



Office of Children and Family Services

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Local Commissioners Memorandum

Transmittal:	19-OCFS-LCM-24
To:	Local District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Child Welfare and Community Services
Date:	October 9, 2019
Subject:	Mandated Reporter Summary of Findings Letters to Be Sent via Email Through CONNECTIONS
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Attachments:	None

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) is to advise local departments of social services (LDSSs) of a change in procedure of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) in providing Summary of Findings letters to mandated reporters. Effective August 23, 2019, staff at the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) will ask all mandated reporters for a business email address, which will be entered into the CONNECTIONS database. Upon the approval and closure of that investigation, a system-generated email will be sent to that email address, with the Summary of Findings letter for that particular investigation as an attachment.

II. Background

New York State Social Services Law (SSL) 422(4)(A), as well as the *New York State Child Protective Services (CPS) Manual*, state that a person or official who is required to make a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment in their role as a mandated reporter shall receive, upon request, the findings of a CPS investigation resulting from that person's report.¹ If the request for information is made prior to the completion of an investigation of a report, the released information shall be limited to the statement that the report is "under investigation." If the request for information is made after the investigation is complete, the release shall be limited to whether the report is "indicated" or "unfounded."

¹ *New York State Child Protective Services Manual*, Chapter 6, Section O.

The CPS manual also states that when a report has been assigned for a family assessment response (FAR), there is no determination of “indicated” or “unfounded.” Therefore, a mandated reporter who asks for the findings of a report that was assigned to FAR will receive information indicating that the report was assigned to FAR, regardless of whether the case is closed or still in progress.²

Prior to this release, local departments of social services (LDSSs) were responsible for providing Summary of Findings letters upon request. In CONNECTIONS, the mandated reporter’s request for the Summary of Findings letter is documented with the reporter’s information. The LDSS would send the findings as generated and printed from CONNECTIONS, or printed manually through an LDSS stand-alone document.

This release informs LDSSs that when a mandated reporter requests a Summary of Findings letter and provides a business email address to the SCR, the LDSS will not be responsible to mail the Summary of Findings letter to the reporter. Rather, CONNECTIONS will automatically generate and email the letter to the mandated reporter as described above.

III. Program Implications

This change pertains to all reports made by a mandated reporter with an intake date of 8/23/19 or later, and where, at the time of intake to the SCR, they request a Summary of Findings letter and provide their business email address.

After the closure of a CPS investigation reported by a mandated reporter, a system-generated email with an attached Summary of Findings letter will be sent to the email address recorded by SCR staff in the intake report. A CPS investigation is considered closed after the LDSS supervisor provides final approval. The sending of the email will be documented in the CONNECTIONS “Event List” for that investigation stage.

OCFS’s role in distributing these letters will be limited to the circumstances above. The LDSS will still be responsible for transmitting the letters as previously described when

- 1) a request is made to the LDSS while the report is under investigation, as referenced in section II of this document; and
- 2) the mandated reporter does not wish to, or is unable to, leave an email address during the intake report to the SCR. In this instance, if the mandated reporter wishes to receive a Summary of Findings letter, the SCR will direct the reporter to request it through the appropriate LDSS office.

Aside from the benefits stated, capturing the mandated reporter’s email address at the time of intake will provide LDSSs with an additional contact resource for the reporting source. Like all information related to the source of the report, the user’s ability to obtain this information will depend on the user’s access to the proper business functions in CONNECTIONS.

Please note that the ability to generate and print the Summary of Findings letter from CONNECTIONS will remain the same.

² *New York State Child Protective Services Manual*, Chapter 5, Section J.

IV. Effective Date

This LCM is effective immediately upon release.

/s/ Lisa Ghartey Ogundimu

Issued by:

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