



Operational Guidelines: Social Workforce

June 2020



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Operational Guidelines: Social Workforce

Access to Justice for Children and Youth during COVID-19

Child Protection Case Management to support the reintegration of children in conflict with the law: a must in the COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

These Operational Guidelines are intended to provide practical "how to" recommendations and principles of action for the Social Workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic to support children and youth in conflict with the law who:

- have been deprived of liberty¹;
- due to the COVID-19 pandemic have been released² or are in the process of being released from detention; or
- were already in the process of reintegration³ through non-custodial measures and their reintegration plans require modification due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Social Workforce" is a broad term which encompasses a range of different professionals⁴. For the purposes of these Operational Guidelines, the term includes social workers, case workers, and similar workers (para-social workers) who work with children in conflict with the law. It should be noted that probation officers⁵ (part of

¹ In addition to pre-trial detention situations, for the purposes of these Operational Guidelines deprivation of liberty refers to at least 6 other detention situations included in the United Nations Global Study of Children Deprived of Liberty, 2019, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/StudyChildrenDeprivedLiberty/Pages/Index.aspx>

² The legal grounds for pandemic release of detained children during the COVID-19 pandemic vary greatly among different countries.

³ **Reintegration of children in conflict with the law** means the re-establishment of roots and a place in society for children who have come into conflict with the law, such that they feel part of, and accepted by, their families and their communities. Reintegration is a social, economic and political process, and includes such measures as low intensity counselling, family coaching, vocational training, community service, education resources, therapy groups, cultural and leisure activities, provision of reintegration kits, etc. Reintegration does not cover only the post-release stage but should be an approach to be concretely implemented since the first contact of the child with the justice system, while in detention and (if the child is released) implemented by way of diversion or mechanisms alternative to detention. Reintegration measures should be tailored to the individual circumstances of the child's case. During the current health pandemic, reintegration must be tailored to accommodate the relevant COVID-19 safety measures, but its main goal should be preserved as much as possible.

As a reference guidance on reintegration of children in conflict with the law, see Terre des hommes publication "Give me a chance, but a real one. How to improve the Reintegration of Children in Conflict with the Law, An analysis of the concept, key standards and practices in the MENA region", March 2020, available at: <https://www.tdh.ch/en/media-library/documents/a2j-mena-reintegration-children-conflict-law-give-chance-real-one>

⁴ As defined in the Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection, UNICEF, February 2019, available at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/53851/file/Guidelines%20to%20strengthen%20social%20service%20for%20child%20protection%202019.pdf>, referring to the definition of the Social Workforce provided by the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (GSWA), available at: <http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/defining-social-service-workforce>

⁵ For specific information regarding the role of probation officers during COVID-19, the Confederation of European Probation (CEP) has published certain measures and protocols on how probation services in Europe should operate during the COVID-19 outbreak, available at: <https://www.cep-probation.org/covid-19-measures-and-protocols-in-probation>

the justice apparatus as such) play a unique role in the care of children in conflict with the law and, therefore, coordination between them and the social workforce is necessary.

These Operational Guidelines focus on the role of social workforce in both applying the Child Protection Case Management System to support the reintegration of children with the law and in its adaptation during the COVID-19 pandemic. These Operational Guidelines follow and connect **Child Justice, Child Protection Case Management**⁶ and **Child Protection in Emergencies**⁷ technical guidance and approaches.

Social workforce, security forces and legal professionals are cornerstones of Child Justice Systems across the world. All three groups of professionals should strive to follow and implement a **co-operative and interdisciplinary approach**⁸ when working with children in conflict with the law, and especially during the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, operational guidelines have also been developed for security forces and legal professionals, and included as separate, but complementary, chapters in this publication.

These Operational Guidelines also **complement numerous technical notes**⁹ compiled by different interagency organizations pertaining to children deprived of liberty during COVID-19 which focus on the "what to do," as well as guidance on child protection case management, where children in detention are one of the specific vulnerable groups requiring particular attention.

Finally, these Operational Guidelines should be **contextualized** in accordance with local regulations, professionalism of the social workforce personnel in country and the specific COVID-19-related measures enacted by national and sub-national authorities.

⁶ **Child Protection Case Management** as a comprehensive and tailored, individualised approach: *A way of organising and carrying out work to address an individual child's (and their family's) needs in an appropriate, systematic and timely manner, through direct support and/or referrals, and in accordance with a project or programme's objectives.* (Interagency guidelines for Case Management & Child Protection. Global Child Protection Working Group <https://alliancecpha.org/en/child-protection-online-library/inter-agency-guidelines-case-management-and-child-protection>.)

