

QUALITY PROTECTS ACTION PLAN

Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut – 2014
Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut – Department of Family Services

**QUALITY
PROTECTS
ACTION PLAN**

**UPDATE TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS – June 2016**

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Executive Summary:

This update to the Standing Committee reports on the progress of the Quality Protects Action Plan, which addresses the recommendations in the Auditor General's 2014 *Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut*. The update reports on the accomplishments of the Department of Family Services and identifies ongoing priorities for the 2016/17 fiscal year. The Department was successful in accomplishing a number of recommendations outlined in the *Follow-up Report*, and recognizes the need for ongoing work in areas such as community engagement.

As the Auditor General reiterates, parents are primarily responsible for a child's wellbeing, but communities also contribute to the child's protection. As such, the Department recognizes its continued role in working collaboratively with families and communities to ensure children's safety and families' wellbeing. In doing so, through a successful Business Case the Department obtained funding for seven (7) Family Resource Workers who will provide services focused on prevention and community engagement. The pilot project will allow the Department to incorporate Inuit Societal Values and Inuktitut language services into program delivery, address workload and recruitment concerns, and support Community Social Services Workers in prevention-based services. Additionally, as part of the 2016/17 Action Plan for Suicide Prevention in Nunavut, the Department will provide funding for the Inunnguiniq Parenting Program Facilitator Training. The parenting program, based on needs identified by Nunavummiut, includes Inuit perspectives on child-rearing, positive discipline methods, wellness counselling and healing from trauma. The program aligns with the Auditor General's recommendations as it engages parents in keeping children safe and expands community engagement and development by including Elders in the delivery of the program.

The Department was also successful in obtaining two additional Community Social Service Workers for the Iqaluit Area Office. The increase in staff touches upon many of the recommendations in the *Follow-up Report*, including increasing the Office's capacity to address compliance standards and workload challenges, while most importantly increasing its ability to support vulnerable Nunavummiut.

Furthermore, the Department is pleased to report its success in obtaining funding for the electronic Case Management System*. This system will allow workers to track critical information related to referrals, investigations, service plans and case notes, and make more informed decisions with respect to ongoing case management and planning. The system will facilitate compliance with key standards and allow for increased oversight and transparency within the Department's operations.

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The Department of Family Services identifies the Auditor General's recommendations as priorities. The Department will continue its work towards identifying best practices with respect to workload standards and will revise the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual accordingly. Additionally, the Department is guided by the priorities in its Business Plan related to the *Follow-up Report*, such as reviewing parental and community engagement services, human resource development, and training systems for staff.

The Department will continue to provide biannual updates to Standing Committee on the implementation of the recommendations of the Auditor General.

*Please note, in the Department's previous response to the Standing Committee on the *Follow-up Report*, the term Client Information System is used. This term is used synonymously with the Case Management System in this report.

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OAG Recommendation	Department's Response	Action Item*	Status	Next Steps	Timeframe
Workforce Management					
<p>Recommendation 23: In keeping with its previous commitment, the Department of Family Services should build on its work to date and continue to collaborate with the Department of Finance and the regions to ensure that community social service worker positions are filled with permanent staff in all communities. In doing so, the Department of Family Services should monitor vacancies and staffing activity and should address any systemic recruitment and retention issues that affect its ability to sustain capacity.</p>	Agreed. The Department will work with the appropriate government departments to address any barriers to recruitment and retention of community social services workers and supervisors. In particular, these efforts will focus on ensuring that there is appropriate office space, staff housing units and appropriate timeliness associated with the staffing process.	23.1	In progress	The Department is requesting a seat on the Housing Allocation Committee.	June 2016
	The Department is working with Nunavut Arctic College to review the Human Services Program to ensure that the program results in graduates who are employable in positions with the Department.	23.2	Complete		
	In the short term, the Department will develop a system to monitor vacancies and staffing activity. This will help the Department to identify whether additional efforts are required to sustain capacity.	23.3	Complete		

*A complete list of Action Items and associated descriptions can be found in Appendix A.

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<p>Recommendation 27: The Department of Family Services should set and monitor workload standards and take steps to ensure that these standards are met.</p>	<p>Agreed. Over the short term, the Department will continue its work to develop workload standards for both generic and standardized caseloads in keeping with recognized best practice standards (where available) and scope of practice within Nunavut. This will entail a review of other provincial/territorial child welfare programs to determine current standards and other relevant professional bodies and associations regarding caseload standards for defined areas of practice.</p>	27.1	In progress	The Department is examining an initial workload analysis completed by the Department and will begin collecting Regional caseload data. Data will help inform next steps in developing standards.	June 2016
		27.2	In progress	The Department is completing a jurisdictional scan related to best practices and workload standards.	June 2016
		27.3	In progress	The Department will revise the Child and Family Services Procedures Manual based on findings from the jurisdictional scan.	March 2017

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<p>Recommendation 35: The Department of Family Services should track the community social service workers who receive or require statutory training and establish a regular training schedule, to ensure that everyone who needs training completes the program in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Agreed. The Department has worked on updating and improving its mandatory training program with the intention of offering it to all community social workers as required.</p>	35.1	Complete		
	<p>Over the short term, the Department will improve its current tracking system of all community social services workers and their training to capture information such as dates of training completed and types of training completed. The tracking system will include a follow-up system to identify if an individual requires additional training.</p>	35.2	Complete		
	<p>Further, the Department will immediately establish a detailed learning plan process to ensure that all required competencies are met for community social services workers to receive a child protection worker appointment.</p>	35.3	Complete		

