

# Director of Child & Family Services 2016/2017 Annual Report



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Building *Nunavut* Together  
*Nunavut* liuqatigiingniq  
Bâtir le *Nunavut* ensemble

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Department of Family Services

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Director of Child & Family Services 2016/17 Annual Report meets the legislated requirements of the *Child and Family Services Act* by providing a report on the administration of the *Act* and its regulations, presenting statistics with respect to child welfare within the territory, and outlining the services and initiatives under the Child & Family Services Division. The 2016/17 Annual Report also serves to highlight a number of key achievements, and the major changes the Department has pursued in the past year to improve its capacity to deliver quality and culturally appropriate services to children, youth, and families.

In our fourth year of operations, we are focusing on how we can better engage with the families and communities we serve. We integrated community engagement into our 2017/2020 Business Plan, and contributed action items under the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy that support Inuit parenting and Inuit-specific approaches to child protection. While we have made considerable progress since our creation in 2013, we know that community engagement is ongoing and we will continue to work towards community-based, collaborative approaches to protecting and supporting vulnerable Nunavummiut.

For the upcoming year, the Department will work to raise the profile of its frontline staff, highlighting the positive contributions they make in communities, and the ways in which they can work collaboratively with families. The aim of highlighting the collaborative work of our frontline staff is to show Nunavummiut how they can reach out for proactive, preventative support, before intrusive measures are necessary to protect children and youth.

We will continue to support staff in prevention and early-intervention work, as we recognize the importance of working with families before more intrusive interventions are required. We will continue our partnership with the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre, through funding the delivery of its Inunnguiniq Parenting Facilitator Training Program, which includes Inuit perspectives on child rearing, positive discipline methods, wellness counselling, and healing from trauma. Additionally, the Department is taking steps towards the delivery of its Parent and Community Engagement Training for Community Social Services Workers (CSSWs). The training will increase CSSWs' understanding of community engagement, their ability to work collaboratively with parents, and the skills to build positive partnerships within communities and regions. In this work, we remain guided by a number of Inuit Societal Values, most notably the principles of *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq: Respecting others, relationships and caring for people*; *Pijitsirniq: Serving and providing for family and/or community*; and *Piliriqatigiinniq/Ikajuqtiigiinniq: Working together for a common cause*.

Protection of vulnerable children, youth, and families is at the core of our mandate as a Department. We rely on frontline staff, families, extended families, foster families, and our community partners, for their continued dedication, time, strength, and support, to help us achieve our mandate. I want to express my sincere gratitude for all their efforts and contributions, which allowed us to support and protect over 1,000 Nunavummiut this past year.

Respectfully,

Jo-Anne Henderson-White, B.A., B.S.W., M.S.W.  
Director of Child & Family Services

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

### Strengthened Service Capacity

Over the past year, the Department of Family Services worked towards increasing its service capacity in-territory and out-of-territory through two notable steps.

- Obtained \$837,000 for seven Family Resource Workers, who will provide essential prevention-based services to Nunavummiut, and incorporate Inuit Societal Values and Inuktitut language services into program delivery. The Family Resource Workers were added in Arctic Bay, Clyde River, Kugluktuk, Hall Beach, Whale Cove, Taloyoak, and Sanikiluaq. Although the Department has experienced delays and challenges in the hiring process for the new positions, the Department is actively monitoring these positions to mitigate any issues that arise.
  - Secured two Client Liaison Officers in Ottawa and Edmonton respectively. Client Liaison Officers will be responsible for ensuring Nunavummiut receive adequate levels of care through regular visits with children, youth, and adults residing in out-of-territory facilities. The positions will be posted in early FY 2017/18 for Nunavut Inuit only, which will add to the Department's capacity to provide culturally appropriate support for Nunavummiut residing out-of-territory. The Department expects the positions will be staffed in Fall 2017.
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### Worked towards the Child & Family Services Case Management System

- In June 2016, a Project Manager was hired to manage the implementation of the Child & Family Services Case Management System. The Department secured a vendor for the system in March 2017, who will conduct information gathering sessions with frontline staff in early FY 2017/18, to begin building the components of the system.
  - The new system will let CSSWs document referrals, investigations, service plans, and case notes, allowing for increased oversight and transparency, as well as planning and program development. It is expected that the system will be operational by the end of FY 2018/19.
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### Implemented Action Items under the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Action Plan

