

I. Introduction

a. Background about the Sacramento Juvenile Court's Dedicated Calendar

- i. Sacramento Juvenile Court's Dedicated Calendar serves commercially sexually exploited children and youth identified as at risk of exploitation. The court's process and decision-making incorporates comprehensive information shared between juvenile justice, child welfare, education, and mental health systems. This approach seeks to improve and promote safety, stability, well-being, and accountability.
- ii. Created in 2014, the Dedicated Calendar aligns with national calls to improve identification, cross-system collaboration, and services for commercially sexually exploited children. The Dedicated Calendar is an integral component of Sacramento County's efforts to improve outcomes for youth involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems through multi-agency collaboration.
- iii. To inform judicial decision-making in the Dedicated Calendar, a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) discusses each case prior to the court hearing. These pre-court meetings bring all parties together to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the youth's circumstances, needs, and strengths. The MDT, co-led by the Public Defender and District Attorney, makes recommendations to the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court based on the team's assessment of the youth's best interest and public safety.
- iv. The Dedicated Calendar uses a trauma-informed approach and is focused on increasing safety and stability for youth when their case is closed.

b. Purpose

- i. Sexually exploited youth often enter the juvenile justice system, and many are dually involved in the child welfare system. The Dedicated Calendar is structured to meet the unique needs of exploited youth that are not addressed in a standard juvenile court process.
- ii. The purpose of the Dedicated Calendar is to:
 1. *Provide a trauma-informed, treatment-focused juvenile court model for youth who have experienced or are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation.*
 2. *Provide a court process where decisions are informed by relevant information about the youth's circumstances, needs, and strengths. MDT members carefully consider what will work best to support youth to achieve their goals.*
 3. *Achieve the best possible outcome for the youth and society.*

4. *Provide continuity and consistency for youth by having a dedicated judicial officer, defense attorney, prosecutor, probation officer, mental health clinician, and other court participants who are trained in the treatment of commercial sexual exploitation of children, adolescent brain development, trauma, and vicarious trauma.*

c. Goals

- i. The goals of the Dedicated Calendar are to:
 1. *Support youth exiting the juvenile justice system to: (1) return home or to an alternative supportive, safe, and stable living situation when needed; (2) improve attendance and achievement at school or alternative educational activities; (3) learn and utilize coping skills; and (4) achieve sobriety.*
 2. *Achieve safety, stability, and connection to services and healthy relationships that will endure beyond the youth's involvement with the court by creating individualized goals and plans for each youth.*

d. Overview of the Dedicated Calendar Court Structure

- i. Pre-Court Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT): The Pre-Court Multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meets weekly prior to court dates to identify each youth's needs and discuss recommendations for the court. The MDT process, roles, and member responsibilities are described in section II.
- ii. Court Proceedings: Court convenes for a minimum of one day per week. The Court hears a brief update from the MDT regarding each case prior to court proceedings. Further details about court are in section III.
 1. *A minimum of one half-day is dedicated to hearing cases of youth involved solely with juvenile justice allegations.*
 2. *A minimum of one half-day is dedicated to hearings for youth with open cases in dependency court and open juvenile justice cases.*

II. Multi-Disciplinary Team Structure and Process

a. Overview & Purpose of the MDT

- i. The pre-court MDT meets weekly prior to court to identify the youth's needs and strengths, discuss progress on terms and conditions (if applicable), and share information about status and involvement with other systems. The purpose of the MDT is to ensure that all of the youth's needs are being met, including placement, mental health, education, substance use treatment, and healthcare. Following the pre-court meeting, the MDT provides the court with a comprehensive

summary of the youth's circumstances, needs, and strengths.

b. Legal Authority and Confidentiality

- i. Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 827, 830, 18951, 18961.5, 18961.7, and 18964 govern the disclosure of information between the parties participating in the MDT. Child Protective Services, Probation, and other team members may exchange verbal and written information regarding youth assigned to The Dedicated Calendar, when it is reasonably believed to be relevant to the prevention, identification, or treatment of child abuse. Information exchanged during MDT Meetings is confidential and can only be used for case planning. Testimony concerning the MDT Meeting discussion is not admissible in any criminal, civil, or juvenile court proceeding. At each The Dedicated Calendar MDT Meeting, any documents, notes, or records provided or shared during the meeting are returned to the original custodian or destroyed at the conclusion of the meeting. This does not include public reports filed with the court. Information shared during the MDT Meeting shall not be used in any criminal prosecution of the youth.
- ii. In addition, MDT members follow professional legal or ethical obligations. MDT members may also withhold information at the request of the youth, unless there is a legal obligation to share that information (e.g., in the case of mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse).