⁷ On the thematic **Child Protection in Emergencies**, Terre des hommes counts with 3 guidance documents: (i) Thematic Policy (available at: https://www.tdh.ch/sites/default/files/b2cfd8b0-a91a-4406-88fa-c68cfece4dbb_tdh_pol-thema2013_crisis-huma_en_light_original.pdf), (ii) Operational Methodological Manual (available at: https://www.tdh.ch/sites/default/files/tdh_manuel-ope2013_crisis-huma_en_interactif.pdf) and (iii) Programme Guidance (available at: https://www.tdh.ch/sites/default/files/tdh_manuel-prog2013_crisis-huma_en_interactif.pdf).

⁸ During COVID-19, Child Justice more than ever requires strong coordination and cooperation among the different professionals involved in the treatment and well-being of children in conflict with the law. The principle of interdisciplinarity in Child Justice calls for co-management and co-responsibility by legal professionals, social actors and security forces involved in processes pertaining to children in conflict with the law at all stages of the legal process, including after the case is judicially closed (the follow-up phase). Interdisciplinarity is essential for decision-making and implementing decisions regarding children's cases, and it is *sine qua non* for a safe and sustainable reintegration pathway for them. During the COVID-19 pandemic, even when the reintegration process is adapted to the circumstances, interdisciplinarity is to be seriously considered and applied.

⁹ Other relevant technical notes compiled by different organizations include: (i) Technical Note: COVID-19 and Children Deprived of their Liberty by the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (<https://alliancecpha.org/en/child-protection-online-library/technical-note-covid-19-and-children-deprived-their-liberty>), (ii) IASC Interim Guidance on COVID-19: Focus on Persons Deprived of Their Liberty (<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/other/iasc-interim-guidance-covid-19-focus-persons-deprived-their-liberty-developed-ohchr-and-who>), (iii) WHO Interim Guidance on the prevention and control of COVID-19 in prisons and places of detention (http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/434026/Preparedness-prevention-and-control-of-COVID-19-in-prisons.pdf?ua=1), (iv) Terre des hommes Lausanne Foundation - Accelerate release of children from detention; Protect Children from COVID-19 (<https://www.tdh.ch/en/statements/release-children-detention-covid-19>), (v) Case Management Preparedness and Response to COVID-19 - Rapid Contingency Considerations by Terre des hommes (<https://covid.childhub.org/en/child-protection-multimedia-resources/case-management-preparedness-and-response-covid-19-rapid>).

The role and key objectives of the social workforce interacting with children in conflict with the law during the COVID-19 pandemic

- The social workforce has two main, interrelated **objectives** in working with children in conflict with the law, which should be maintained and appropriately adapted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - ensuring the wellbeing of the child – this means ensuring the child's psychosocial wellbeing, resilience and treatment, while using appropriate safeguards to prevent or diminish the risk of exposure of the child to COVID-19; and
 - maximizing the chances of reintegration having a positive impact on the child – through a strengths-based approach, support and accompaniment, family involvement, ensuring access to essential and dignified services, and addressing concerns systematically applying the **best interests of the child** throughout the process.
- The Social Workforce plays an **essential role** during COVID-19 with children in conflict with the law, including:
 - full accompaniment of the child during all the stages of the judicial process, including court appearances or equivalent;
 - managing all case information and case progress and maintaining continuous communication with the child, family and the relevant legal professionals;
 - coordinating necessary complementary processes and services and being responsible for convening and informing any other parties involved in the case as needed (including other professionals, such as security forces, judges, prosecutors, educators, health and mental health professionals, etc.). Service coordination includes (but is not limited to) community mobilization, family tracing and reunification, and the identification of foster or alternative care for the child when required.

Mali & Mauritania

Interdisciplinary protocols to organize and support the reintegration and follow-up for children who are either in detention or released due to the COVID-19 pandemic have been signed by judicial authorities, social workforce, detention center staff, service providers and Terre des hommes. In Mali, a Committee for Monitoring and Reintegration of Children in Contact with the Law (COSURE) was set up after the signing of the protocol on 3 April 2020. So far, 52 children have been released and are being supported through this Committee. In Mauritania, the protocol signed between Terre des hommes and the Ministry of Justice on 9 April 2020 set the steps for ensuring minimum social services as well as working conditions for social workers, to provide assistance and follow-up services to children kept in detention, as well as to those who have been released.

