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| Client Incident Management System (CIMS) |
| Tip Sheet - Short-form Investigation and Review - Investigation Outcome and Case Review ReportApril 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.

## When to use the short-form investigation and review process

A short form investigation and review process may only be used when the investigation manager is able to determine an outcome, based on clear evidence and balance of probabilities, for an allegation of abuse or neglect at the time of initial follow up/screening meeting. In these matters, a case review or root cause analysis must also be completed as a response to the incident. The decision to undertake a short form investigation and review must be based on relevant and reliable evidence and is pursuant to *Client incident management guide January 2020 section 4.2.2*. Most short form investigations will be in the format of an investigation outcome and case review, which is the focus of this tip sheet.

Typically, a short form investigation and review process may be appropriate in the following examples:

* A client-to-client abuse allegation is witnessed by staff and the impact to the client is evident at the time of initial follow up/screening meeting.
* Incidents where the subject of the allegation makes admissions and the impact to the client is evident at the time of initial follow up.
* The evidence can be corroborated and could not be perceived to be based on collusion or a conflict of interest.

The process may not be appropriate where:

* The outcome relies on indirect or circumstantial evidence.
* The outcome relies on witness evidence which may be considered biased or perceived to have a conflict of interest, such as evidence from a co-worker or co-client.

## The content of the report

The investigation outcome and case review report includes:

* Rationale and evidence which justifies the decision not to conduct a full investigation, is based on the available evidence (e.g. CCTV footage) and weighting of information.
* Facts that support the decision to substantiate or not substantiate the abuse or neglect of the client, including consideration of evidence ‘on the balance of probability’.
* An incident response plan to identify what action will be taken to ensure the safety of clients in the future and address any practice improvements required or themes identified in the investigation outcome.
* A case review primarily based on a desktop review of available documentation, such as client files, medical records, and occupational health and safety policies.
* Concise and targeted interviews (if deemed necessary).
* Information about how the clients involved have been supported and had their safety needs met.
* Key issues and learnings for the client and service provider.
* A case review action plan to address the issues identified in the case review, including the actions required to implement quality improvement opportunities for the service provider.

**Extension applications** are not available for the short-form investigation and review process.

## Outcome decision

It is not consistent with the criteria for a short-form investigation and review to have an outcome of insufficient evidence to determine an outcome.

The reason for this is that when undertaking a short form investigation and review, the assessment and decision has already been made that there is sufficient evidence that:

* An incident did or did not occur as described
* The client did or did not experience abuse or neglect because of the incident.

If the investigation manager has any doubt about the detail or accuracy of the description of the incident or the initial assessment of impact at the initial follow up stage, then a full investigation is required.

Incident response plans should include the tasks associated with the investigation and case review such as, informing parties of the outcome. The incident response plan should also include any reflections or actions to address client safety, learning opportunities and improvements which have been identified. This could include such topics as:

* Refresher for staff on case note recording policy requirements
* Refresher for staff on following client care/support plan
* Feedback to a staff member/team on good practice elements
* Client Care Team meeting processes

It should be noted that advice should be sought from service provider human resource staff, about what information can/cannot be shared with clients and other persons about any actions in relation to staff/carers.

## Resources

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

* Client incident management guide January 2020
* CIMS investigation outcome and case review template
* CIMS investigation outcome and root cause analysis template

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>

The review of CIMS is currently underway, for information about the review, please email the CIMS Review <CIMS.Review@dffh.vic.gov.au>

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