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| Client Incident Management System (CIMS) |
| Tip Sheet – Case Review  April 2023 |
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## Introduction

The *Client incident management guide January 2020* states in its introduction “the effective operation of the CIMS relies on all parties acting with transparency, integrity and accountability. There is an expectation that all activities undertaken by service providers and the department required by the guide will be based on appropriate professional judgement, and all parties acting in good faith, in the best interests of clients.” The tip sheet is guided by this expectation.

## Definition and purpose of a CIMS Client Incident Review

*The Client Incident Management Guide January 2020* (the Guide) (section 5.1.1) defines a client incident review as:

“Analysis of an incident to identify what happened, determine whether an incident was managed appropriately, and to identify the causes of the incident and subsequent learnings to apply to reduce the risk of future harm.” The purpose of a client incident review should inform continuous improvement.

The Guide further states, “reviews must adopt a person-centred and rights-based approach. Clients should get the support they need to participate in the review process, including through engagement with a key support person if desired. Service providers must consider how the client’s experience and welfare could be improved and seek client input regularly and throughout the review process as appropriate.”

A review seeks to answer one or both of the following questions:

* Did the service provider respond with appropriate actions to manage the incident? (Focus on quality assurance, accountability, and client outcomes)
* Why did the incident happen, and what can be changed to reduce the likelihood of similar or related incidents occurring? (Focus on continuous improvement)

## Different Client Incident Review Types

Every major incident report submitted in the Client Incident Management System (CIMS) is required to be followed up with either an incident investigation or an incident review (Client incident management guide January 2020 (section 5.2).

All major incidents which are not subject to an investigation, require an incident review. There are two types of review in the CIMS process.

* **Case review** – a review led by the service provider following a client incident to identify what happened and any process and system issues. This is a less structured and resource-intensive review than a root cause analysis review. These are appropriate where service processes or systems **were not, or do not appear to be, a significant causal or contributing factor** to the incident.
* **Root cause analysis (RCA) review** – a structured review process for identifying the basic or causal factor(s) that underlie an incident, to facilitate learning from that incident. It requires trained staff and appropriate resourcing and time, and therefore is only required in certain defined cases. This is appropriate for where service processes or systems **were, or appear to be, a significant causal or contributing factor** to the incident occurring.

Most incident reviews will be case reviews, the focus of this tip sheet.

## Process for conducting a Case Review

The service provider is required to nominate an experienced staff member who has the requisite experience, skill set and objectivity to conduct the case review. This person is known as the review manager. The case review may include reviewing documentation such as incident reports and client file notes, and interviewing clients, staff, and managers. If interviews are conducted for the case review, then appropriate support will be offered to the client to support their participation in the review process, including the offer of a key support person.

The process for the completion of the case review is outlined in the Guide, (section 5.4). The process includes communication of the findings of the review to the people involved in the incident (including the client and the key support worker).

Where the same client is the subject of multiple incident reports recording the same or similar incident types within quick succession or over a short timeframe, the service provider may consider conducting a single Case Review to review these incidents. This may provide a more wholistic approach to the review of incidents as compared to reviewing each incident report individually.

The completed case review report must be uploaded to CIMS. Case reviews are an internal, continuous improvement tool for services to identify and improve quality and safety issues. These reviews are not quality assured by the departmental Safeguarding and Oversight Unit staff.

Please note: When requested, the Safeguarding and Oversight unit of the department will provide a copy of the case review report to departmental staff who are authorised recipients.

## Content of a Case Review

Case reviews must be **completed by service providers within 21 business days** of incident report endorsement, and include the following information at a minimum:

* summary of the incident
* assessment of the appropriateness of the management of the incident
* contributing factors / causes of the incident
* actions to be taken to reduce the risk of similar incidents occurring, including staff member responsible for each action and the target date for completion
* administrative information
  + incident frequency (one-off / pattern for staff / pattern for client)
  + name and position of person who conducted the review
  + date of the review

Please note requests for extension of time are not applicable to case reviews.

There may be instances where there are barriers to completing all components of the case review. This may be in the form of the client no longer being a client of the service provider nor a client of Child Protection; critical staff involved in the incident no longer being employees of the service provider or poor documentation of the actions taken during and or following the incident which would reasonably be expected to inform a case review. In these circumstances the case review should be completed based on the available information, identifying improvement opportunities where one or more of the barriers are within the scope of the service provider to influence e.g., poor documentation/recordkeeping.

For example, where the case review identified that there is very little information on the client file or in the residential unit records about factors leading to the incident, nor is there much information about the management of the incident by staff, the action plan should reflect an action on refresher training on the benefit and obligations of staff to maintain client and unit records in accordance with record keeping policy requirements.

Case review action plans should reflect the learnings or identified areas for improvement resulting from the case review process. The case review action plan should not be a re-statement of actions taken at the time of the incident.

**Tip 1**: The focus for the case review and subsequent outcome/action plan should be on the two key questions:

* Did the service provider respond with appropriate actions to manage the incident? (Focus on quality assurance, accountability, and client outcomes)
* Why did the client incident happen, and what can be changed to reduce the likelihood of similar or related incidents occurring? (Focus on continuous improvement)

A lack of information to inform a determination about these questions may suggest a learning opportunity about documentation/record keeping.

## Client focus and collaborative practice

In line with section 5.1.1 of the Guide, the *Client Voice Framework* (November 2019), and *Child Safe Standards* (July 2022), where the client is a child protection client, it is consistent with collaborative practice to engage with relevant Child Protection staff to seek assistance to engage the client in the review process. These activities should be documented in the case review.

**Tip 2**: Just as the two key questions above should be a focus of the case review, the framework for the case review is embedded in service providers considering ‘*how the client’s experience and welfare could be improved and seek client input regularly and throughout the review process as appropriate*.’

Where case reviews are focussed on learning or improvement opportunities in case management for individual clients, for child protection clients, the use of the Care Team process should not be underestimated. This could occur during the actual review process and/or could inform the action plan in relation to care, safety, behavioural planning and/or case planning. This could be in relation to one off incidents, patterns of incidents and/or escalation of incidents. It is strongly recommended that where the incident involves a child protection client, the completed case review, issues, themes, and actions from the action plan should be discussed at the client’s Care Team meeting.

Record management

It is also worth noting that a case review report which addresses one or both questions identified above is important in documenting the client experience at that time. It is important their client record reflects the client experience, how the client was supported, how the incident was managed and the outcome of any review or investigation. This is not only important for informing current practice but is also valuable as it provides evidence of the service providers response and the outcome to an incident should the client make enquiries in the future, potentially as an adult.

## Resources

The following link <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/cims> provides access to:

* Client incident management guide (January 2020)
* CIMS Case review template
* Frequently asked questions – policy update 1-2020

CIMS learning and development tools are available in the Learning and Development section accessible via the following link <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/cims-learning-and-development>

Information on the client voice framework is available at the following link: <https://dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/client-voice-framework-community-services>

Information on the new Child Safe Standards is available at the following link:<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/>

The review of CIMS is currently underway, for information about the review, please [email the CIMS Review](mailto:cims.review@dffh.vic.gov.au) <CIMS.Review@dffh.vic.gov.au>

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