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Compliance with Key Standards					
<p>Recommendation 50: The Department of Family Services should ensure compliance with standards established for case file management, facility inspections, foster home reviews, and the Director's annual audit. In doing so, it should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensure that staff, supervisors, and management are accountable for non-compliance with standards; and -Use the results of the existing control processes, such as case audits by supervisors, to take corrective action on deficiencies and to follow-up on whether these deficiencies have been addressed. 	Agreed. Over the short term, the Department will provide a case file standards training program for all supervisory staff, and revise the appropriate Children and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual to ensure that non-compliance is addressed within the performance appraisal system.	50.1	Complete		
	The Department will establish a random file audit schedule to be implemented at both regional and headquarters offices in the medium term. The findings from these audits will be used to take corrective action in order to address non-compliance with standards.	50.2	Complete		
		50.3	Complete		
		50.4	First phase complete.	The Department has secured resources to implement a Case Management System and is starting the process of hiring a Project Manager through CGS. The Departments of Family Services and CGS have met to discuss next steps in moving forward.	A Project Manager will be hired through CGS by June 2016. A more detailed timeline will be developed once the Project Manager is hired, and will be included in the Department's next biannual response.

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Basic Information on Children in Care					
Recommendation 57: The Department of Family Services should ensure the timely and consistent collection and sharing of basic information about the children in its care by closely monitoring community reporting and taking corrective follow-up action as required.	Agreed. Over the short term, the Department will ensure that all basic information about children in care is included in the headquarters tracking system being developed. Headquarters will actively follow up with regions who fail to report according to standards.	57.1	Complete		
	The Department will work to secure resources to implement a client information system across Nunavut in the medium term.	57.2	Complete	See Action 50.4 for Next Steps.	See Action 50.4 for Timeframe.

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Community Engagement and Input					
Recommendation 63: As we recommended in our 2011 audit, the Department of Family Services should actively engage parents and communities in developing strategies for keeping children safe. These strategies should include specific actions, timelines, and resources to address challenges in their communities.	Agreed. Over the short term the Department will expand its regional reporting system to include information on services, activities and resources to support child safety through parental engagement and community development.	63.1	Complete		
	In the medium term, the Department will review and expand the current training resources available to staff to promote parental engagement and community development work.	63.2	Complete		
		63.3	Ongoing	In collaboration with the Ilisaqsivik Society, the Department is submitting a proposal to EIA for CSSW training that aims to increase parental/community engagement.	The proposal was submitted to EIA April 2016. A more detailed timeline will be developed if/when funding is secured.
				A meeting was held in April 2016 to develop a Work Plan for the Inunnguiniq Parenting Program Working Group. Staff is currently drafting the Work Plan.	A more detailed timeline will be developed if/when funding is secured and the Work Plan is finalized.

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Appendix A

Recommendation 23: In keeping with its previous commitment, the Department of Family Services should build on its work to date and continue to collaborate with the Department of Finance and the regions to ensure that community social service worker positions are filled with permanent staff in all communities. In doing so, the Department of Family Services should monitor vacancies and staffing activity and should address any systemic recruitment and retention issues that affect its ability to sustain capacity.

Action Item 23.1: Improve recruitment, training, and retention of staff.

Action Item 23.2: Establish interdepartmental committee to work with Nunavut Arctic College to review Social Services Worker Program.

Action Item 23.3: Develop a tracking system to monitor vacancies and staff activity.

Recommendation 27: The Department of Family Services should set and monitor workload standards and take steps to ensure that these standards are met.

Action Item 27.1: Gather current caseload data from all regions within Nunavut.

Action Item 27.2: Conduct interjurisdictional review to gather child welfare workload information to enable Department to develop workload standards.

Action Item 27.3: Amend the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual.

Recommendation 35: The Department of Family Services should track the community social service workers who receive or require statutory training and establish a regular training schedule, to ensure that everyone who needs training completes the program in a timely manner.

Action Item 35.1: Revise and implement training program.

Action Item 35.2: Expand tracking system for statutory appointment to include types of training received and dates of completion.

Action Item 35.3: Amend processes and standards to ensure training dates and competencies are regularly collected.

Recommendation 50: The Department of Family Services should ensure compliance with standards established for case file management, facility inspections, foster home reviews, and the Director's annual audit. In doing so, it should: a) Ensure that staff, supervisors, and management are accountable for non-compliance with standards; and b) Use the results of the existing control processes, such as case audits by supervisors, to take corrective action on deficiencies and to follow-up on whether these deficiencies have been addressed.

Action Item 50.1: Establish a case file standards training program and review standards to ensure clear accountabilities for compliance with case management.

Action Item 50.2: Review and revise current regional file audit process, schedule and reporting. Expand tracking system for statutory appointment to include types of training received and dates of completion.

Action Item 50.3: Establish an annual schedule of audits for HQ to complete in each region.

Action Item 50.4: Implement a Client Information System (CIS) that monitors case documentation and compliance performance for each client served.

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Recommendation 57: The Department of Family Services should ensure the timely and consistent collection and sharing of basic information about the children in its care by closely monitoring community reporting and taking corrective follow-up action as required.

Action Item 57.1: Establish a manual Child in Care Tracking system for HQ to gather information on all children in care.

Action Item 57.2: Prepare a Business Case to establish a client information database.

Recommendation 63: As we recommended in our 2011 audit, the Department of Family Services should actively engage parents and communities in developing strategies for keeping children safe. These strategies should include specific actions, timelines, and resources to address challenges in their communities.

Action Item 63.1: Expand the monthly regional reporting system to include more information on staff engagement work in the community.

Action Item 63.2: Consult with staff to determine what additional training is required in order to support expanded practice in community development, parenting support, and early intervention.

Action Item 63.3: Examine community resource programs currently working in Nunavut and develop expanded working relationships.