

Placement Decision Tool¹

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

There are limited options for residential care for trafficking victims identified in Jamaica regardless of age or sex. While there is a designated trafficking in persons (TIP) shelter, this only accommodates adult female victims and there is no designated location for residential care for children of either sex. Residential options which exist as part of the national child protection system could be utilized for child trafficking victims, but there are factors in the Jamaican context that reduce reliance on this approach. These factors include:

- Issue of secrecy/confidentiality of shelter spaces – the location of all group homes and places of safety for children are required by law to be public knowledge and placement of children who have been trafficked in these institutions is considered to be a security risk in high-risk cases.
- Child trafficking victims need access to trauma informed care that is not available in general childcare facilities.

As a result of these concerns, the Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA) has had to pursue various options outside of the traditional protection system such as hotel stays. In some instances where children are nearly 18 years old, it has been reported that the child protection system has been bypassed in favour of an NGO shelter for women in crisis or the existing TIP shelter. Options such as extended hotel stays are considered to be too costly and effectively lead to victim isolation. Additionally, not utilizing a standard set of options for residential care makes it more difficult to ensure that victims receive similar services at a high quality.

At a meeting held with key stakeholders involved in the U.S. Department of State-funded Jamaica – U.S. Child Protection Compact (CPC) project, the following elements were identified as critical for residential care for child trafficking victims:

1. Locate shelters in high priority locations – up to three geographic locations
2. Trauma informed care that adequately meets the needs of children, including both girls and boys. The care should be available on-site or very close to the shelter site.
3. Availability of a variety of models for residential care – based on levels of risk

The CPFSA recommends and pursues establishing the following shelter options that are to be used based on the levels of risk (see attached glossary of terms for more information):

1. Family care
2. Supervision
3. Foster care (inclusive of specialized therapeutic care)
4. Kinship care
5. Shelter care (including secure institutions)

Recognizing the adverse impacts of institutionalization on children, and in adherence to the principles of “necessity” and “suitability” as guided by the United Nations Guidelines for Alternative Care, the CPFSA explores institutional/shelter care as an option of last resort.

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Placement Decision Tool

A placement decision tool may be used to make a placement recommendation based on risk indicators across child, family, and suspected offender dimensions. The higher the score, the higher the risk, which guides the placement.

Purpose of the Tool

The purpose of the tool is for objectively verifiable decision-making regarding the placement of children who are identified to be in circumstances of exploitation and abuse or presumed to be victims of trafficking, who have to come under the supervision of the CPFSA, or who have to be removed from the custody of their parents/primary caregivers. The tool includes some indicators specific to child trafficking, and the recommendations for placement generated by the tool include placement options/recommendations for child trafficking victims. While the tool has been developed for cases of child trafficking, it may also be used to guide placements for all types of child protection cases. The tool has broader application to other types of child protection cases because many of the indicators used to make placement decisions for child trafficking victims also apply to cases of children who are victims of other types of child abuse and exploitation.

How Does the Tool Work?

The tool is disaggregated into three dimensions: child dimension, family dimension, and suspected offender dimension. Within each dimension are three to seven domains (i.e. general and safety concerns, parenting skills and involvement, control factors). Within each of the domains are one to seven indicators. The indicators are in the form of questions with “yes” or “no” answers.

Each indicator is given an equal weighting of one. Therefore, the higher the score, the greater the risk level (low, medium, high) assigned to the child. The items highlighted in red are considered “red flags” and thus require specific attention regardless of the domain score or overall score. These include the indicator related to suicidal ideation and self-harm in the child dimension and the homelessness indicator in the family dimension.

Determination of placement will be based on consideration of the level of risk for the child, family, and suspected offender.

Given that there are three dimensions and three levels of risks, there are twenty-seven permutations that each result in an automatic recommendation for placement if the child needs to be removed from the parent/primary caregiver or is otherwise in need of shelter. Given the important role of human instinct in social investigations, the tool allows for an officer to override the placement recommendation, and requests a comment justifying the rejection of the recommendation, and indication of any extraordinary risk or indicator(s) of concern.

Who Would Use This Tool?

The tool may be used by investigators, case managers and field officers contributing to placement decisions for children in care.