- For FY 2016/17, the Department was approved to spend \$269,000 for work to prevent child sexual abuse. The Department hired a consultant to provide research and identify evidence-based priorities for child sexual abuse initiatives. The research supported the development of a work plan for the incoming Coordinator, Preventing Violence Against Children and Youth, who will be hired at the beginning of FY 2017/18. The Coordinator will be responsible for improving the ability of frontline staff to identify and work with clients experiencing, or who have experienced, sexual abuse, supporting foster parents to identify and address these issues, and developing public awareness initiatives about violence and sexual abuse.

- Additionally, the Department of Family Services provided \$120,000 in funding to the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre (QHRC) to deliver four training sessions of its Inunnguiniq Parenting Facilitator Training Program. 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 training was delivered to 54 participants in three communities (Iqaluit, Arviat, and Cambridge Bay).
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## **Coordinated Men & Boys Roundtables**

- In an effort to expand initiatives targeting the needs of boys and young men, the Department of Family Services coordinated two roundtables in Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet respectively, with key stakeholders who offer supports, programs, and initiatives to men and boys in the territory. The topics at the roundtables included issues affecting men and boys in Nunavut; strengths and limitations of current programs and services for men and boys; and, resources necessary to meet the needs of men and boys.
- The information gathered from the roundtables will inform the Department on how it can best support the needs of community-based agencies providing programs. The Department is planning a roundtable for the Kitikmeot region for Fall 2017.

## **SIGNIFICANT CHANGES**

### **Transfer of the Elders' Homes to the Department of Health**

To address the many issues facing Nunavut's long-term residential care system, in April 2016 the Government of Nunavut was asked to consider consolidating the responsibility for long-term residential care under the Department of Health. In May 2016, the Government of Nunavut approved the transfer of the responsibility of the three Elders' Homes from Family Services to Health, effective April 1, 2017. Over the past year, the Departments of Family Services and Health took a number of steps to ensure a seamless transition.

Although the responsibility of the Elders' Homes is with the Department of Health, the Department of Family Services will continue to offer services related to the social wellbeing of seniors, including the provision of income support and financial assistance, investigations into elder abuse, as well as community-level support.

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### **Changes to the Public Guardianship Program**

To ensure the Public Guardian's clients receive the support required, the Department of Family Services took a number of steps to improve the current Public Guardianship program.

- Created a new position of Public Guardian and transferred the appointment of the Public Guardian from the Director, Child & Family Services, to the new position in order to mitigate the high potential for conflict of interest. A conflict could arise when the duties of the Public Guardian conflict with responsibilities the employee has to the Department of Family Services and the Government of Nunavut.
- Appointed a Deputy Public Guardian and arranged separate legal counsel. The changes will support the Public Guardian manage an increasing caseload, and in making court applications and addressing legal issues.

## YEAR IN REVIEW

Table 1 presents an overview of the services delivered to Nunavummiut through the Child & Family Services Division. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented is from March 31, 2017, and represents a snapshot in time.

**Table 1: Statistical Summary of Child & Family Services**

Select Indicators	Total	Percentage
<b>Number of Children and Youth Receiving Services</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>100%</b>
Male	242	60%
Female	164	40%
<b>Children and Youth Receiving Services by Court or Agreement</b>		
Under Court Order	178	44%
By Service Agreement	228	56%
<b>Children and Youth Receiving Services In or Out-of-Territory</b>		
In Nunavut	343	84%
Out-of-Territory	63	16%
<b>Children and Youth Receiving Services In Nunavut, by Placement Type</b>		
Foster homes	118	34%
In family	117	34%
Extended family placements	84	24%
Group homes	24	7%
<b>Number of Adults Receiving Services</b>	<b>249</b>	
In Nunavut	120	48%
Out-of-Territory	129	52%
<b>Total Number of Persons Admitted to Family Violence Shelters</b>	<b>455</b>	
Women	224	49%
Children	231	51%

As at March 31, 2017, the Department of Family Services was providing protection and/or support to 406 children and youth and 249 adults. These supports include in-home supports, respite care, counselling services, investigations and interventions in cases of abuse, and through foster care and residential care. A large proportion of children and youth (84%) were receiving care and services in Nunavut and half of those children (50%) were receiving services within their family or extended family. Additionally, of the 406 children and youth the Department was supporting, more than half (56%) are under Service Agreements, which are agreements that provide opportunities for families to work more collaboratively with the Child & Family Services Division before more intrusive measures are required.