Jordan

The case management system and its forms have been adapted to adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly regarding children released from prison where the reintegration plans have been individually assessed and adjusted by social and case workers.

Gaza

Family group conferencing activities are being organized through long-distance services (videoconferencing and phone follow-up) by social workers assisting with the reintegration of children released due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These activities remain not only crucial for ensuring that families are supportive, participate in the reintegration process and understand the situation of the child, but also for the child to express him/herself, hold responsibility and reach agreements with the social worker and his/her family members pertaining to his/her reintegration milestones. It is the social worker who prepares the parties by phone before the sessions take place and who oversees communicating and coordinating the information with the caseworker and the judicial authorities (probation officer and judges assigned to the case).

- providing lay counselling to the child and his or her family, which is particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic given the disruption to in-person interaction and partial or total unavailability of family contact;
- ensuring tailor-made reintegration plans during the COVID-19 pandemic, which must include child and family participation, as well as follow-up mechanisms;
- providing social reports to justice actors regarding the judicial review of the case (with a view to sustain the child's release); and
- undertaking an important advocacy role by identifying and lobbying for innovative solutions to expedite the release of children from remand or detention and sustain this measure in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Colombia

In Colombia, a follow-up mechanism (online/phone) has been put in place to manage messages, punctual flow of information and health sensitization activities with youth who started their post-release reintegration plans before the COVID-19 pandemic arose. These activities, factored into the adapted reintegration plan during COVID-19, also serve to provide youth whose reintegration process has been impacted with lay counselling and support while maximizing wellbeing during the pandemic.

Myanmar

Following the amnesty granted by the Myanmar President on 17 April 2020 to mark New Year celebrations, 172 children deprived of liberty in the so-called "Training Schools", over 80% of whom were charged with drug-related crimes, were released. Since their release, case and social workers at Terre des hommes, in coordination with competent authorities in-country, have initiated and adapted case management approaches for the COVID-19 pandemic, the process of family reintegration (nuclear and kinship) and identification of services available to guarantee rehabilitation/treatment according to the individual needs assessed.

Operational guidance for the social workforce in their interaction with children and youth in conflict with the law during COVID-19

A child protection case management approach is not only still suitable, but remains essential during the COVID-19 pandemic; however, specific adaptations must be made to address disrupted services and the limitations imposed on the justice and legal sectors during this time. Below are two key adaptations to the case management approach to be considered by social workforce professionals:

- Mainstream the reintegration approach with regard to all the different steps of the case management process (adapted to the pandemic circumstances and overseen by the social workforce assigned to it) not only during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also during its aftermath.
- Maintain (or establish), to the extent possible, alternative pathways and services for case management responses for children in conflict with the law when the usual formal channels have been disrupted by COVID-19 measures or were non-existent before the pandemic arose.

COVID-19 and the measures that national and local governments have put in place to mitigate its spread may have disrupted pre-existing child protection systems or services; therefore, new protocols may need to be implemented by the social workforce to handle child cases appropriately during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, many detention centers were not connected with child protection case management systems before

the COVID-19 measures were put in place, which means that children were not registered within them – a situation that makes it more difficult for the social workforce to identify and work with children who are either kept in detention or released. Making efforts to collaborate with and strengthen child protection and case management systems (pre-existent and adapted, or alternative, if they are not functioning or did not exist) during and in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic is considered to be crucial.

Taking into account these proposed adaptations, and adapted prevention and safety measures for remote or in-person support¹⁰, below are the proposed core steps for managing cases of children in conflict with the law during the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., child protection case management steps or CP CM Steps¹¹):

CP CM Step	How to do it during the COVID-19 pandemic?
Identification & registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Work with detention staff/security forces/justice authorities to identify cases where the child is to be kept in detention even during COVID-19 and advocate for release due to the pandemic's negative effects. A contextualized interdisciplinary action protocol, led by the social workforce and allocating decision-making powers and responsibilities among the key actors involved, should be established or adapted to the pandemic's conditions. – Review children's files with special focus on the latest social inquiry report¹² carried out and the judicial stage of the case in order to identify/register the case for release. – Determine individualized risk attribution against prioritization criteria during COVID-19 and vulnerability factors of the child and his/her eventual receiving by family (if the case is to be proposed for release). – Take in and/or register cases that are not part of the child protection case management system where possible, or, alternatively, establish a registration system (at least with all the detention centers centralized within one public authority – e.g., Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Affairs or homologue). – Obtain informed consent of the child/family before registration of the case. – Consider internal capacities and the appropriate ratio of children's cases per social/case worker during COVID-19 pandemic (the recommended caseload is no

