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Ref nr 13/1/P

ENQUIRIES: Dr L Corrie

STATE OF DISASTER: DIRECTIONS IN TERMS OF CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION SERVICES 18 MARCH 2020 – 16 APRIL 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

Following President Ramaphosa's announcement of a State of National Disaster on 15-03-2020, this special circular aims to address the management of the spread of the COVID-19 virus while securing the continued rendering of essential care services to children as per Regulations during the 21-day lockdown in the Western Cape (26 March 2020 at 24:00 until 24:00 16 April 2020). Social work services are declared essential services in rendering care services to children.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To provide for the continuation of out-of-centre subsidised essential child care services in the Western Cape during the period of lockdown.
- To ensure compliance to the norms and standards and standard operating procedures.
- To sustain the provision of family child care and community-based child care programmes.
- To support families in this period of disaster.

3. DISASTER MANAGEMENT ACT REGULATIONS



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Final lockdown regulations..pdf

4. UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL

- 4.1 Daily screening of staff to ascertain their state of health and whether or not they display symptoms of COVID-19 is encouraged. Employees displaying such symptoms must be requested to seek medical treatment from a medical professional or make use of the hotlines for information.
- 4.2 All preventative steps must be taken to reduce the spread of the virus which include, but are not limited to, making hand sanitiser, masks, protective clothing, gloves and paper towels available, and ensuring regular disinfecting of surfaces.
- 4.3 Training of staff to assist them to identify the risks and mitigating them sufficiently is recommended.
- 4.4 Where social service professionals are to work from home, they must access mandatory supervisory and mentoring support services which are overseen by social work managers.

- 4.5 The use of electronic media, WhatsApp groups, Skype, ZOOM, Face-Time and emails is to be used wherever possible and practical and to be supported by management.
- 4.6 Continuation with service delivery as far as is reasonably practicable.
- 4.7 Official communication channels must be used. Be wary of spreading fake news, especially via social media.

5. TRANSFER PAYMENT AGREEMENTS

- 5.1 Governing bodies are reminded of their obligations as they relates to the provisions of the Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA). Organisations intending to lockdown must inform the Department officially of the Board decision and provide alternative contingency measures to ensure the continuation of services by latest 27 March 2020. Designated child protection organisations remain responsible for the rendering of essential statutory child protection services.
- 5.2 Funding to organisations who are compliant will continue as per TPA.
- 5.3 Organisations to keep record of staff arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation purposes.
- 5.4 Monitoring and evaluation site visits by the Department are suspended until further notice.
- 5.5 Staff in funded posts must comply with SACSSP Registration requirements.
- 5.6 All funded organisations must continue to submit their Quarter 4 progress reports to the Department as per transfer payment agreement **not later than 09th April 2020**.
- 5.7 NGOs need to report savings in writing on their letterhead, requesting to use the funds towards the purchase of sanitisers, masks or protective clothing. All invoices need to be filed for M&E and AG purposes. An addendum TPA for this exclusive purpose will be entered into for three months and a progress report on the expenditure will be due end June 2020.

6. CHILD CARE SERVICES

- 6.1 This refers to services that safeguard and promote the overall well-being of children. It includes, but is not limited to: the protection of children from abuse, exploitation and other forms of harm and ensuring that their best interests are of paramount concern.
- 6.2 In the unfortunate event of a child being abused in the home, a safety assessment will be done. Removal will occur only if vital to the child's immediate safety.

7. CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- 7.1 A basic case management system will be implemented to track the services rendered.
- 7.2 Safety assessments will be conducted within 48 hours of receipt of a report of abuse (with Form 22). This will be followed by a safety decision and a safety plan from the designated social worker.
- 7.3 The outcome of safety assessments, safety plans and court orders will be available on case files for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

8. PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

- 8.1 Psycho-social support describes a wide range of care, support and protection programmes that aim to ensure the social, spiritual, emotional and psychological well-being of families and are mostly conducted on a preventative level.
- 8.2 Psycho-social support programmes in this context will be risk-informed (COVID-19) and rendered to families to strengthen their capacity to deal with this stressful disaster. Special caution will be taken to apply social distancing and the use of social media and telephonic counselling is supported.
- 8.3 Psycho-social support responds to and protects the child from abuse, exploitation and psychological stress associated with a disaster of this nature.

9. MEASURES APPLICABLE TO CATEGORIES OF SERVICES

Regional inter-agency coordination systems must be supported.

Health services can be accessed on local or district level.

Social service professionals must keep to the scope of social work practice.