c. Membership representing the following entities:

- i. District Attorney
- ii. Public Defender
- iii. County Counsel
- iv. Juvenile Probation
- v. UC Davis CAARE Center
- vi. Department of Child, Family, and Adult Services – Division of Child Protective Services (CPS)
- vii. Department of Health Services - Division of Behavioral Health Services (BHS)
- viii. Conflict Criminal Defenders
- ix. Child's Dependency Attorney
- x. Sacramento Police Department
- xi. Sacramento Sherriff's Department
- xii. Mental health providers, including Wraparound providers
- xiii. Sacramento County Office of Education

- xiv. Court Appointed Special Advocates or other youth advocate

d. Roles and Responsibilities

i. General Responsibilities of all members:

1. *Attend meetings regularly.*
2. *Provide meaningful participation by sharing information pertinent to meeting the youth's needs and best interests.*
3. *Participate in a manner consistent with statutory provisions and protections.*
4. *Provide timely updates regarding developments in youth's life.*
5. *Provide follow-up or linkage to services within the scope of member's role.*

ii. Public Defender (PD)

1. *Co-lead MDT with District Attorney.*
2. *Present cases during MDT: Create and manage agenda, give a concise presentation of the known facts for each case, and facilitate discussion. (See section E2b. below.)*
3. *Formulate representation plan for court based on information provided during MDT and by the youth.*
4. *Consult additional sources of information (e.g., social media) to inform representation strategy and MDT discussion.*
5. *Coordinate with Conflict Criminal Defenders regarding cases, as needed.*
6. *Coordinate with Sacramento County District Attorneys and any other county, state, or agency prosecuting a human trafficking case involving a Dedicated Calendar youth. This is to ensure the named victim or witness has legal representation and to provide support during all testimony.*

iii. District Attorney (DA)

1. *Co-lead MDT with Public Defender.*
2. *Gather and/or consider all relevant information about the young person's case and life circumstances. Request input from others if a recommended disposition or charge is unclear.*
3. *Based on MDT discussion and available information, determine a recommended disposition or charge to present in court that best supports the youth's progress toward goals, while balancing public safety.*
4. *Provide discovery and investigation reports to Public Defender.*

5. *Coordinate with other courts if a charge is filed in another jurisdiction, or if the youth is party to a case that has co-minors in another court.*
6. *Coordinate with counterparts in adult system for Non-Minor Dependents on the Dedicated Calendar who are charged with a new offense. This includes coordination with the Reducing Sexually Exploited & Trafficked (RESET) Court for eligible non-minor dependents.*
7. *Coordinate with counterparts in adult system that have pending prosecutions involving Dedicated Calendar youth as named victims or witnesses. Provide input on scheduling interviews and setting hearing or trial dates. Support and facilitate youth's participation as a victim witness. This includes arranging transportation and accommodations during trial, and coordinating with relevant support persons.*

iv. Child Protective Services

1. *County Counsel*

- a. Represent County CPS
- b. Ensure that CPS's position is clear in MDT proceedings, particularly as it pertains to legal issues and placement options.
- c. Ensure that CPS information is accurately shared during the MDT.
- d. Provide information about the youth's placement, family situation, health, and CPS services.
- e. Relay information from the MDT to case-carrying social workers to coordinate new placements and services.
- f. Provide consultation to MDT members on possible procedural or service options in dependency court given the facts of the case.

2. *Child Welfare Worker*

- a. Provide written updates to County Counsel regarding youth's CPS history, services, and placement.
- b. Attend MDT Meeting as needed to provide information about the youth's CPS history, services, and placement.

v. Probation

1. *Probation Officers*

- a. Complete Probation Reports for all assigned youth on the week's calendar prior to the MDT Meeting and submit to

- the Court Presenter.
 - b. Provide information about the child’s juvenile probation history, services, and placement, including progress toward existing probation conditions.
 - c. Provide input regarding probation services and placements available and appropriate for the youth.
 - 2. *Probation Court Presenter*
 - a. Ensure assigned reports are submitted in a timely manner by Court Officers or Probation Officers.
 - b. Distribute reports to MDT members.
 - c. Follow up with the Probation Officer to obtain missing or additional information as needed.
 - d. Prepare and distribute the weekly calendars with all pertinent information (e.g., education credits, maximum confinement time, and identification of youth’s dependency counsel, social worker, CASA, or other providers).
 - e. Prepare Court Reports to submit prior to court appearances, as assigned.
- vi. UC Davis CAARE Center
 - 1. *Provide consultation on the impact of commercial sexual exploitation on youth’s mental health and how trauma may manifest in youth’s behavior and decision-making.*
 - 2. *Provide consultation to the MDT on the mental health needs of youth on calendar, including treatment recommendations and additional services needed.*
 - 3. *Provide updates regarding UC Davis CAARE Center clients (e.g., general information about level of engagement and participation in services).*
 - 4. *Support the trauma-informed culture of MDT by providing guidance on trauma-informed language and approaches.*
 - 5. *Link youth to appropriate follow-up support services at UC Davis CAARE Center or other community-based organizations as needed.*
- vii. Behavioral Health Services
 - 1. *Act as a liaison for youth receiving mental health services from a BHS provider.*
 - 2. *Share general updates about diagnosis, medication, level of engagement, and participation in services.*
 - 3. *Obtain relevant information as needed from BHS providers serving*

