



Texas Department of
Family and Protective Services

Adult Protective Services Update DFPS Council

APS Associate Commissioner

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State Auditor's Office Audit of APS

- State Auditor's Office (SAO) has completed and released their audit on *The Department and Family Protective Services' Adult Protective Services Investigations*.
- The audit helped highlight areas that are in need of improvement.
- In many of these areas, Adult Protective Services (APS) and the agency began improvements before the SAO audit. In other areas, APS is beginning the process of implementing SAO recommendations.
- The SAO focused their sample on areas where compliance would likely be low. The audit acknowledges that the sample used was likely not representative of the APS client population; however, the audit will help APS address deficiencies in these important areas.
- DFPS and APS are appreciative of the efforts of the SAO.



Texas Department of
Family and Protective Services

CHAPTER 1

**DFPS Did Not Always Make Regular Contacts With Clients
or Follow Its Policies for Supervisory Review of Cases;
However, It Made Required Efforts to Address Identified
Client Needs**

Did Not Always Make Regular Contacts With Clients to Ensure Their Safety as Required By Its Policies

Recommendation:

- DFPS should implement a process to ensure that caseworkers make contacts with clients at the frequencies required by the Department's policies.

Management's Response:

October 2017, APS initiated use of Insight, a tool that helps the caseworker manage their casework on a daily basis. The tool is linked to the case management system and is updated daily, allowing anyone to produce a color coded dashboard showing compliance with contacts and indicating which contacts are coming due.

Has a Control Requiring Supervisory Approval of Cases Prior to Closure; However, That Control Was Not Always Operating Effectively

Recommendations:

- DFPS should ensure that: There is adequate segregation of duties in its process for reviewing casefiles to verify that investigations were conducted in accordance with applicable requirements.
- Its reviews of cases submitted for closure are in compliance with the timelines established by Department policy.

Management's Response:

Due to turnover and abandoned caseloads, rare occasions when supervisors, managers or a designee to approve cases for closure that are assigned to their own workload. Long term, APS will pursue IT changes to the case management system.

Generally Initiated Investigations in a Timely Manner, Performed Required Assessments of Client Safety, and Made Adequate Efforts to Address Identified Client Needs as Required

Recommendations:

- DFPS should: Ensure that it initiates investigations within the required timelines and conducts assessments in accordance with the applicable policies and procedures.
- Ensure that it interviews all required parties during an investigation.

Management's Response:

October 2017, APS has implemented Insight which provides daily updated information on Recidivism Review, Case Initiation, IFTF, Safety Assessment, Date of Last Safety Contact, Safety Contacts, RORA Completion, Strength and Needs Assessment, Date of Last Service Contact.

Distributed to staff "Did you know" communication from the Director of Field

Generally Followed Its Policies Related to Closing Certain Investigations

Recommendation:

- DFPS should ensure that its caseworkers and supervisors follow its policies and procedures for cases in which the client refuses to cooperate with an investigation.

Management's Response:

- *APS will provide training to management and caseworkers on the requirements for cases in which the client refuses to cooperate. APS will monitor compliance through Quality Assurance case reading process and improved Supervisory approval process (same as responses to 1-A and 1-B).*



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CHAPTER 2

DFPS Did Not Always Make Regular Contacts With Clients or Follow Its Policies for Supervisory Review of Cases; However, It Made Required Efforts to Address Identified Client Needs

Did Not Always Follow Its Policies and Procedures When Determining That Clients Were Ineligible for APS Services

Recommendations:

- DFPS should ensure that: Determinations of ineligibility are adequately supported and made in accordance with its policies and procedures.
- Cases that are not within the jurisdiction of APS are referred to the appropriate programs.

Management's Response:

- APS will review its policy on eligibility, regarding definitions of disability and clarify as needed. APS will train all personnel on the policy utilizing "Policy-in-a-Box".
 - Provide training to all staff to improve their ability to identify and refer cases that do not meet APS definitions or jurisdiction to the appropriate investigating agencies.
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Provided Purchased Client Services Only to Eligible Individuals and Ensured That Purchased Client Services Were for Allowable Goods and Services and Met a Documented Client Need

Recommendation:

- The DFPS should ensure that Purchased Client Services transactions for more than \$750 receive all approvals by its policies.

Management's Response:

- Section 3650 of the APS Handbook will be revised to indicate that one second-line management approval is required for transactions that exceed \$750.
 - This policy change retains the higher level approval and allows for approval documentation to be captured in the case management system.
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CHAPTER 3

DFPS user access management and access control processes for certain information systems that contain sensitive and confidential information exhibited weaknesses.

Should Improve Its Controls Over User Access

Recommendations:

- DFPS should improve its controls and processes to ensure that access to its information systems is appropriately restricted.
- Strengthen its controls and processes over user accounts to ensure that access is disabled when a user no longer needs it for their current job responsibilities.

Management's Response:

DFPS has implemented a series of controls to mitigate the risk of unauthorized user access to sensitive data within its systems. The agency maintains that with these controls in place no instances of unauthorized access were identified during the scope of this particular audit.
