Box

This box on the Conclusion Screen in FACES is utilized by CCU to document NMI's and denials issued to staff. NMI's and denials generally fall into three categories:

1. Missing policy requirements
2. Disagreement with the Safety Assessment of 'Safe'. The CCU specialist should articulate the specific safety threat the specialist believes is present.
3. Disagreement with the conclusion. If CCU believes the report should have a POE finding, the specialist should articulate the specific element(s) of abuse/neglect they believe there is enough evidence to support.

Should the local supervisor disagree with CCU's request for the NMI or denial, they may choose to go ahead and close the report. However, the local supervisor should use this box on the conclusion screen to document the reason they are approving the report.

CCU will send disposition letters only on reports approved by CCU. If the local office approves the report, the local office is responsible for sending the disposition letters.

Huddles and Touchpoints

Huddles are strongly encouraged and best practice to ensure that children are seen timely, consultations occur timely, and to move cases toward timely closure. Huddles on safe cases should not be an in-depth staffing on the report, but simply a quick discussion around: barriers to seeing children timely, creating a plan to call CCU for a timely staffing, and for identifying and creating a plan for what the team member still needs to complete to close the case.

At a minimum, the Conclusion Approval/Administrative Review information box should also be utilized by the frontline supervisor to document the seven (7) day, fifteen (15) day, and the twenty-five (25) day touch point to document the reason(s) huddle conversations.

Circuit Mangers should pay particular attention to reports approaching the fifteen (15) day mark without a case consultation or initial child contacts entered and should be able to identify why the case remains open. Circuit Managers should review the report for information from the supervisor on the Conclusion Screen about the status of the report and follow up when these elements are missing.

Field Support Managers should pay particular attention to reports approaching the twenty-five (25) day mark without a case consultation or initial child contacts entered and should be able to identify why the case remains open. Field Support Managers should review the report for information from the supervisor on the Conclusion Screen about the status of the report and follow up when these elements are missing.

This is summarized in the table below:

	Local Supervisor	Circuit Manager	Field Support Manager
7 day touchpoint	Missing Initial Child Contacts, Missing Consults, Next steps for closure		
15 day touchpoint	Missing Initial Child Contacts, Missing Consults, Next steps for closure	Missing Initial Child Contacts, Missing Consults, Next steps for closure	
25 day touchpoint	Missing Initial Child Contacts,	Missing Initial Child Contacts,	Missing Initial Child Contacts,

	Missing Consults, Next steps for closure	Missing Consults, Next steps for closure	Missing Consults, Next steps for closure
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Central Consult Unit Report Checkbox

If the CCU specialist provides a consultation or approves the report, they will mark that it was a CCU consulted report in the checkbox on the Conclusion Screen in FACES. If the CCU specialist does not provide consultation because the report was referred back to the local office, they will not mark that it was a CCU report.

Frontline team members should never un-check the CCU checkbox on the Conclusion Screen. This box plays an important role in data collection and the data reports being provided to assist with local huddles.

NECESSARY ACTION	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review this memorandum with all Children’s Division staff. 2. Review revised Child Welfare Manual chapters as indicated below. 3. All questions should be cleared through normal supervisory channels and directed to: 	
CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT Kara Wilcox Kara.B.Wilcox@dss.mo.gov	MANAGER CONTACT Sara Smith Sara.E.Smith@dss.mo.gov
POLICY:	
FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS	
REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES CCU Facts and Myths	
RELATED STATUTE	