¹⁰ Children in conflict with the law are considered particularly sensitive cases during COVID-19. A flow chart to guide and support decision-making on case management support (either through personal interactions or remotely) depending on the specific risk attribution for each child's case is available here: <http://socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/child-protection-case-management-covid19-decision-making-essential-personal-interactions>

¹¹ Interagency case management standard forms (to be adapted according to the applicable national/sub-national context) for each CP CM step have been finalised by the Case Management Task Force and globally available at: <https://alliancecpha.org/en/child-protection-hub/case-management-task-force>; http://www.cpcnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CM_guidelines_ENG_.pdf

¹² A social inquiry report (or equivalent) is a document usually created and updated by a social worker/probation officer. It contains the child's personal information, as well as details regarding the child's background, family and community environment, the child's case, including circumstances of the case, judicial stages, reintegration plan recommendations, services to be received, follow-up on measures and services agreed, etc. The social inquiry report is a crucial document as it would eventually be reviewed and considered by the judicial authorities while adjudicating the child's case.

CP CM Step	How to do it during the COVID-19 pandemic?
	<p>more than 25 cases per social/case worker,¹³ and even less depending on the complexity of the cases and reintegration processes).</p>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A social worker's assessment of a child's case should encompass risk and protective factors, and address to the maximum extent possible the following factors¹⁴: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) family/caregivers: assess vulnerability, willingness and capacity to accept / care for the child and meet the child's basic needs, etc.; (ii) community and detention facility capacities and conditions: assess weaknesses, strengths, support required, and, presently, additionally assess collateral child protection risks and concerns due to the COVID-19 pandemic;¹⁵ (iii) basic needs of the child: food and non-food items (e.g., shelter, hygiene products), primary health and mental health specialized services, livelihood, psychological and educational needs; (iv) status of the judicial case; and (v) status of the development (achievements and challenges) of the reintegration plan, if any. - Assessment is to be registered, kept with the child's file, and updated in the social inquiry report or similar document.
Case Plan/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based on the assessment and any pre-existing case plan (where applicable), consider developing two case plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) short-term plan to be implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic ("reintegration in transition plan"); and (ii) medium/long-term plan for the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. <p>Both plans should be connected and subject to review as the pandemic circumstances change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The "reintegration in transition" plan should be developed with the child and the family (use conference calls if staff movement and access to remand and detention facilities is restricted due to the pandemic; high risk cases to receive physical support when safety allows—prioritize appropriately) and at a minimum should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ services to be provided to the child;

¹³ As advised in the Child Protection Minimum Standards: Standard 18 available at: [Child Protection Minimum Standards. Standard 18: Case Management](#)

¹⁴ As advised in the Child Protection Minimum Standards: Standard 14 - Applying a socio-ecological approach to child protection programming, available at: https://alliancecpha.org/en/CPMS_home

¹⁵ Examples of "collateral child protection risks and concerns" include separation of children from their caregivers, rejection by the child's family, social exclusion, sexual and gender-based violence, neglect, psychosocial distress, abuse (physical or emotional) and child labor. They are listed in the Terre des hommes Child Protection Case Management Preparedness and Response Guidance available at: <https://covid.childhub.org/en/child-protection-multimedia-resources/case-management-preparedness-and-response-covid-19-rapid>.

CP CM Step	How to do it during the COVID-19 pandemic?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ allocation of the commitments/responsibilities of the parties involved in the plan (including obtaining consent from the child and family); ▪ information, resources and communication channels (including contact between children, family and lawyers for those in detention); and ▪ referral and follow-up mechanisms for the social worker assigned to each case and the other key professionals involved in the case plan (e.g., security forces/prosecutor/judges/lawyers). <p>– The medium/long-term plan should be the pre-existing reintegration plan (where it exists) updated to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the "reintegration in transition" plan during the COVID-19 pandemic (its results, pending issues to be addressed, etc.); and ▪ a proposal for the continuation of required services in the aftermath of the pandemic that should also include the legal/judicial pathways that the case may be subjected to once judicial activity is reactivated.
Implementation of the case plan (reintegration plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Map/identify other key actors (such as security forces and legal professionals assigned to each case, health professionals, education actors, etc.) for coordination and to transfer key information for the cases that require such other actors' follow-up. – Identify channels for coordination with other social workforce professionals and other disciplines (remote or, when safe and appropriate, in person), to allow the exchange of information during all phases of the case, including in relation to best practices, challenges, solutions, referrals, and service updates. – Determine the services available to children in conflict with the law and the manner in which such services are provided (e.g., consider preventive safety measures in case of face-to-face interaction or the possibility of providing support remotely).¹⁶ Restorative justice services¹⁷ should be considered when feasible.