While the tool may be used in making a decision to remove the child from the primary caregivers or the place of residence, it is also useful for making an informed decision as to whether the child should be placed with another relative or should be placed before the court for the child to formally come into the Agency’s care. Very often, however, investigators have to

think and act quickly in making a decision to remove a child from their home or the site of exploitation and abuse. Therefore this tool may be used after the initial decision has been made.

If the child is removed and taken to a place of safety, the investigator may then complete the tool and submit the results to a Court Officer or the Placement Coordinator for their recommendation to bear on a placement decision after a Fit Person Order has been made.

This tool can then be used later to make decisions regarding changes in the child's placement based on the child's development, and the progress of any criminal investigations connected to the child's case. At this point, the tool may be used collaboratively with placement teams, committees, and the children's officer assigned to the child.

Format of the Tool

The tool can be used in paper format with explanations for a manual calculation, but this is timely and cumbersome. A protected excel sheet can therefore be used with built-in calculations. The paper format is presented in this proposal. Future considerations should include inclusion of this tool in the CPFA's child case management system (SOHEMA).

Paper-based Specimen Tool

Child's Name		
Case #		
Date		
Risk Level		
I. Child Dimension	Low/Medium/High	
II. Family Dimension	Low/Medium/High	
III. Suspected Offender Dimension	Low/Medium/High	
PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATION		

Circle the scores for the indicators that apply

CHILD DIMENSION					
General and Safety Concerns	Yes	No	School Attendance (select one)	Yes	No
The child has a history of childhood abuse or neglect	1	0	The child attends school irregularly	1	0
The child is currently employed	1	0	The child has a history of truancy	1	0
The child's movement is restricted (e.g. abducted, kidnapped, preventing the child from interacting with friends or family, preventing the child from attending school, or imprisoning the child in his/her home)	1	0	The child (under 16) does not attend school at all	1	0
The child has a history of frequent runaway behaviors	1	0	School Attendance Total	/3	
General and Safety Concerns Total	/4		Substance Abuse	Yes	No
Child Mental Health & Behavioral Problems	Yes	No	The child has a history of substance abuse	1	0
The child has developmental delay	1	0	Substance Abuse Total	/1	
The child has explosive outbursts	1	0	Relationships & Sexuality	Yes	No
The child has a history of moderate mental health illness	1	0	The child has an older boyfriend/girlfriend	1	0
The child has a history of severe mental illness	1	0	The child identifies as LGBTQI+	1	0
The child has suicidal ideation/has self-harmed.	1	0	The child is a parent or is pregnant	1	0
Child Mental Health & Behavioral Problems Total	/5		Relationships & Sexuality Total	/3	
Trafficking Specific Indicators	Yes	No	Conflict with the Law	Yes	No
The child has been paid to have sex	1	0	The child has been in conflict with the law	1	0

CHILD DIMENSION					
Someone else has been paid for the child to be sexually exploited.	1	0	The child has a history of involvement in gang activities	1	0
The child has been forced to work or forced to participate in criminal activities.	1	0	Conflict with the Law Total	/2	
The child has been used to promote/lure others into sexual exploitation by family members or peers	1	0			
The child has been forced to work (e.g., on a farm, on a fishing vessel, as a domestic helper) under poor conditions.	1	0			
The child has been forced to be a member of a gang	1	0			
The child is a known recruiter for child trafficking	1	0			
Trafficking Specific Indicators Total	/7				
DOMAIN SCORES					
School Attendance	/3		Child Mental Health & Behavioral Problems	/5	
General and Safety Concerns	/4		Relationships & Sexuality	/3	
Substance Abuse	/1		Conflict with the Law	/2	
Trafficking Specific Indicators	/7		CHILD DIMENSION TOTAL SCORE	/25	
Child Score Category (Please choose 1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low (0 – 7) ○ Medium (8 – 18) ○ High (19 – 25) 					

