



# **Standing Committee on Community Services**

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*ANNUAL REPORT*

*2016*

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Halifax

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Honourable Kevin Murphy  
Speaker  
House of Assembly  
Province House  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Community Services, I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the committee for the period from September 2015 to June 2016 of the Sixty-second General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Arab'.

Patricia Arab, MLA, Fairview-Clayton Park  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Community Services

Halifax, Nova Scotia  
2016

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## INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Community Services, an all-party Committee of the House of Assembly, was struck at the beginning of the First Session of the Sixty-second General Assembly. Pursuant to Rule 60(2)(d) of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedures of the House of Assembly*:

(d) the Community Services Committee is established for the purpose of considering matters normally assigned to or within the purview of the Departments and Ministers of Business and Consumer Services and of Municipal Affairs and matters relating to the Human Rights Commission and the Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission.

In 1998, the Speaker, as Chairman of the Legislature's Internal Economy Board, gave the Community Services Committee written permission to also consider matters within the purview of the Department of Health and the Department of Community Services.

## MEMBERSHIP

There shall be no more than nine Members of the Legislative Assembly appointed to this committee. The current membership of the Standing Committee on Community Services is as follows:

Ms. Patricia Arab, MLA, Chair  
Fairview-Clayton Park

Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA  
Northside-Westmount

Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA, Vice Chair  
Halifax Atlantic

Mr. Larry Harrison, MLA  
Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley

Ms. Pam Eyking, MLA  
Victoria-The Lakes

Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA  
Chester-St. Margaret's

Mr. Bill Horne, MLA  
Waverly-Fall River-Beaver Bank

Ms. Marian Mancini, MLA  
Dartmouth South

Ms. Joyce Treen, MLA  
Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage

## **MEMBERSHIP CHANGES**

Ms. Marian Mancini, MLA, replaced Ms. Lenore Zann, MLA, September 24, 2015.

## **PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS**

The Community Services Committee traditionally meets once a month. These meetings are usually held on the first Tuesday of the month in the Legislative Committees Office.

## **NOTICES, TRANSCRIPTS, REQUESTED INFORMATION, PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS**

### **NOTICES**

Notices of committee meetings are sent to all members of the committee, caucus office staff, legislative staff and Communications Nova Scotia. The notices are also posted in Province House and on the Nova Scotia Legislature web site at the following address:  
<http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/calendar/>

### **TRANSCRIPTS**

Transcripts of all Community Services Committee meetings are available from the Legislative Library in Province House, the Legislative Committees Office, or on the Community Services Committee web page at the following address:  
[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/)

### **REQUESTED INFORMATION**

On occasions when the committee requests information that is not readily available during a meeting, the witness will be asked to provide the requested information as soon as possible following the meeting. Once the requested information is received and approved by the committee, it is placed on the Community Services Committee web page and can be viewed at the following address:  
[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/)

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Witness presentations are distributed to committee members in advance of the meeting date. Presentations are placed on the Community Services Committee web page after the meeting and can be viewed at the following address:  
[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/)

## **REPORTS**

All reports of the Standing Committee on Community Services are compiled by the Legislative Committees Office and forwarded to committee members for consideration. Upon completion of the review and approval of the report, the Chair tables the report with the Speaker of the House of Assembly or with the Clerk of the House of Assembly.

Distribution of the report is as follows:

To the Speaker and the Clerk of the House of Assembly; committee members; all witnesses who appeared before the committee; the Nova Scotia Legislative Library; the caucus offices; and the media. This report is available to the general public upon request from the Legislative Committees Office, and is available on the Community Services Committee web page at the following address:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/reports/community\\_services](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/reports/community_services)

## **RESEARCH MATERIAL**

All research for the Community Services Committee is compiled by the Legislative Library in consultation with the committee clerk. Research material is compiled in an electronic format and is distributed by the committee clerk prior to the meeting to members, staff, and witnesses.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The committee wishes to extend its gratitude to all witnesses for their time and co-operation. Special appreciation is extended to the Legislative Committees Office; Hansard Reporting Services; Legislative Television and Broadcast Services and the Nova Scotia Legislative Library.