- the youth.*
4. *Assist with mental health referrals to ensure youth have access to services in a timely manner.*
 5. *Provide consultation to the MDT regarding available services, including recommendations for specific providers that would be a good fit for the youth.*
- viii. Sacramento County Office of Education
1. *Provide information about youth's school attendance, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) status, credits, and other educational information available in Foster Focus or from school district liaisons.*
 2. *Consult with MDT regarding available services and supports, and provide linkage as needed.*
- ix. Dependency Attorney
1. *Provide updates regarding youth's dependency status and needs, as relevant to the proceedings (e.g., dependency related issues that need to be addressed).*
 2. *Provide additional contextual information regarding youth's needs, accomplishments, and other life changes to inform MDT recommendations.*
 3. *Provide up-to-date information about existing child welfare orders to avoid duplication of services, inconsistent placement or contact orders, and/or contradictory juvenile justice court orders.*
- x. Other Providers
1. *Attend as needed to provide updates on the youth's participation in services, such as residential treatment.*
 2. *Provide additional contextual information regarding the youth's needs, accomplishments, or changes in life circumstances. These updates may be provided to another MDT member by phone or email prior to the MDT Meeting.*
 3. *Expedite service initiation when a referral is made. Work with MDT to address any service barriers.*
- xi. Conflict Criminal Defenders
1. *Formulate representation plan for court based on information provided during MDT or by the youth prior to court.*
 2. *Consult additional sources of information (e.g., social media) to inform representation strategy and MDT discussion.*

e. Structure and Procedure

i. Pre-MDT tasks

1. *Each Friday, the Public Defender releases a list of youth scheduled to appear in court the following week.*
2. *MDT members meet with clients (over the phone if necessary) to get updates and provide them with information regarding their upcoming appearance.*
3. *Probation Court Presenter requests required reports from Court Officers and Field Officers.*
4. *CPS County Counsel sends list of dependents on calendar to CPS Liaison, who collects updates from Child Welfare Workers. CPS County Counsel collates and distributes updates to the MDT as they become available.*
5. *CPS County Counsel sends most recent dependency court report to the court, Public Defender, District Attorney, and Probation Court Presenter.*
6. *Other MDT members gather information and updates to share with the MDT.*
7. *Public Defender and District Attorney gather additional information as needed to inform their plan for court.*

ii. MDT Meeting

1. *The MDT meets weekly before the scheduled court days to discuss cases on that week's calendar.*
2. *The MDT is co-led by PD and DA. PD presents each case on that week's calendar, including information pertinent to the MDT or court proceeding, including:*
 - a. *Critical information (see list below);*
 - b. *Identified gaps in information;*
 - c. *Plans for obtaining missing information;*
 - d. *Services, disposition, and placement considerations based on the youth's goals and needs; and recommendations and plans for court.*
 - e. *Updated information and/or changes in the youth's status that were not previously known.*

iii. Key Information for MDT:

In preparation for each case, MDT members present information across important life domains to inform discussion about the youth's current circumstances and progress toward goals. The depth and breadth of information provides a unique lens into the youth's life that is not always

available to other courts. As a result, the MDT and Court are able to consider a comprehensive range of support. Key information includes:

