



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

## Protocol for Foster Home Quality Team

Supplemental to DCS Policy: [16.16 Denial, Closure, or Suspended Admissions of Foster Homes](#)

The Office of Continuous Quality Improvement's Foster Home Quality Team (FHQT) monitors all Special Investigation Unit (SIU) investigations involving foster homes. The purpose of this protocol is to explain the methodology for conducting reviews for all DCS and contract provider foster homes.

### Initial Investigation Notices: Suspended Admissions

1. SIU initial investigation notices are emailed to the Foster Home Quality Team (FHQT) at EI\_DCS\_Quality\_Control\_SIU@tn.gov and reviewed by a member of FHQT within two (2) business days of receipt of email.
2. Foster homes are placed on suspended admissions when a foster parent(s) is identified as the alleged perpetrator in an investigation and within two (2) business days of receiving notification of an SIU investigation.
3. FHQT consults with SIU on all investigations in which the foster parent is not the alleged perpetrator. SIU makes recommendations regarding if the home should or should not be placed on suspended admissions.
4. FHQT notifies the region and/or contract provider of both the SIU investigation and the suspended admissions.

### Investigation Closures

1. SIU investigation closures are emailed to FHQT at EI\_DCS\_Quality\_Control\_SIU@tn.gov and reviewed by a member of FHQT within two (2) business days of receipt of email.
2. FHQT will lift the suspended admissions of investigations classified as Allegation Unsubstantiated, Perpetrator Unsubstantiated (AUPU) within two (2) business days of receipt of case closure if the investigation does not meet criteria to be reviewed. FHQT will notify the region and/or contract provider of the lift of suspended admissions.

03/19/21

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3. SIU investigation closures that meet the following criteria are flagged for a review by FHQT:

- a) Investigation with a classification of Allegation Unsubstantiated, Perpetrator Unsubstantiated where Safety Issues are noted on Form CS-0740 and/or the SIU Closing Notification;

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- b) Investigations with a classification of Child with Sexual Behavior Problems;
  - c) Investigations with two or more prior SIU investigations on the foster parent(s);
  - d) Investigations involving foster parent(s) with prior FHQT history (regardless of the recent investigation being classified as unsubstantiated);
  - e) Investigations in which a Safety Plan and/or Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) was implemented;
  - f) Investigations involving a child death in a foster home;
  - g) Investigations in which an allegation has been substantiated but the alleged perpetrator is not the foster parent;
  - h) Investigations with either an allegation or perpetrator classified as substantiated, even if overturned through Due Process;
  - i) Foster homes closed in good standing, but an inquiry was added due to concerns and the foster home wants to re-activate;
  - j) Investigations in which a FHQT team member, region, or provider has concerns or made a request to discuss in a FHQT meeting.
4. FHQT maintains a spreadsheet of all foster homes with the date the SIU closing notice is received, and, if applicable, when the suspended admission is lifted, if the foster home is reviewed by FHQT, and the type of review (Meeting Review or PreScreen/Electronic Review) by FHQT.

### **FHQT Reviews**

#### **Meeting Review**

The purpose of the Meeting Review, which may be conducted in person and/or through virtual means such as conference call or video conference call, is for FHQT, Central Office, and regional team members to have discussions regarding the investigation and the foster home to ensure there are no on-going safety concerns for custodial children and to identify trends and needs (e.g. training, safety plans, performance improvement plans, etc.). The Meeting Review is conducted weekly.