FAMILY DIMENSION								
Parenting Skills and Involvement	Yes	No	Provision of Care – respond to only one	Yes	No			
The parent/caregiver exhibits poor parenting skills (overly protective/restrictive, physically or emotionally abusive)	1	0	There are inconsistencies in seeking medical and dental care considered routine for child	1	0			
The parent/caregiver is not involved in child's life (e.g., does not attend school activities or know their child's friends)	1	0	The child has not been receiving any routine medical and dental care	1	0			
The parent/caregiver leaves child unattended for extended periods	1	0	Provision of Care Total	/2				
The parent/caregiver has a history of substance abuse	1	0	Access to Support	Yes	No			
The family has a history of domestic abuse.	1	0	The family does not have a regular support system (supervision for children during absence, external financial support).	1	0			
Parenting Skills and Involvement Total	/5		The parent/caregiver is unemployed or has minimal income	1	0			
Housing	Yes	No	Access to Support Total	/2				
The family is homeless (If selected, skip to Provision of Care)	1	0	Comments/Summary:					
The dwelling is overcrowded	1	0						
The dwelling is dilapidated	1	0						
The dwelling lacks basic sanitary amenities	1	0						
Housing Total	/4							
DOMAIN SCORES								
Parenting Skills and Involvement	/5							
Provision of Care	/2							
Access to Support	/2							
Housing	/4							
FAMILY DIMENSION TOTAL Score	/13							
Family Score Category (Please choose 1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low (0 – 3) ○ Medium (4 – 8) ○ High (9 – 13) 								

SUSPECTED OFFENDER DIMENSION					
Control Factors	Yes	No	Access to the Child and Family	Yes	No
The suspected offender supports the family (food, bills, other financials)	1	0	The suspected offender is known to the family	1	0
The child/family is otherwise dependent on the suspected offender	1	0	The suspected offender is a member of the child's family	1	0
The suspected offender is in a sexual relationship with the child	1	0	The suspected offender lives in the same community as the child	1	0
The suspected offender provides shelter for the family	1	0	The suspected offender lives in the same household as the child	1	0
The family is otherwise being controlled by the suspected offender	1	0	The suspected offender is not in police custody	1	0
Control Factors Total	/5		Access to the Child and Family Total	/5	
Abuse and Criminality	Yes	No	Comments/Summary:		
The suspected offender has reportedly threatened the family	1	0			
The suspected offender has been abusive to the family	1	0			
The suspected offender is a part of a gang (local or regional)	1	0			
The suspected offender is a part of a trafficking network	1	0			
Abuse and Criminality Total	/4				
DOMAIN SCORES					
Control Factors	/5				
Access to the Child and Family	/5				
Abuse and Criminality	/4				
SUSPECTED OFFENDER DIMENSION TOTAL	/14				
Suspected Offender Category (Please choose 1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low (0 – 4) ○ Medium (5 – 10) ○ High (11– 14) 					

Glossary of Terms

Poor working conditions	These are working conditions that are indicative of worker exploitation and are in contravention of Jamaican labour laws. They include lack of access to basic amenities and sanitary conveniences, and inability to take sufficient breaks or engage in recreation. For this tool, it also includes inability to continue schooling, or exposure to environments or equipment that compromise the child's physical and moral health and safety.
Childhood abuse/neglect	This is the child's experience of physical, emotional, or sexual harm or exploitation, or the child's experience of disregard for his/her care or supervision.
Irregular school attendance	Irregular school attendance is where there is a prolonged or habitual disruption.
Developmental delay	Developmental delay is a situation in which the child has not achieved key developmental milestones (physical, cognitive, social) that are normal and expected for his/her age.
Trafficker	This is any offender who engages in any of the following actions: recruitment, enticement or encouragement of a child, transportation or transfer of a child, receipt or harbouring of a child, for the purpose of that child's exploitation. A trafficker is also anyone who engages in any other action that facilitates the exploitation of the child as defined in the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression, and Punishment) Act (2007).
Moderate/severe mental illness	Mental illness occurs when there are changes in thinking, perception, conduct, and emotions which impact the individual's functioning and sense of wellness. Moderate mental illness has a medium impact on the person's functioning, causing some distress to the individual, their family and those who interact with them. Severe mental illness has a debilitating impact on the individual, making participation in regular activities very difficult and seriously impacting the family's daily life
Gang	A more or less organized set of people who engage in criminal activity or antisocial conduct.
Sexual exploitation	According to the United Nations: "Any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This includes acts such as transactional sex, solicitation of transactional sex,

and exploitative relationships.”² It includes sexual relations with a child under 18, in any context. Although the age of consent in Jamaica is 16, no child can consent to commercial sexual exploitation.