The following section provides more detailed statistics and analysis pertaining to Child Protection Services. It is followed by a section outlining the other areas of service that fall under the Child & Family Services Division, including Adult Supports, Guardianship Services, Adoption Services, and Family Violence Prevention, and concludes with a section on the Department's Future Directions.

## CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

In the past year, the Department provided support and/or protection to 406 children and youth. This section will outline how many children and youth were supported under Service Agreements and Court Orders respectively. It is critical to note that CSSWs are mandated under the *Child and Family Services Act* to work collaboratively with families before more serious child protection concerns arise. Service Agreements allow CSSWs to engage with families proactively, before interventions that are more intrusive are warranted.

### Service Agreements

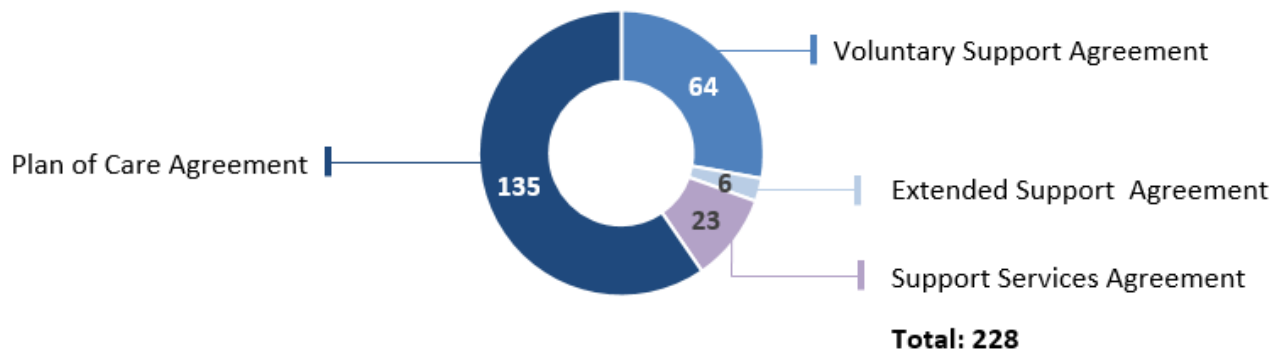
There are three types of Service Agreements utilized when a youth or family would benefit from receiving supports, but no serious protection concerns exist.

Figure 1 below describes how many children and youth were receiving service, by the types of Service Agreements outlined on the right. The figure also includes the number of children and youth receiving service through a Plan of Care Agreement. A Plan of Care is a written agreement between the parent(s) and the Department of Family Services that outlines a case plan for the child and family to ensure the child’s protection and wellbeing.

Although a Plan of Care Agreement is still an agreement and alternative to court, a Plan of Care means there are immediate child protection concerns within the home.

Service Agreements	
<b>Voluntary Support Agreement:</b>	agreement with parents and children under the age of 16 who are not in need of protection, but require some form of support.
<b>Support Services Agreement:</b>	agreement with youth between the ages of 16 and 19 who cannot remain safely in their parents’ home and are making efforts to care for themselves.
<b>Extended Support Agreement:</b>	agreement that allows CFS to provide supports to young adults between the ages of 19 and 25.

**Figure 1: Children and Youth Receiving Service, by Service Agreement, March 31, 2017**



As shown above, a total of 228 children and youth were receiving care through Service Agreements, reflecting an overall increase from FY 2015/16, when 204 children and youth were receiving care through Service Agreements. The largest increase can be seen in Plan of Care Agreements, which rose from 85 in FY 2015/16, to 135 in FY 2016/17. Although Plan of Care Agreements are used when child protection concerns exist, they are still an approach to child protection that is more collaborative in nature, and avoid involvement of the court. Where possible, CSSWs will work with families, extended family members, community members, and members of other agencies (i.e., RCMP), in the development of a Plan of Care Agreement, to facilitate a more comprehensive approach to supporting families. The overall increase in children and youth receiving support through Service Agreements is a notable increase for the Department, reflecting its commitment to more collaborative, prevention-based approaches to supporting children and families.

