

Chapter 8: Resource Work Policies

Policy 8.19: Quality of Care Review

Effective Date of Policy:

March 1, 2017

Amendment Date of Policy:

May 18, 2021

Policy Statement

When there is a significant concern about the quality of a child/youth's care in a family care home, which is not due to abuse, neglect or emotional harm (requiring an investigation), the concern is reviewed by a delegated worker through a Quality of Care Review (QOCR) in a timely way.

Outcomes

- Caregivers adhere to the terms in the Family Care Home Agreement and applicable policies regarding children/youth in care.
- QOCR are completed in a fair and timely manner.
- Caregivers receive support during the Quality of Care Review process.
- The outcome of the QOCR is made known to the caregiver and the child/youth in a timely manner.

Standards

- 8.19.(1)** The supervisor of the resource worker determines whether to conduct a QOCR, with approval by the responsible manager, within 24 hours of receiving information concerning a caregiver's breach of the Family Care Home Agreement, applicable policies and/or rights regarding children/youth in care.
- 8.19.(2)** If there is a decision to commence a QOCR, start the review within 5 days of receiving the concern.
- 8.19.(3)** Complete the QOCR within 45 days of receiving a report, unless doing so compromises the integrity of the QOCR. If an extension is needed, obtain approval of the responsible manager and then notify the caregiver of the need to extend.
- 8.19.(4)** If, as a result of a Quality of Care Review, a decision is made to apply a serious sanction to the caregiver (reduction of level or closure of the family care home), inform the caregiver of their right, within 30 days of receiving the decision, to make a written request to the Director of Quality Assurance for a review of the administrative fairness of the decision.

Procedures

Assessment and Determining the Response

- If the concern about the caregiver is determined to be below the threshold of requiring a QOCR, the issues are addressed and resolved informally through the resource worker and a child/youth's worker discussing the matter with the caregiver.
- A QOCR may be required at any point where there is reason to believe that the caregiver(s) is unable or unwilling to meet the terms of the Family Care Home Agreement or provide care for the child/youth according to the Standards for Foster Homes.
- When considering the need for a QOCR, conduct an Initial Record Review by reviewing electronic databases to:
 - determine the number, **if any**, of past QOCRs and Family Care Home Investigations about the caregiver; and
 - identify the previous issues or concerns, **if applicable**.
- Document the concern on [MIS](#).
- The resource worker and the supervisor of the resource worker jointly assess the concern within 24 hours of receiving the information to decide whether there is reasonable doubt about the quality of care the child is receiving.
- The supervisor of the resource worker makes the decision to initiate a QOCR, with approval by the responsible manager, when there is reasonable doubt about the quality of care the child is receiving.
- If the responsible manager approves the decision to conduct a QOCR:
 - As soon as possible, the resource worker informs the caregiver by telephone or in person advising of the concern and the ministry's decision to conduct a review.
 - The child's worker will ensure that all appropriate protocols are followed with the child/youth's Indigenous community, if applicable.
- If the concern is about a serious issue of abuse, neglect or emotional harm, the responsible manager reviews the concern and determines if the matter needs to be addressed through a Family Care Home Investigation, based on the following criteria:
 - Caregiver not protecting the child/youth from physical harm, the likelihood of physical harm, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation from another person;
 - Emotional harm by caregiver;

- Emotional harm from domestic violence;
- Neglect with physical harm or likelihood of physical harm;
- Physical harm or likelihood of physical harm by the caregiver; or
- Sexual abuse/exploitation by the caregiver.

Information and support for the caregiver in a family care home

- As soon as possible and within 5 days following a decision to conduct a QOCR, the MCFD/DAA resource worker notifies the caregiver of:
 - the information included in the report, except any information that would likely reveal the identity of the individual who has made a report;
 - the decision to conduct a QOCR;
 - information about the QOCR process;
 - actions to be taken to support the children living in the family care home and the reasons for those actions (e.g. children removed from the home); and
 - the caregiver is updated every 14 days by the resource worker.
- The resource worker also:
 - Informs the caregiver of everyone's role and how decisions are made;
 - Advises the caregiver of the contact information for a support person or available support services, such as the BCFFPA, IPS or other local services;
 - Informs the support person for the caregiver that they must sign an oath of confidentiality prepared by the director prior to the support person's involvement in the QOCR process; and
 - Provides the caregiver with a copy of this policy and explains the information in the report and the QOCR process to them.