¹⁶ Terre des hommes has developed a series of info sheets on COVID-19 to help guide the most suitable child protection service modality, the most appropriate technology, including a decision flowchart, ethical considerations, and specific elements regarding informed consent and data protection. The info sheets are available at: <https://childhub.org/en/child-protection-multimedia-resources/infosheet-covid-19-child-protection-services-choosing-modality>

In addition, several guidelines regarding providing services via distance modalities during the COVID-19 crisis have been developed. Some examples include: Guidance for Child Protection Case workers to share with Children or Caregivers on COVID-19 Preventive Safety Measures when doing Case Management Work, available at: <http://socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/guidance-child-protection-case-workers-share-children-or-caregivers-covid-19-preventive>; Child Protection Case Management Guidance for Remote Phone Follow-up in COVID-19, available at: <http://socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/child-protection-case-management-guidance-remote-phone-follow-covid-19>; Remote Psychological First Aid during the COVID-19 Outbreak, available at: <http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/remote-psychological-first-aid-during-covid-19-outbreak>; Child Protection Case Management – COVID-19 Decision-Making on Essential Personal Interactions, available at: <http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/child-protection-case-management-covid19-decision-making-essential-personal-interactions>

¹⁷ The European Forum for Restorative Justice, among others, has published some insights and recommendations on how to adapt restorative justice practices during COVID-19: <https://www.euforumrj.org/en/restorative-justice-and-covid-19-responding-restoratively-duringto-crisis>

CP CM Step	How to do it during the COVID-19 pandemic?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider providing remote lay counselling directly by the social worker to the child and his or her family as part of the accompaniment provided. - Ensure the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), information materials on COVID-19 measures and modalities of dissemination of the same to children, families and others involved in the child's case. Ensure the safety of the child and family before in-person interaction whenever possible. - Determine the availability of communication means (for the child and/or family) in case these are needed for follow-up purposes. - Supervise the provision of basic and complementary services identified in the "reintegration in transition plan" in accordance with availability and need (this can be provided progressively, as agreed in the plan). - Whenever possible, provide services directly or by referral (e.g., services related to health, mental health and psychosocial support, education, livelihood, including food items/cash/non-food items, legal services). At a minimum, such services should include counselling and representation, as well as restorative justice. - Implement remote modalities whenever suitable and possible,¹⁸ and use physical outreach only in high-risk cases and to the extent allowed pursuant to local COVID-19 measures. - Update the case plan and/or social inquiry report on a weekly basis.
Follow-up & review	<p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - with the child/family/service providers throughout the case management process (remotely and/or in person), implementing any required review process; - with prosecutors/judges/lawyers involved with the case, in the event judicial review of the case is renewed. <p>Review and re-evaluate the following aspects of the case plan(s) in the context of evolving COVID-19 measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - case risk attribution; - any challenges and achievements; - how support services are being provided (including gaps in the provision of support services and progressive availability of services); - how the child and other key actors are honoring commitments agreed to in the case plan(s). <p>Update the social inquiry report (or equivalent):</p> <p>Written updates reflecting the progress of the case plan are necessary, especially if there is subsequent judicial review of the case.</p>

¹⁸ Refer to footnote 16. In addition, a comprehensive list of resources can be found on the web page of the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, under the Resources section, available at: <http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources>

