
Case closure

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Case management can be terminated because the duration of support has ended, the returnee no longer meets the criteria for case management support, the returnee chooses to stop receiving support, they leave the area or they die. Planning and preparing for the time when support comes to an end is an important part of reintegration assistance.

Ideally, case management closure will be anticipated, desirable and in the best interests of the returnee and their family. However, there may be instances when assistance comes to a sudden stop. For instance, a returnee might abruptly exit services for a number of reasons: he or she no longer wants to receive reintegration assistance; is experiencing a major barrier to access; the type of reintegration assistance is no longer desirable or suitable; they are aggressive or threatening with case managers or staff; or there are real or perceived negative repercussions to the returnee for receiving support. These repercussions stem from stigma for accessing services or other logistical burdens associated with receiving services. Returnees also exit services if they choose to re-migrate or because they feel like the costs associated with receiving services outweigh their benefits.

When returnees express an interest in ending their involvement in reintegration assistance early or express an interest in re-migrating soon after their return, it can be useful to explore the reasons why and determine if any changes can be made to the available services to make them more accessible and appropriate.

Sometimes termination of involvement in reintegration provision is involuntary. When service providers (notably organizations) depend on external sources of funding, services could be terminated due to lack of budgetary support. Security or other contextual factors can also force services to close if the risks in providing reintegration assistance are deemed unacceptably high. Involuntary termination also includes situations where the returnee does not meet requirements of the reintegration assistance, which could include minimum levels of participation or standards of behaviour.

? The case manager should prepare returnees for any transition out of services, if possible. Continuity of care should be the aim of case closure. Where possible, available additional services for protection and assistance should be identified and referrals made in a timely manner to allow for sufficient transition. Case managers can only make referrals and transfer information with the explicit consent of the returnee and through secure communication channels. Coordinating with future service providers helps to provide a “warm handoff” so that transitions are eased and the burden of responsibility for any continuum of care does not fall solely on the returnee.

? Case managers should provide information on other relevant services or referrals to other programmes with sufficient lead time to prevent major gaps in service delivery. This is particularly important when gaps in services could be detrimental to the health and well-being of the migrant or their family, for example in the case of physical and mental health care or children's education.

? Whenever possible, prior to closing a case, the reintegration plan should be reviewed to determine whether it met the returnee's needs. Such a review can also identify any unmet or emerging needs. The returnee should participate in this review. Returnees should also have an exit interview and closing assessment. This can contribute to their successful transition out of reintegration services and provide useful insights to improve assistance for others in the future.

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All support provided to returnees should begin with case closure in mind. Therefore, assistance plans should include long-term strategies for reintegration. In the case of unaccompanied and separated children, decisions and planning regarding case closure are implicit in the process of best interest assessment and best interest determination.

Death of a returnee while accessing reintegration assistance

In the unfortunate event that a returnee dies, from any cause, while accessing reintegration support, the case manager has an important role to play.

The case manager should notify relevant authorities and family members (if they were not already aware) where safe and appropriate and while respecting the dignity of the deceased returnee. Other serviceproviding agencies involved in the returnee's reintegration should also be notified.

If there is an investigation following the death of a returnee, including criminal investigations by law enforcement agencies, a case manager may be required to share known information on the deceased returnee and the support they were provided. This should be done following agreed MoUs and data and information sharing protocols between law enforcement and the case management agencies.

All files and information on the provision of reintegration assistance to the deceased returnee should be archived appropriately.

The death of a returnee will likely cause distress for those involved in their assistance. Case managers and other service providers should receive support, including from supervisors and their employers, for their own self-care.

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