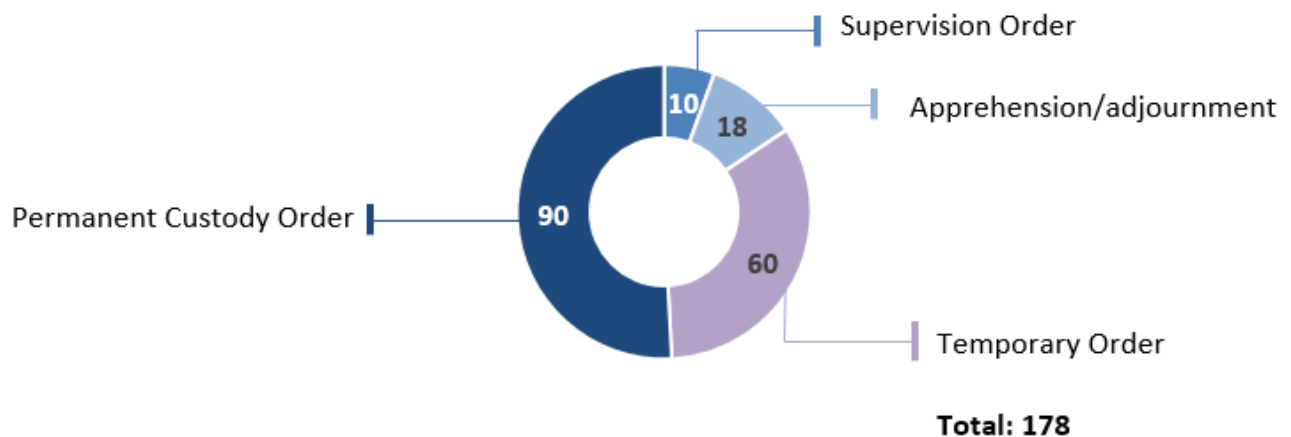
## Court Orders

There are three types of Court Orders the Department is mandated to utilize under the *Act* when a child needs protection, outlined on the right.

As at March 31, 2017, there were 178 children and youth under Court Orders. Figure 2 below provides a snapshot of the number of children and youth receiving services through Court Orders, including the number of children and youth under apprehension/adjournment statuses. An apprehension is a point in time when a child has been removed from the care of their parent(s). An adjournment order means a Court Order was made to bring the matter back to court on a later date, at which point one of the three types of Court Orders can be issued.

Court Orders	
<b>Supervision Order:</b>	court order that directs a CSSW to supervise the home of a child according to the terms and conditions of the order. The order cannot be for a period exceeding one year.
<b>Temporary Custody Order:</b>	court order which directs that the child be placed in the custody of the Director for a specified period.
<b>Permanent Custody Order:</b>	court order that places a child in the permanent custody of the Director to age 16, extendable to 19 if the youth consents or if ordered by the court. The court may specify in the order any terms and conditions that the court deems necessary such as provisions around the child's access to their parent(s).