1. *Pending charges, including any new charges since last appearance, and discussion of potential dispositions or offers.*
2. *Reason for referral to The Dedicated Calendar (if new case).*
3. *Results of screening using the Commercial Sexual Exploitation – Identification Tool (CSE-IT), including when screening was conducted, who conducted it, the total score, and level of concern.*
4. *Youth’s progress toward individual goals since last appearance or hearing.*
5. *Safety concerns and plans (including updating or creating new safety plans as needed).*
6. *Mental or physical health diagnoses, and youth’s engagement and progress in treatment (e.g., mental health, Wraparound, addiction and medication).*
7. *Parenting and/or pregnancy status of youth.*
8. *Youth’s involvement with the child welfare system (if any), including updates on services and placement.*
9. *Youth’s educational status, including current school, educational plan, Individual Education Plan (IEP) supports provided or needed, progress toward graduation (if applicable), and youth’s relationships with peers and education staff.*
10. *Youth’s living situation, supports and services in place, and whether the home situation or placement is providing adequate support to meet the youth’s needs. MDT members discuss other concerns related to living situation, e.g. episodes of absconding, proximity to exploiter, and impact of relationships with others living in the home environment or community.*
11. *Dynamics of youth’s relationships with parents/caregivers, other family members, placement providers, therapists, school teachers and staff, and other important people in the youth’s life.*
12. *Other information pertinent to supporting the youth’s safety, stability, and progress toward goals.*

f. Factors for successful MDT

There are several factors that support the effective functioning of the MDT:

- i. District Attorney and Public Defender develop and model a strong working relationship as co-leaders of the MDT, signified by coordination, communication, and common focus on the youth’s safety, stability, and success.

- ii. All team members develop trust and collaborative working relationships. Sharing information and participating in the MDT is a critical component of building trust. When members of the MDT gather information but do not provide updates or participate in discussion, it erodes trust and results in a less comprehensive understanding of the youth's life and circumstances. MDT members also build trust by demonstrating their unconditional regard for the best interests of the youth, and a common commitment to using information shared within the MDT to help the youth.
- iii. Team members consider the individual experiences, needs, and strengths of each young person who comes before them.
- iv. The primary focus for the MDT is to gain a holistic view of the youth's life. This may mean that discussion of the youth's experience of sexual exploitation is limited to the immediate charges or safety issues related to the appearance, and is not necessarily the focus if other considerations are primary.

III. Court

a. Overview & Purpose of Court

- i. Using a trauma-informed approach, the Dedicated Calendar focuses on helping the youth make progress toward improved safety, stability, and success. Recommendations and updates provided by the MDT are central to The Dedicated Calendar's youth-centered approach.

b. Schedule

- i. The Dedicated Calendar convenes a minimum of one day per week.
- ii. The court considers cases of youth without current child welfare and cases where the youth has an open case in dependency court and an open juvenile justice case.

c. Structure & Procedure in Court

- i. Before court convenes, the MDT members update the judge on the pre-court MDT discussion, including any new issues that have emerged since the youth's last appearance and recommendations to the court (e.g, regarding disposition, placement or custody order, or terms and conditions of probation).
- ii. Before or between cases, the defense attorney may meet with the youth and family for any additional updates and to confirm the plan for court. These meetings with the youth and family may yield new information, which will be shared as an update to the MDT prior to the proceeding.
- iii. Judge calls the case.

1. *Youth is brought into courtroom from detention area or waiting room. All present greet and welcome the youth.*
 2. *Court greets the youth and their family/support person, asks how they are doing, and articulates an informed appreciation for their presence and safety.*
 3. *Public Defender presents their argument regarding the charge at hand or provides an update if it is a progress report.*
 4. *Judge requests input from UC Davis CAARE Center, BHS, and/or CPS as needed. The representative first greets the youth before presenting the requested information.*
 5. *District Attorney greets the youth and comments on an area of progress, then presents their recommended disposition or finding.*
 6. *Judge delivers ruling, including reason for decision.*
 7. *Meaningfully engaging the youth, the Judge invites them to ask clarifying questions about the court proceeding or decision rendered, comment on the day's appearance, or share other updates about how they're doing, their progress, or the charges or proceeding.*
 8. *Court schedules the youth's next appearance or hearing.*
- iv. If, during court, new service needs or barriers to accessing supports are identified, the Judge requests that the UC Davis representative meet with the youth before they leave court to help connect them with services.

d. Factors for Successful Specialized Court

- i. The Dedicated Calendar is distinct from other juvenile courts in two key ways.
 1. *A single Judge, a single Public Defender,* and single District Attorney are assigned to all cases on the Dedicated Calendar. This allows the Court and the Counsel to deepen their expertise regarding the needs and experiences of sexually exploited youth, build the trust and collaboration needed for the success of the court, and foster a consistent court experience for the youth.*
 2. *In addition, the Dedicated Calendar utilizes an increased frequency of Progress Reports in comparison to other courts. The majority of these are Appearance Progress Reports (APRs). However, when it is not feasible for the youth to appear in court (e.g., due to being placed out of state or other geographical constraints), a phone-appearance may be arranged. Progress Reports may be scheduled*

* The only exception is when Conflict Criminal Defenders is representing a youth due to a conflict on the assigned Public Defender's caseload.

as frequently as once per week to every other month, depending on the youth's circumstances and progress toward goals. APRs are scheduled more frequently for youth who need more support or structure. APRs become less frequent for youth who have achieved more stability.