FAMILY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS
<p>Contingency plans are available to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The provision of psycho-social care and support services to families infected and affected by COVID-19.• Access to trauma counselling, integration and re-unification services to persons affected to mitigate stigmatisation.• Assessment of families at risk and appropriate referral for early intervention services.• Parents are empowered in terms of their responsibilities and rights towards child-rearing amidst the closure of ECD centres and schools.• Ongoing awareness in the community on the prevention and control of COVID-19 through social media and other electronic methods.
DROP-IN-CENTRES
<p>Contingency plans are available to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuation of services by staggering numbers and avoiding crowding situations.• Providing food as per registration requirement.• Supporting families and children with hygiene.• Psycho-social support services.• Referral of children and families who need medical support or specialised services.• Sharing relevant information on COVID-19 with communities.
PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION AND HIV ORGANISATIONS
<p>Contingency plans provide for and ensure:</p>

- The continuation of services by staggering of numbers and avoiding crowding situations.
- Referral of persons who need special support services, e.g. medical attention or assessment of children.
- Share information with the communities on COVID-19 and attend to the dispelling of myths.
- Psycho-social support services.
- Strengthening of family reunification services.
- Distribution of food parcels to households as per transfer payment agreement.

SHELTER SERVICES

Shelters have contingency plans that indicate:

- The implementation of the universal precautionary measures with special focus on high standards of hygiene in shelters.
- All persons entering shelters to be screened and follow hygiene practices.
- Sufficient space between beds is allowed.
- Space for self-quarantine/isolation.
- Suspension of visits by family members and service providers.
- Networking with local clinics for the testing and referral for medical services.
- Continued rendering of reunification services.
- Information sharing with homeless adults, strengthening personal hygiene practices.

ESSENTIAL STATUTORY CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

Designated child protection organisations have contingency plans in place aligned to the following:

- Designated social workers are to communicate with local children's courts to enquire about specific measures put in place at the court to contain the spread of the virus.
- Any challenges in approaching a children's court must be reported to the Regional and Provincial DSD Offices.
- The presiding officer has the discretion as to whether a child should be present in court – some courts (e.g. Cape Town, Laingsburg and Wynberg children's courts) have already given guidance on court attendance during this period.
- Social workers must explore the postponement of cases via a letter, co-signed by the supervisor, delivered via email. The written views of parent/caregiver/child must as far as possible be obtained. Where it is not possible to see the parties, the social worker attempts to get their views in the form of a telephonic consultation, WhatsApp or email, which evidence must then be made available to the court. The social worker will follow up on emails sent with the clerk of the court to ensure

that communication was received and confirm whether attendance is required or not.

- It is strongly advised that matters where a party or a child travelled outside the RSA within three weeks before the court date OR has a cough, runny nose, fever or any symptom of a cold, flu, respiratory infection or other symptoms of COVID-19 of whatever cause be postponed.
- The Protocol on the Uniform Integrated Multi-Agency Referral Pathway for Child Protection in the Western Cape applies to the reporting in terms of section 110 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 to designated child protection services.
- Social workers are to only respond to an emergency report after a telephonic pre-screening and where the outcome of the safety assessment within 48 hours clearly indicates high risk or serious harm. Multi-disciplinary consultations will inform decision-making and a valid court order will be available in these matters.
- Where alleged child trafficking is reported, the social worker must report it to the SAPS and Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit (FCS). The outcome of the safety assessment done by the designated social worker must indicate emergency placement in a child and youth care centre (CYCC) per valid court order.
- The emergency removal of a child must comply with the Western Cape Standard Operating Procedure for the removal of a child into temporary safe care in terms of section 152(1) of the Children's Act 38 of 2005.
- The necessary measures will be in place to account for all children moved during the lockdown period.
- Social workers who attend to emergency matters and conduct home visits will be **issued with protective clothing** and must take precautionary steps for protection. However, home visits should only be conducted where no other means of collecting information on the child's and family's status and the safety of the child are available and the child's immediate safety is at risk.
- National SAPS Instruction 3 of 2010: The Care and Protection of Children in terms of the Children's Act and the Protocol on the Uniform Integrated Multi-Agency Referral Pathway for Child Protection in the Western Cape apply in the event a child is removed by a police official.
- Where appropriate a child will be supported to access health care services.
- Foster Care Supervision services will be telephonically monitored.
- Non-payment of SASSA grants will be dealt with by the relevant authorities.
- Transfers in terms of section 171, section 168 leave of absence and, section 169 approvals to leave the Republic are suspended until further notice. Special conditions will be recorded by the Canalisation Officer.
- Ensure adherence to and validity of children's court orders.