**Figure 2: Children and Youth Receiving Service, by Court Order, March 31, 2017**

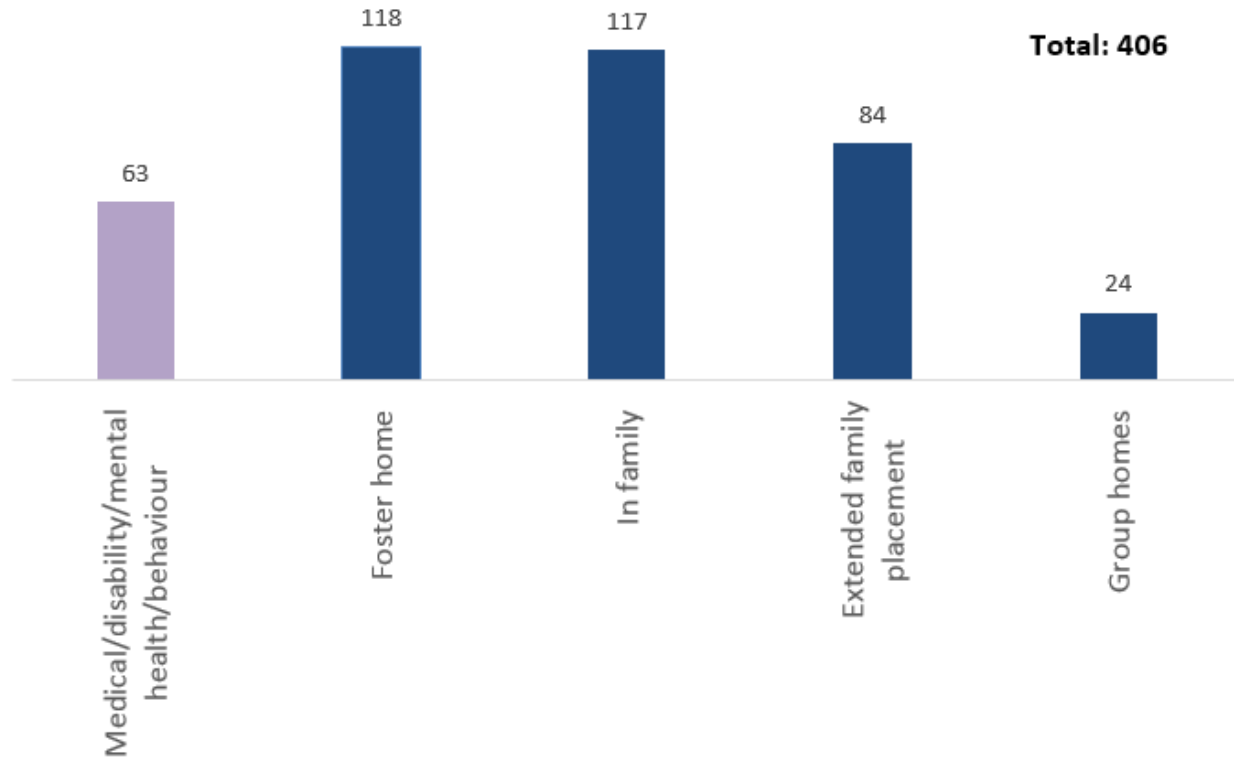


Of the 406 children and youth receiving services, less than half (44%) were receiving services under Court Orders. Half (51%) of the children and youth receiving services under Court Orders were under Permanent Custody Orders (also known as Permanent Care). Under the *Child and Family Services Act*, the Department of Family Services is mandated to seek Permanent Custody Orders for children and youth who need significant protection. The court is called upon in these cases to deliberate the matter, and either issue or deny the Permanent Custody Order. Typically, when the Department is seeking a Permanent Custody Order, they have worked previously with the family through other Service Agreements and Court Orders. If the family struggles to meet the agreement and conditions deemed necessary to protect and support a child, the Department must seek a Permanent Custody Order to ensure the child's ongoing safety. As shown on the next page, many children and youth receiving services from the Department, including those under Permanent Custody Orders, will remain within an extended family or their community.

## Where Children & Youth Receiving Services Live

Figure 3 below describes where children and youth were receiving services as at March 31, 2017.

**Figure 3: Children and Youth Receiving Service, In-Territory and Out-of-Territory, March 31, 2017**



84% (343) of children and youth receiving services were in-territory and half of those children and youth (50%) remained within their family or extended family. Of the 343 children residing in Nunavut, the majority (34%) are residing in foster homes. The figure also demonstrates that 7% (24) children were residing within group homes in the territory. For FY 2016/17, the Department of Family Services provided \$3,615,054.03 to three group homes in Nunavut. This funding allows children and youth with higher needs to remain in-territory.

The figure also shows that 63 children and youth, or 16% of all children and youth supported by the Department, were receiving services out-of-territory for a variety of reasons including severe behavioural or mental health challenges, and/or medical issues. As noted previously, over the past year the Department strengthened its capacity to ensure adequate oversight over out-of-territory facilities and clients' care by creating two Client Liaison Officers who will be staffed in Ottawa and Edmonton respectively. These Client Liaison Officers will be Nunavut Inuit, which will create culturally appropriate relationships and connections for Nunavummiut residing out-of-territory.

