



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

LISA TUCKER CAULEY • Division Director, Human Services

May 16, 2024

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**ATTENTION: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM MANAGERS, CHILD WELFARE SUPERVISORS
AND CHILD WELFARE STAFF**

SUBJECT: PERMANENCY PLANNING AND CROSS FUNCTION MANUAL UPDATES

REQUIRED ACTION: Information Only Time Sensitive **Immediate**

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND: IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW AND REISED FORMS AND RELATED POLICY

The North Carolina Division of Social Services (NCDSS) is releasing this letter to announce the revision and release of DSS forms, and policy updates to bring the Permanency Policy and the Cross Function manuals in alignment with changes related to:

1. The inclusion of Safe Surrender requirements added to form [DSS-5120](#) Determination of Foster Care Benefits
2. Release of the Human Trafficking Screening Tool – HTST [DSS 5402](#)
3. Registration for Office Hour Webinars on understanding and implementing the HTST

Safe Surrender Requirement added to DSS-5120 Determination of Foster Care Benefits

To align with the November 2023 release of policy around Safe Surrender, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) has updated the [DSS-5120](#) Determination of Foster Care Benefits form to include a section on Safe Surrender requirements.

Human Traffick Screening Tool (HTST) – DSS 5402

To align with the required actions for Title IV-E agencies resulting from the enactment of the [Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2022](#), NC DHHS is implementing the use of a screening tool to screen for human trafficking specifically for youth and young adults who return to care from runaway status. This tool will be used for all youth and young adults in foster care, kinship care, State care, private residential settings, and other out of home care, including emergency shelters, as they are at especially high risk.

The Human Trafficking Screening Tool - HTST [DSS-5402](#) has been developed for use by case workers for screening youth within 24 hours of return from runaway status. Updates have been made to both the [Permanency Planning Manual](#) and the [Cross Function Manual](#) related to using the HTST.

Office Hour Webinar Registration Information

Two Office Hour Webinars have been scheduled to support county staff in understanding and implementing the HTST. Sessions will be recorded. Registration information is below:

- Session 1: Thursday, May 30, 2024, 2pm – 3pm – [REGISTER FOR SESSION 1](#)
- Session 2: Friday, May 31, 2024, 1pm – 2pm – [REGISTER FOR SESSION 2](#)

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603

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Policy Manual Changes

The [Permanency Planning Manual](#) has been updated to reflect the following changes:

- Policy and Guidance for using the HTST-DSS 5402, reflected on page105.

The [Cross Function Manual](#) has been updated to reflect the following changes:

- Protocol and Guidance for using the HTST-DSS 5402, reflected on page 283.

For questions, please contact your RCWS or the NCDSS Permanency Policy Consultant, Sonya Morgan at sonya.morgan@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



Adrian W. Daye
Deputy Director for Child Welfare Practice
Division of Social Services, Child Welfare
North Carolina Department of Health and
Human Services

Cc: Lisa Tucker Cauley, Division Director of Human Services
Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Safety and Prevention Services
Kimaree Sanders, Section Chief for Regulatory and Licensing
Peter West, Section Chief for County Operations

Attachments: DSS-5120
DSS-5401

CWS-37-24

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