CP CM Step	How to do it during the COVID-19 pandemic?
	<p>Redistribute the caseload within the social workforce network as needed:</p> <p>It is recommended to redistribute the caseload every two weeks.</p>
Case Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close the "reintegration in transition" plan if and when the COVID-19-related risks of the case have been adequately addressed, and the child/family can be safely transitioned to medium/long-term solutions. <p>While criteria for case closure can vary per context/case, at a minimum it is recommended to consider the following non-exhaustive list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a supportive household with no health risk issues, and with safety measures in place and working; ▪ Health risks at detention facilities pertaining to COVID-19 are at the lowest level and safety measures are in place allowing for face-to-face services; ▪ There is positive assessment of MHPSS support received by the child; ▪ There is minimum family income (through livelihood support or pre-existing); and ▪ Adequate legal counselling and judicial follow-up in the case is possible (both in cases where the child is released and where the child remains in detention). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transition to the medium/long-term reintegration plan when COVID-19 measures are sufficiently relaxed to allow it, and after a review and update to its implementation conditions based on the results of the "reintegration in transition" plan. - Close the medium/long-term reintegration plan: criteria for closure will vary depending on the stated objectives of the plan. This phase should include a follow-up within 1 to 3 months after closure.

Two cross-cutting elements of the major actions to be led by the social workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic are:

<p>Information management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Record only the essential information/data and share only with relevant professionals. Data Protection procedures remain applicable: confidentiality is crucial in the context of COVID-19; breaching confidentiality can expose children to increased harm and risks (e.g., stigma from the community). ✓ Adaptation of safe fast-tracking procedures (which should comport with any applicable local COVID-19 measures or guidelines) that require only essential and straight-forward information on the child case. 	<p>Monitoring, evaluation, learning & accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use appropriate information/data gathered to portray analysis, trends and solutions to improve preparedness, enhance non-custodial measures for children (e.g. sustainability of the release after the COVID-19 pandemic) and child justice system improvements. ✓ Set-up adapted accountability mechanisms (e.g., complaint mechanisms) for children and families (applicable also in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic).
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- ✓ Case management forms: in case they are available and can be adapted, the recommendation is to keep those; in case they are not available, standard case management forms that may be customized according to the applicable context are available (*refer to footnote 11*).

Essential principles of action for social workforce personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic

- A special effort should be made during the COVID-19 pandemic to apply **child safeguarding standards and measures**.¹⁹ Such child safeguarding measures must be tailored to reflect any applicable local COVID-19-related safety measures and guidelines and should reflect the **deontological and ethical principles** for the social workforce²⁰.

Commonly, detention facilities for children and youth either do not employ or do not systematically apply safeguarding measures specifically geared toward the needs of children. Such safeguarding measures are critical for preparedness and responsiveness in the disruptive context generated by COVID-19 (and in its aftermath).

- It is essential that **gender and diversity** considerations (including its intersectionality) are applied by the social workforce personnel in their interaction with children in order to overcome existing biases, prejudices, discrimination, and challenge inequalities in the distribution of power²¹, all of which are exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. All children are entitled to flourish and fully exercise their rights at all times, including during the pandemic.
- It is imperative that social workforce professionals dealing with children in conflict with the law during the COVID-19 pandemic are aware of situations that may threaten their own **safety and security** and make judicious choices informed by available ethical decision-making guidance²².

¹⁹ Terre des hommes has prepared a comprehensive Child Safeguarding Policy that can be used as guidance, available at: <https://www.tdh.ch/en/media-library/documents/child-safeguarding-policy>

²⁰ The minimum principles to be followed in any action involving children are: **do no harm, confidentiality, accountability, consent child/family, adherence to ethical behavior, best interest of the child and non-discrimination**. See Child Protection Case Management Principles, p. 16-19, available at: http://www.cpcnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CM_guidelines_ENG_.pdf and Ethical Guidance for Social Workers, available at: <https://www.basw.co.uk/covid-19-pandemic-%E2%80%93-ethical-guidance-social-workers>

²¹ Terre des hommes, Gender & Diversity Policy, available at: https://www.tdh.ch/sites/default/files/201802_pol_gender_diversity_v1_en_0.pdf

²² Ethical decision-making in the face of COVID-19: International Federation of Social Workers, available at: <https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/Option-A-Ethical-Decision-making-in-the-face-of-COVID-19.pdf>; Social Service Workforce Safety and Wellbeing during the COVID-19 Response - Recommended Actions, available at:

- During COVID-19, social workforce supervising personnel should:
 - Identify appropriate and available means of communication with and regular support for social/case workers;
 - Create space (in-person or remotely) for case management meetings, as well as for individual meetings to discuss social workers' wellbeing, including signs of stress and means of self-care; and
 - Give social/case workers the time to talk about their concerns, needs, and their ideas.

<http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/social-service-workforce-safety-and-wellbeing-during-covid-19-response-recommended-actions>

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