- ii. The Dedicated Calendar utilizes individualized probation conditions rather than a default set of conditions employed by most juvenile courts. These individualized conditions are based on the youth's circumstances, strengths, and needs, as well as the charges. All individualized probation terms incorporate trauma and mental health services and supports.
- iii. Due to the pre-court MDT, the Judge's decision is informed by a greater breadth and depth of knowledge about the youth's life circumstances than is typically available in other courts. The Judge in this specialized court has a multifaceted understanding of what each youth needs to survive and thrive, resulting in a holistic court approach. As described above, MDT members share comprehensive information about services, placements, and supports that do and do not work for the young person (e.g., family members they may be able to live with, concerning relationships, or placement types that are most motivating and supportive). The MDT process instills confidence in the attorneys' recommendations because the Judge is aware of the level of collaboration invested in determining a plan for the youth.
- iv. The youth's perspective and experience are central to all court proceedings. The Judge ensures that the youth has the opportunity to participate in a way that is not typical in other courtrooms by clarifying legal language and making sure the youth understands everything that is discussed. The Judge also asks the youth to share updates on their personal goals, what safety means to them, and their perspective on what works or doesn't work about particular services or placements. It is the expectation and practice that each person speaks to the youth directly while providing their recommendation or input to the court. Court proceedings reflect the MDT's collaboration, trust, and commitment to the best interests of the youth. This is only possible by ensuring that the youth's perspective is incorporated into all decisions made by the court.
- v. The initial and ongoing training provided to the Dedicated Calendar team provides a critical foundation of knowledge to understand and respond to the needs of exploited youth. Past trainings have covered topics including an overview of commercial sexual exploitation of children, indicators of trafficking, trauma and adolescent brain development, and vicarious trauma.

e. Roles and Responsibilities

- i. Public Defender
 1. *Represents the youth's stated interests in court. Prior to court, Public Defender consults with the youth to prepare them for any expected counter-arguments from the District Attorney, and likely outcomes of the hearing.*
- ii. District Attorney
 1. *Argues for a Court decision that is consistent with the best interest of the youth and public safety.*
 2. *Provides updated information about pending cases in adult court which may affect the case plan for a youth in The Dedicated Calendar.*
- iii. Probation
 1. *The Dedicated Calendar Court Presenter manages the day's calendar, and provides Probation reports and updates as needed.*
- iv. Child Protective Services
 1. *County Counsel represents County CPS and provides information as needed during court proceedings for youth with open referrals or cases in child welfare.*
- v. Behavioral Health Services
 1. *Consult with court if input is requested, based on known facts.*
 2. *Assist with linking youth to behavioral health services if needs arise in court.*
- vi. UC Davis CAARE Center
 1. *Consult with Court if opinion is requested, based on known facts.*
 2. *Provide immediate connection to UC Davis services if requested by Judge.*
 3. *Provide immediate case management for youth at the courthouse to address emergent needs.*
 4. *Support the trauma-informed culture of The Dedicated Calendar by providing guidance on language and approach, and promoting understanding of how trauma manifests in the youth's life.*
 5. *Provide consultation on commercial sexual exploitation, how it impacts youth, and services or supports that might be needed or helpful.*

6. *Provide consultation to the Court on the mental health needs of youth on the calendar, including recommendations regarding need and focus of therapy and treatment for youth.*
7. *Provide allowable updates regarding UC Davis clients (e.g., general information about level of engagement and participation in services).*

IV. Conclusion

- a. The Dedicated Calendar is a unique court serving youth who are exploited or at risk of exploitation using several key approaches. The multi-disciplinary team ensures that a comprehensive understanding of the youth's needs and life circumstances informs the court's decisions. The court's trauma-informed approach creates a welcoming and supportive environment for youth. The dedicated judge, public defender, and district attorney, provide a consistent experience for youth, and mean that all members of the court have an understanding of how sexual exploitation and associated risk factors impact youth. The presence of skilled providers in the courtroom allows for youth to be immediately connected with services and supports to meet their needs and support their progress towards their goals. But most importantly, the Dedicated Calendar makes room for the youth's voice. Offering youth the ability to openly share their needs, opinions, and wants distinguishes the Dedicated Calendar from many of the spaces in youth's lives. This approach results in a court that fully accounts for the impact of sexual exploitation when considering the best interest of the youth and fairly addressing the best interest of society.