Information and support for the child/youth in care

- The child/youth's worker will inform the child/youth (with capacity) about the quality of care review process, the ministry's internal complaint process, and supports such as the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) and Ombudsperson.
- If the child/youth in care is Indigenous the child/youth's worker will facilitate the child/youth having a support person from their Indigenous community involved in the process.
- According to the child/youth's abilities, the child/youth will be consulted regarding any changes to their placement or Care Plan.

Conducting a Quality of Care Review

- The resource worker and the child's worker gather relevant information about the concern by completing the following steps:
 - Both review their respective files of the child/youth and the caregivers, including the child/youth's Care Plan to determine how previous issues or concerns have been addressed;
 - The child/youth's worker meets with the child/youth to hear child/youth's views of the concern and ensure the child/youth's views are taken into consideration throughout the process;
 - The resource worker meets with the caregivers to obtain their views and suggestions on how to address the concern; and
 - Talk to the other children/youth in care in the family care home who may have relevant information about the concern (with the involvement of the social workers who have responsibility for other child/youth in care living in the home).

Completing the QOCR

- The resource worker records the QOCR in MIS and recommends an action plan to the involved supervisors.
- The child/youth's worker, resource worker and supervisor of the resource worker jointly discuss the review of the reported concern and the action plan taking the following into consideration:
 - Whether the match between the child/youth's needs and the skills and resources of the caregiver(s) is appropriate.
 - Whether the quality of care concern affects the continued use of the home.
 - Whether additional supports, services, training or other resources are needed.
- On the basis of this review, the supervisor of the resource worker decides on a final action plan that includes the responsibilities of those involved and a time table for the plan.

Reporting the QOCR Results

- The resource worker coordinates a meeting with the caregiver, and, if appropriate, the child/youth's worker to discuss the QOCR outcomes and action plan, unresolved issues and additional supports needed, and the process if caregivers are not satisfied with the outcome of the review.
- The child/youth's worker meets with the child/youth within 7 days of the meeting with the caregiver to discuss any issues, decisions, or changes arising from the QOCR, including any concerns of the child/youth.

- If the child/youth is Indigenous, the child/youth's worker informs the designated representative from the Indigenous community regarding any changes in plans or placement of the child/youth.
- When a review is completed, provide the caregiver with a summary of the QOCR report, containing information regarding the outcomes.
- A summary of the QOCR report is placed on both the resource file and the child/youth's file.

If Caregiver has Complaint about Outcome of QOCR

- A caregiver may apply in writing to the Director of Quality Assurance at DQAFPRreviews@gov.bc.ca for the review of the administrative fairness and clinical judgement of a decision, without the need for a prior attempt at informal/local resolution or review by a responsible manager (as per Policy 8.21, *Dispute Resolution for Caregivers*), if:
 - the decision has arisen from a Quality of Care Review and resulted in a serious sanction (loss of level or closure of the family care home);
 - the application for a review is made within 30 days of receiving the decision about the serious sanction.
- If the Director of Quality Assurance decides to conduct a review, the caregiver is sent a letter within 7 days of the Director of Quality Assurance receiving the review request, indicating the commencement of a review, the issues under review and the timeframe for completion of the review.
- The review process of the Director of Quality Assurance is completed within 30 days unless the caregiver agrees to an extension. The decision is distributed in writing to all involved within 7 days of the decision, with the caregiver informed of the option of requesting an external review (i.e. Ombudsperson).
- If the Director of Quality Assurance decides not to conduct a review, the caregiver is sent a letter within 7 days of the Director of Quality Assurance receiving the review request, indicating the reasons why the complaint is not accepted and describes the options for external reviews (i.e. Ombudsperson).
- If the issue does not pertain to a serious sanction, see Policy 8.21, *Dispute Resolution for Caregivers*.

Additional Resources:

- [Quality of Care Protocols in MIS](#)