The Department recognizes the importance of working to repatriate children and youth who are receiving services out-of-territory, where possible. The last section on Future Directions outlines how the Department more recently increased its capacity to support Nunavummiut in-territory, and will be working to repatriate certain children and youth to the territory.

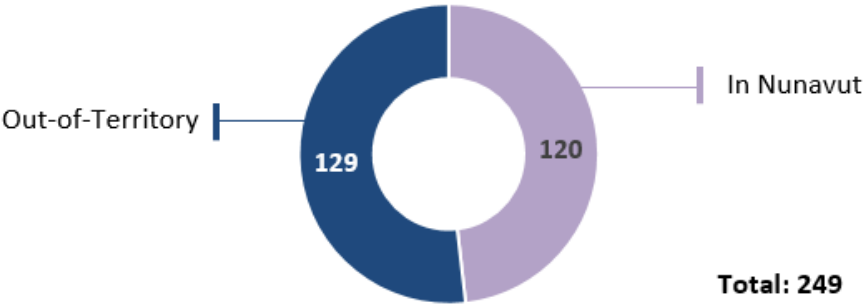


# OTHER AREAS OF SERVICE UNDER THE CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES DIVISION

## Adult Supports & Residential Care

As at March 31, 2017, the Department of Family Services was supporting 249 adults. The figure below demonstrates that 48% (120) adults were receiving service within the territory. This type of service includes day-to-day support provided by CSSWs to adults and/or their family, including but not limited to: counselling, respite care, in-home support, and/or drug or alcohol rehabilitation. The Department also provides funding to in-territory residential care facilities to support adults with higher needs.

**Figure 4: Adults Receiving Service, In-Territory and Out-of-Territory, March 31, 2017**



### In-Territory Residential Care

In-territory residential care facilities include group homes, supported living homes, and alternative family care homes. Alternative family care homes allow adults, who are over the age of 19 and receive Departmental support under the *Guardianship and Trusteeship Act*, to maintain residence in Nunavut with a relative instead of being placed out-of-territory. For FY 2016/17, the Department of Family Services spent a total \$2,921,601 on residential care facilities in Nunavut.

### Out-of-Territory Residential Care

As at March 31, 2017, the Department was supporting 129 adults out-of-territory in group homes, medical facilities, and specialized care homes. Because Nunavut does not have the capacity or infrastructure, the Department must rely on out-of-territory residential care facilities to meet the needs of Nunavummiut who require specialized care, ongoing medical intervention, treatment of mental health, or dementia services. As noted previously, Client Liaison Officers will play a large role in supporting these adults, ensuring their level of care is adequate, and facilitating cultural connections.

## Guardianship Services

### The Public Guardian

The Department of Family Services is also responsible for managing Guardianship Services through its Public Guardian. The Government of Nunavut, under the *Guardianship and Trusteeship Act*, appoints the Public Guardian whose main role is to make decisions about personal and health matters for those who, in the Court’s view, are unfit to make decisions on their own, and who have not already appointed a suitable private guardian. The Public Guardian is also responsible for reviewing all guardianship applications and documents before they are presented to the court.

As at March 31, 2017, the Public Guardian was responsible for 230 active files. As noted previously, over the past year the Department of Family Services took steps to strengthen the Public Guardianship program. A Deputy Public Guardian was appointed and separate legal counsel was arranged to support the work of the Public Guardian in making court applications and addressing legal issues. Additionally, in order to mitigate the potential for conflict of interest, the Department took steps to separate the Public Guardianship program from the Child & Family Services Division, including moving the budget for Public Guardianship to the Corporate Management Division. The Department is continuing to work with the Departments of Justice and Finance to explore modeling the Public Guardian office as a separate entity, similar to the Public Trustee Office affiliated with the Department of Justice.<sup>1</sup>

### Adoption Services

Table 2 below provides a snapshot of the number of children adopted in Nunavut for FY 2016/17, by region and type of adoption.