- Coordinate services with the Department of Health and the SAPS to prevent child-family separation.
- Where family support services are required, caregivers must be supported to access community-based services by following existing referral protocol.
- The Protocol for the rendering of After-Hour Child Protection Services stands for only emergency matters that meet the criteria stipulated in this circular.
- Submission of Form 22 and statistics to the Provincial Office within existing timelines is mandatory as per database kept of services rendered.
- In the unfortunate event of the death of a temporary safe care or a foster parent, provision will as far as practically possible be made for the admission of the affected child into a CYCC provided that a legal court order is available. This excludes a child in the care of a family member or caregiver.
- In the unfortunate event of the death of a child in alternative care, a Form 40 must be electronically submitted to Canalisation and monitored by the case manager.

ISIBINDI

Contingency plans are available to ensure:

- Services to vulnerable children be aligned to NACCW Disaster Management Guidelines.
- New Safe Park rules aligned to Regulations are to be introduced by the NACCW.
- Share information on COVID-19 and address myths and related trauma.
- Appropriately refer children who show symptoms for medical services or emergency child protection services.

CLUSTER FOSTER CARE

Contingency plans are available aligned to the following essential services to ensure the safety, care and protection of the children placed in the scheme:

- Strengthen hygiene standards: hand sanitisers, masks, gloves and aprons.
- Sufficient food supplies for the lockdown period.
- Medicines available to children.
- Promptly attend to children in need of medical care.
- Leave of absence applications are on hold for the lockdown period.
- No visitations are permitted during the lockdown period, to curb the spread of COVID-19.

PLACEMENT IN TEMPORARY SAFE CARE

All child and youth care centre's remain operational as an essential service. Centralised admissions can be contacted where emergency temporary safe care placement is required. Admissions are strictly limited to cases where the

criteria for emergency placements, as stipulated under essential statutory services, are met and a valid court order available.

Contact number for centralised admissions 021-826 6050.

10. TRAVEL PERMITS

- 10.1 Travel permits are essential in cases of emergency statutory removal of children in order to attend children's court.
- 10.2 Find Annexure C attached that the organisation must issue for their staff.
- 10.3 Social workers must have ID cards and a copy of Annexure C available when travelling.

11. WORK ARRANGEMENTS

- 11.1 Working from home is supported where staff can be contacted by telephone and email.
- 11.2 All offices must provide notifications on the doors with an emergency number of a social worker or designated contact person or a message on the phone with emergency numbers. All calls be diverted to the emergency number.
- 11.3 The Department is in no position to take over services that DCPOs were contracted to render.

12. MEDIA

- 12.1 Where media queries are received regarding services rendered, the normal protocol will apply where the Department will request the service partner to respond before a response is provided.

13. ETHICAL PRACTICE

- 13.1 While it is acknowledged that services will mostly be rendered by social service practitioners working from home, the highest standards in terms of ethical practice must be upheld.
- 13.2 Special care must be taken to protect the confidentiality of beneficiary information and the content of case files.

14. ACCESSING SUPPORT SERVICES

The following support services can be accessed:

DSD Regional offices	All the offices of the DSD are operational.
Social Relief	DSD Regional Offices coordinate referral to targeted feeding sites.
Victim empowerment services	Information on accessing shelter services will be available on Regional level.

	Note that all first admissions are subject to a two-week compulsory stay in identified shelters. Contact: 0800 428 428 or SMS help to 31531 Please Call Me: *120*7867#.)
Shelters for homeless adults	All funded shelters remain operational during this period.
Thuthuzela Care Centres	All centres are operational.
Human Trafficking Hotline	0800 222 777
GBV Telephonic Counselling	0800 150 150
GBV Command Centre	0800 428 428
Childline	0800 055 555
Lifeline	0861 322 323
ACVV	021-461 7437
CWSA	066 4870 789
SASSA	Contact: 0800 60 10 11 PostBank: 0800 53 54 55

15. EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Cognisance should be taken of the potential psycho-social impact, such as anxiety and other stress factors, of the COVID-19 outbreak on our employees and their families. The following can be accessed for support and advice:

RELEVANT CALL CENTRE	PROVINCIAL HOTLINE	WC DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE
TELEPHONE NUMBER	021 928 4102	021 937 6313

The National Department of Health has developed a service via WhatsApp where the latest information on COVID-19 can be accessed on +27 600 123 456.

Your co-operation with implementing the special measures put in place for the period until 16 April 2020 is appreciated. It is in the interest of all that the spread of COVID-19 be stopped, but that children continue to be protected within our legal mandates. Any changes to these guidelines will be communicated via email to all the service delivery partners.

Yours sincerely

DR LESLEY CORRIE
DIRECTOR: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
DATE: 25 MARCH 2020