1. SIU investigations that meet the following criteria are eligible for the Meeting Review:

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- a) Investigation with a classification of Allegation Unsubstantiated, Perpetrator Unsubstantiated where Safety Issues are noted on Form CS-0740 and/or the SIU Closing Notification;
  - b) Investigations with a classification of Child with Sexual Behavior Problems;
  - c) Investigations involving a child death in a foster home;
  - d) Investigations with either an allegation or perpetrator classified as substantiated, even if overturned through Due Process;
  - e) Foster homes closed in good standing, but an inquiry was added due to concerns and the foster home wants to re-activate;
  - f) Any home that wants to re-activate that was previously closed in bad standing, and has FHQT or SIU history;
  - g) Investigations in which a FHQT team member, region, or provider has concerns or made a request to discuss in a FHQT meeting.
- 2. FHQT Program Manager or designee will email that investigation and review date to applicable regional placement FHQT team members within three (3) business days of receipt of SIU closure notification.
  - 3. FHQT Program Manager or designee will email the Meeting Review agenda and supporting documents to Central Office and regional team members two (2) business days before the Meeting Review.

### **PreScreen/Electronic Review**

The purpose of the PreScreen/Electronic Review is to lift the suspended admissions of foster homes involved with SIU investigations classified as Allegation Unsubstantiated, Perpetrator Unsubstantiated (AUPU). The PreScreen/Electronic Review allows FHQT to complete an expedited review of the investigation/foster home without going through a Meeting Review.

- 1. SIU investigations classified as AUPU that meet the following criteria are eligible for the PreScreen/Electronic Review:
  - a) Investigations with two or more prior SIU investigations on the foster parents;
  - b) Investigations with the foster parent having prior FHQT history (regardless of the recent investigation being classified as unsubstantiated);

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- c) Investigations in which a Safety Plan and/or Program Improvement Plan (PIP) was implemented;
  - d) Any home that wants to re-activate that was previously closed in bad standing, but has no FHQT or SIU history and previous concerns have been addressed.
2. The PreScreen/Electronic Review is conducted via email and involves both Central Office and regional FHQT team members.
3. FHQT Program manager or designee will email the investigation and supportive documents to both Central Office and regional FHQT team members within three (3) business days of receipt of the SIU closure notification. If a FHQT member has questions or concerns, the investigation will be reviewed during an upcoming FHQT Meeting Review. If there are no questions or concerns, the suspended admissions will be lifted within two (2) business days of PreScreen/Electronic Review notification.

### **FHQT Outcomes**

Common outcomes from FHQT Reviews (Meeting or PreScreen/Electronic) may include one or more of the following:

- a) Lifting a foster home's suspended admissions;
- b) Lifting the foster home's suspended admissions and incorporating placement restrictions. Placement restrictions may be comprised of age restrictions, gender restrictions, specific child restrictions, etc.;
- c) Recommending foster parent(s) receive additional training prior to lifting suspended admissions;
- d) Recommending the foster parent(s) have a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) prior to lifting the suspended admissions;
- e) Recommending the foster home have a Safety Plan implemented prior to lifting the suspended admissions;
- f) Supporting the region's and/or contract provider's recommendation to close the foster home and/or making recommendations to close the foster home;

**Effective Date: 03/19/21 Supersedes:**

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g) Additional monitoring.

**Secondary Reviews**

1. The contract provider may request a Secondary Review if there is a disagreement with the foster home closure decision recommended by the region/FHQT.
2. The contract provider must submit a request for a Secondary Review within 10 business days after the receipt of a FHQT foster home closure recommendation.
3. Once FHQT receives the request for a Secondary Review, the contract provider will have an additional 10 business days upon FHQT's receipt of acknowledgement to provide FHQT with supporting documentation.
4. The FHQT Program Manager or designee will schedule the Secondary Review. Secondary Reviews may involve the following participants: contract provider staff, appropriate regional FHQT members, appropriate SIU staff and FHQT Central Office team members. Foster parents may not participate in Secondary Reviews. The confirmation time, date, and call information will be sent within three (3) business days of receipt of all requested information.

FHQT maintains a spreadsheet of all reviews and the review outcomes.

If the region and FHQT cannot reach an agreement regarding status of the foster home, the investigation and/or concerns are presented to the Deputy Commissioner of Child Programs and the Assistant Commissioner of Continuous Quality Improvement for a final decision.