**Table 2: Children Adopted in Nunavut, by Region, FY 2016/17**

Region	Private	Departmental	Custom
Kivalliq	8	0	55
Qikiqtaaluk (excluding Iqaluit)	12	2	52
Iqaluit	7	0	39
Kitikmeot	0	1	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>155</b>

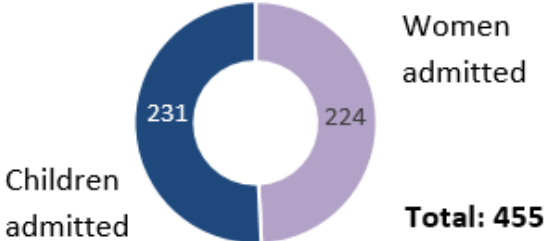
CSSWs provide adoption services for all adoptions in Nunavut, except those under the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act*. Where possible, for departmental adoptions, CSSWs work to identify extended family and community members as the first choice for children requiring a home. Additionally, under the *Adoption Act*, the Department is mandated to consult with Regional Inuit Associations when an Inuk child is being placed for private or departmental adoption. The Department is working to improve the consultation process with Regional Inuit Associations to facilitate communication and oversight of the adoption process for an Inuk child.

### Family Violence Prevention

For FY 2016/17, the Department provided \$2,640,000 to the five Family Violence Shelters in Nunavut. As demonstrated on the right, this funding directly supported the 455 women and children who sought safety in the Family Violence Shelters.

Although there was a drop in admissions to Family Violence Shelters, from 593 women and children in FY 2015/16 to 455 over the past year, this does not necessarily mean a decrease in occupancy in the shelters. Rather, women and children may be staying longer in the shelters, which would result in fewer admissions. CSSWs also play a critical role in family violence intervention in communities including individual and group counselling, referrals to other services, and transportation to a safe location.

**Figure 5: Persons Admitted to Family Violence Shelters, FY 2016/17**



<sup>1</sup> Given the Department of Family Services’ efforts in separating the Public Guardian from the Child & Family Services Division, future Annual Reports will no longer contain statistics pertaining to this program.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

### **Continuing Efforts in Community Engagement**

The Department was successful in obtaining funding for Parent and Community Engagement Training for CSSWs, which will focus on improving CSSWs' understanding of community engagement and consultation, and effective collaboration and communication. The training is an important step towards community engagement and empowering communities to provide safety and protection for children.

### **Strengthening Residential Care Capacity In-Territory**

In FY 2016/17, due to the ending of the contract with the previous service provider, the Department of Family Services suspended residential care services for the Ilagiitugut Group Home in Iqaluit. The suspension was temporary while the Department worked to secure another service provider who could deliver enhanced services to address the needs of high-risk adolescent females. The contract was awarded in winter 2017 to Atlantic Youth Services, who will provide cultural and traditional land-based programming, emotional skills regulation training, and culturally and developmentally appropriate intervention and treatment services.

The Department will be working to resume services in the Ilagiitugut Group Home by June 2017. The building will house eight high-risk female clients, provide space for a visiting Elder, offer on-site family visits, and provide treatment based programs for the youth. Once services are resumed, the Department will begin repatriation planning for youth out-of-territory.

## **CONCLUSION**

The 2016/17 Annual Report highlighted the key achievements of the Department of Family Services, and the major changes that have occurred over the past year. It presented statistics that reflect the Department's commitment to more collaborative Service Agreements, keeping children within territory where possible, and increasing its' capacity to support and provide culturally appropriate services to Nunavummiut living out-of-territory.

The upcoming year marks the beginning of our fifth year as a Department. It is an opportunity for the Department to focus on retaining a strong and well-trained staffing complement, whose efforts for collaboration with families is highlighted in communities. We know our role is to provide support where necessary, but that parents and communities are ultimately responsible for the protection of children and youth. As such, we will continue to strengthen efforts to proactively support parents and build partnerships with community partners who will support these efforts.

**Note on Data Collection**

The data in this report came from monthly summaries provided by frontline staff. All efforts are made to provide accurate information in the absence of a centralized case management system. As noted above, the Department of Family Services is working towards the implementation of a case management system, which will facilitate accurate data collection.