



**Response to the Standing Committee
on Oversight of Government
Operations and Public Accounts
on the Review of the Report of the Auditor
General of Canada to the Legislative
Assembly of Nunavut on the 2014 Follow-up
Report on Child and Family Services in
Nunavut**

April 2015

On September 16-17, 2014 the Assistant Auditor General of Canada, Ronnie Campbell, appeared before the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts to present the *Auditor General of Canada's 2014 Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut*. Following that appearance, the Standing Committee tabled their Report on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on the 2014 Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut. The Standing Committee report consists of nine (9) recommendations to the Government of Nunavut (GN), specifically to the Department of Family Services, which the Committee felt could help improve the delivery of services to children and youth in Nunavut.

Pursuant to Rule 91(5) of the *Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut*, this document has been prepared by the Department of Family Services (DFS) in response to the *Report of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on the 2014 Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut*.

This response individually addresses the specific recommendations made by the Standing Committee in their report which was presented to the Legislative Assembly on October 27, 2014.

Standing Committee Recommendation #1:

The Standing Committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut, as a whole, ensure that Action Plans which are developed to address issues raised by the Auditor General of Canada be provided to the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts at the earliest opportunity.

GN Response

The Department of Family Services commits to providing the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government and Public Accounts with information on Action Plans that are developed to address issues raised by the Auditor General of Canada in a timely manner.

Standing Committee Recommendation #2:

The Standing Committee recommends that Action Plans produced by the Government of Nunavut to address such issues as those raised in the reports of the Auditor General of Canada, are updated on a regular and consistent basis and that those updates be tabled in the Legislative Assembly on a regular and consistent basis.

GN Response:

The Department of Family Services will provide regular and timely updates to the Legislative Assembly on the Quality Protects Action Plan throughout 2015/2016.

Standing Committee Recommendation #3:

The Standing Committee Recommends that the Department of Family Services provide to the Standing Committee, in a timely manner, copies of all documentation and information that departmental witnesses committed to provide during their appearance before the Standing Committee on September 16 and 17, 2014.

GN Response:

As noted by the Committee, the Department of Family Service committed to provide information during our September 16 and 17, 2014 appearance. The information is as follows:

- Residential Care Action Plan (Appendix A);
- The Department’s Children and Family Services Division had a 2013–14 fiscal year budget of \$50.3 million, of which \$10 million was allocated for child protection services and covered the following: permanent salaries; casual wages; ongoing contributions; travel and transportation; materials and supplies; purchased services; utilities (building related); service contracts; fees and payments; and, computer hardware and software.

Of the \$50.3 million, the following was spent on in-territory and out-of-territory (OOT) residential care for children and youth:

- Residential Care for children and youth in Nunavut - \$164,651;
- Residential Care for children and youth OOT - \$9, 317, 977;
- Community Social Service Workers (CSSW) who are hired from within the communities do receive staff housing;
- Section 301 of the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual related to Statutory Appointment of Child Protection Workers is attached and lays out the seven areas of required competency for an appointed CSSW (Appendix B);
- Additional information on OOT residential care providers can be found in the table below:

DFS OOT Facilities for Children and Youth		
Facility	City	Province/Territory
Annie’s Haven Ltd.	Markham	Ontario
Broken Arrow Residential Treatment	Cobourg	Ontario
Calder Centre	Saskatoon	Saskatchewan
CHEO	Ottawa	Ontario
Gloria Penner 5788847 MB Inc.	Winnipeg	Manitoba

Hawk Residential Care and Treatment Homes	Bobcaygeon	Ontario
Homewood Health Centre	Guelph	Ontario
Judy Borne	Stonewall	Manitoba
Macdonald Youth Services	Winnipeg	Manitoba
Mary Homes	Orleans	Ontario
Massey Home 6639977 MB Ltd.	Winnipeg	Manitoba
Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Science	Ottawa	Ontario
Options Youth & Associates	Perth	Ontario
Parkland Community Living and Support Society	Red Deer	Alberta
Partners in Parenting	Orleans	Ontario
Protegra Inc.	Edmonton	Alberta
Ranch Ehrlo Society	Pilot Butte	Saskatchewan
Roger's House	Ottawa	Ontario
Royal Ottawa Hospital	Ottawa	Ontario
Selkirk Mental Health Centre	Selkirk	Manitoba
Sinclair Residence Inc.	Greely	Ontario
St. Vincent's Hospital	Ottawa	Ontario
Stepping Stones	Ottawa	Ontario
Terrace Youth Residential Services	Carleton Place	Ontario
Tungasuvvungat Inuit	Ottawa	Ontario
Winnipeg Inuit Centre	Winnipeg	Manitoba
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority	Winnipeg	Manitoba
Wood's Homes	Calgary	Alberta
Youthdale	Toronto	Ontario

- From April 1, 2011 until March 31, 2015 there were 80 annual facility reviews conducted in OOT facilities for children and youth;
- In response to the Standing Committee's request for further information and clarification on the Social Services Transformation plan. This plan was created as a response to the Office of the Auditor General 2011 Review of the Department of Health and Social Services - Child and Family Services Program. The Plan was not implemented in its entirety although key aspects of the Plan were implemented. These key aspects included:

- recruitment and retention of Community Social Services Workers, including a specific campaign implemented in conjunction with the Department Human Resources to centrally recruit staff;
- workplace review conducted in all three regions to assess working conditions in communities during 2012;
- revised staff training program including a new statutory training program for child welfare appointments in 2013 and supervisor training in 2012;
- residential care action plan to improve quality of care for children and youth placed outside Nunavut through Placement Planning and Review Committee, updated plans of care and facility reviews;
- Residential Placement tracking tool to track and monitor all external placements; and,
- Legislative Review that resulted in significant amendments to improve the Child and Family Services Act based upon community consultations in 2014.