Poor parenting	This construct can involve being overly controlling, a lack of discipline, excessive negativity in talk and action, as well as the absence of positive reinforcement. Abuse in all forms – sexual, emotional, and physical – would also be included, as well as neglect of the child’s physical and emotional needs.
Foster Care	Foster care is a process that temporarily places a child in the care of a person or couple who are not the biological parents of the child, to enable them to raise that child and provide a nurturing environment for his or her physical, spiritual, and emotional growth and development.
Kinship Care	Foster care provided by members of the child’s extended family. This form of alternative care for children is in keeping with the principles of the Child Care and Protection Act, specifically Section 2(3)(e) which affirms the value of maintaining children’s kinship ties.
Supervision Order	An arrangement, provided for within the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA), where children remain with their parents or primary caregiver with periodic supervisory visits by a case manager. Visits and other forms of contact are made to assess the child’s wellbeing, quality of relationships in the home, and areas of needs related to the family’s welfare. CPFSA uses a variety of tools to address issues identified, supports the family in accessing services and resources, or take any other action in the child’s best interest.
Family Care	Care provided by the child’s parents or primary caregiver
Institutional Care	Care provided within a residential childcare facility (children’s homes and places of safety)
Secure Shelter (for security concerns)	Shelter and care provided at a secure shelter designated by the GoJ for housing TIP victims. For child victims, this option is used when there is a concern for the child’s safety, requiring more advanced protection than is provided by the CPFSA. (Children in need of additional measures are noted in the tool as needing secure shelter “for security concerns”).

² United Nations. Conduct in UN Field Missions: Glossary. <https://conduct.unmissions.org/glossary>.

PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

CHILD	FAMILY	SUSPECTED OFFENDER	RECOMMENDED PLACEMENT	CHILD	FAMILY	SUSPECTED OFFENDER	RECOMMENDED PLACEMENT
LOW	LOW	LOW	FAMILY CARE	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH	SPECIALISED FOSTER CARE/SECURE SHELTER FOR SECURITY CONCERN
LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	FAMILY CARE/KINSHIP CARE/SUPERVISION	MEDIUM	HIGH	LOW	FOSTER CARE
LOW	LOW	HIGH	FAMILY CARE/KINSHIP CARE /SECURE SHELTER FOR SECURITY CONCERN	MEDIUM	HIGH	MEDIUM	FOSTER CARE
LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	SUPERVISION	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	INSTITUTIONAL CARE/SECURE SHELTER FOR SECURITY CONCERN
LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	FOSTER CARE	HIGH	LOW	LOW	KINSHIP CARE
LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	SPECIALISED FOSTER CARE/SECURE SHELTER FOR SECURITY CONCERN	HIGH	LOW	MEDIUM	SPECIALISED FOSTER CARE
LOW	HIGH	LOW	FOSTER CARE	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	INSTITUTIONAL CARE/SECURE SHELTER FOR SECURITY CONCERN
LOW	HIGH	MEDIUM	FOSTER CARE	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	KINSHIP CARE
LOW	HIGH	HIGH	FOSTER CARE/SECURE SHELTER FOR SECURITY CONCERN	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	FOSTER CARE
MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	SUPERVISION	HIGH	MEDIUM	HIGH	INSTITUTIONAL CARE/SECURE SHELTER FOR SECURITY CONCERN
MEDIUM	LOW	MEDIUM	SUPERVISION	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	FOSTER CARE
MEDIUM	LOW	HIGH	SUPERVISION/SPECIALISED FOSTER CARE OR SECURE SHELTER FOR SECURITY CONCERN	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	FOSTER CARE

MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	FOSTER CARE		HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	INSTITUTIONAL CARE/SECURE SHELTER FOR SECURITY CONCERN
MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	SPECIALISED FOSTER CARE/SECURE SHELTER FOR SECURITY CONCERN					

* Given the important role of human instinct in social investigations, the tool allows for an officer to override the placement recommendation, and requests a comment justifying the rejection of the recommendation, and indication of any extraordinary risk or indicator(s) of concern.

** Although all secure shelters will be used for TIP, not all levels of security will be the same so if a child has high security needs then additional or alternative measures will need to be arranged and it is important to note that at this point.