There were 25 consultations held, all communities were invited and the communities that were visited were: Iqaluit, Kimmirut, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Igloolik, Hall Beach, Resolute Bay, Cape Dorset, Sanikiluaq, Rankin Inlet, Baker Lake, Cambridge Bay and Gjoa Haven.

The Quality Protects Action Plan (Appendix C) has been developed by the Department of Family Services to respond to the six recommendations made in the 2014 OAG Report including staff recruitment/retention, training, case management and information management.

Standing Committee Recommendation #4:

The Standing Committee Recommends that the Department of Family Services work closely with other Government of Nunavut entities to address staffing needs at the community and regional levels.

GN Response:

The Department of Family Services will work with the appropriate government departments to address any barriers to recruitment and retention of Community Social Services Workers (CSSWs) 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.

Standing Committee Recommendation #5:

The Standing Committee Recommends that the Department of Family Services take the necessary steps to ensure that all community social worker staff have the mandatory training required by law.

GN Response:

The Department of Family Services has worked on updating and improving its statutory training program with the intention of offering it to all Community Social Services Workers as required.

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. 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.

In October 2014, the Department revised and implemented a new CORE (statutory) training program for child protection staff which will be provided at least annually according to need. The Department will expand its current tracking system for statutory appointment to include types of training received and dates of completion. The Department will amend its appointment process for Child Protection Workers to ensure that training dates, and summary of competencies, are regularly collected in the Child Protection appointment database. The CFS Standards 301, 302, 303 have been revised to gather detailed information on specific training, received, professional skills, knowledge of legislation and policy.

Recommendation 35 from the *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on the 2014 Follow-up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut*. will be evaluated every year to maintain quality and consistency and to keep up with child welfare trends and staffing needs.

Standing Committee Recommendation #6:

The Standing Committee Recommends that the Department of Family Services continue to work towards developing and establishing key metrics and benchmarks by which to evaluate workloads faced by social workers and establishes relevant and appropriate workload standards by 2015.

GN Response

Over the short term, the Department of Family Services will continue its work to develop workload standards for both generic and specialized caseloads in keeping with recognized best practice standards (where available) and scope of practice within Nunavut. This will entail a review of other jurisdictions child welfare programs to determine current standards and other relevant professional bodies and associations regarding caseload standards for defined areas of practice.

The Department is in the process of creating the dedicated position of Workload Measures Analyst; this position will focus on developing caseload standards, measurement, and monitoring tools. To support this initiative there will be a community-based engagement process consistent with our plans to work together with our partners toward a common cause while making use of Nunavut based resources.

A Meeting was held on March 13, 2015 with the Child Welfare League of Canada to discuss a culture-based Child protection Capacity Development for Nunavut: Strengthening Workload Management and Workload standards.

Standing Committee Recommendation #7:

The Standing Committee Recommends that the Department of Family Services continue to work towards developing and establishing an electronic case management system by which to collect, consolidate and analyze information on children and youth requiring and receiving protection and care services.

GN Response

The Department of Family Services will implement a Client Information System (CIS) that monitors case documentation and compliance performance for each client served. The CIS will enable supervisors and management to monitor all case recording compliance and take appropriate action as required. 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. In the medium term, the Department will work to secure resources to implement a client information system across Nunavut.

The implementation of the Client Information System is contingent upon securing funding through a business case that will be completed on March 31, 2015.

Standing Committee Recommendation #8:

The Standing Committee Recommends that the Government of Nunavut continue to work towards developing policies and practices to establish privacy safeguards for personal information that is provided in accordance with the law to entities such as designated Inuit organizations in the course of implementing the *Child and Family Services Act* or the *Adoption Act*.

GN Response:

The Government of Nunavut is committed to working with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and to working co-operatively with designated Inuit

organizations to develop appropriate guidelines to ensure that safeguards are in place with respect to personal information that is provided concerning matters arising under the *Child and Family Services Act* and the *Adoption Act*. The Information and Privacy Commissioner for Nunavut has been consulted on this matter and the Department is awaiting the Commissioner's recommendation on provisions to include in an agreement.

The Standing Committee further recommends that the government review the necessity and effectiveness of the current statutory provisions in the *Child and Family Services Act* and the *Adoption Act* which involve entities such as designated Inuit organizations in the implementation of the legislation.

GN Response:

The Department of Family Services is preparing for a review of the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act* which will commence in 2015/2016.

Standing Committee Recommendation #9:

The Standing Committee Recommends that the Department of Family Services give further consideration to developing programs and allocating resources to engage parents, families and communities in finding solutions and strategies for keeping children safe, protected, comfortable and secure within their home communities.

GN Response:

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. The monthly regional reporting system will be expanded to include more information on staff engagement work with parent groups, community support activities and other organizations that are supporting children and families. 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.

The Department will consult with staff to determine what additional areas of training are required in order to support expanded practice in community development, parenting support and other forms of prevention and early intervention. The recommendations from this consultation will be incorporated in both the on-line and in person CFS training programs. This recommendation will be evaluated every year since it will be impacted by staff needs and recruitment and retention goals.