# **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM**

**September 15, 2015**

**WITNESSES**

**Department of Community Services**

Ms. Lynn Hartwell, Deputy Minister

Mr. Joe Rudderham, Executive Director – Disability Support Program

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The Department of Community Services came before the committee to discuss their Disability Support Program. The Disability Support Program, formerly called the Services for Persons with Disabilities Program, supports approximately 5,300 children, youth and adults with intellectual developmental disabilities, long-term mental illness and physical disabilities. It is intended to promote independence, self-reliance, security and social inclusion.

Other programs offered by the department to assist individuals fall within specific categories such as: Direct Family Support Program, which provides assistance to support families who care for family members; Small Options Homes, which provides support for individuals with four or fewer individuals in the home; Independent Living Program provides support and service to individuals who live in their own apartment or home and require a minimal level of support; Alternate Family Support Program, similar to a foster care program where individuals will go into a family home and be provided the supports and services; and Group Homes and Developmental Residences, which are primarily for youth with a diagnosis of intellectual disability and long-term mental illness or physical disability.

Residential Care Facilities are for the more ambulatory or semi-ambulatory individuals who require minimal supports and supervision; Adult Residential Centres are for long-term structured supports and services to individuals with disabilities to enhance their development of interpersonal, community-oriented skills and activities of daily living. There are approximately 369 individuals in this program. Regional Rehabilitation Centres provide services to individuals with disabilities who require intensive level of support and supervision related to the complex behavioural challenges and skill development needs.

The current system is one that has been developed over decades and one that the department is currently trying to redesign. Currently, there is a wait-list of 1,083, and within that, there are 363 people who have no service. The remainder are receiving some service but it's not appropriate. In addition, there are people who are being significantly overserved, and people who probably need a greater level of support that is not available.

On the other end of this is the aging infrastructure, which is costly to maintain. These structures need to be maintained to ensure that while people are in them they are living safely and with dignity.

Transformation is not just in the Disability Support Program, but also in Children, Youth and Families, Employment Support and Income Assistance, and the corporate initiatives. This approach will enable ongoing engagement and communication, encourage collaboration, and provide opportunities for learning and progress to be shared.

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### Motions

- That the following organizations and their representatives be approved to appear as witnesses before the committee at a future date in accordance with a schedule established by the clerk after consultation with the Chair: the Insurance Bureau of Canada, Amanda Dean, VP Atlantic; Housing Nova Scotia, Dan Troke, President and CEO; the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, the witness will be determined; the Nova Scotia Association of Community Living; the Cape Breton-Victoria Child Advocacy Society; the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers; Habitat for Humanity, Marie-France LeBlanc; CMHC, the witness to be determined; Joseph Howe Manor, the witness to be determined; Red Door, Youth Health and Support Centre; Child Welfare Services; the Department of Community Services, Sarah Granke, provincial specialist; Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Stephanie MacInnis-Langley; the Cape Breton Place Family Resource Centre, to be determined who the witness is; Halifax and Region Military Family Resource Centre, with the suggested witness to be determined; L'Arche Atlantic, Jenn Power; EPIC Youth Peer Centre, Barry Waldman; the Department of Community Services, Vicki Wood, Executive Director for Youth and Family Services; and the Department of Community Services - Housing Nova Scotia, Dan Troke, President and CEO.
  - Moved by Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA
  - Motion Carried

### Amendment to motion

- "I move that the following organizations and their representatives be approved to appear as witnesses before the committee at a future date in accordance with a schedule established by the clerk after consultation." I would ask that consultation with the Chair be replaced with the following language that it would be - "after consultation with the committee and the witnesses" - and would also like to add, "and ensuring there is a rotation to the scheduling of witnesses proposed by each caucus".
  - Moved by Ms. Marian Mancini, MLA
  - Amendment defeated
  - Original motion carried

- Approve the Annual Report
  - Moved by Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA
  - Motion carried

### Correspondence

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Department of Community Services (response to the committee’s letter resulting from the March 3 meeting) – Re: Big Brothers Big Sisters, South Shore “In School Mentor Matches” program.
- Housing Nova Scotia (copy of response to the Face of Poverty Consultation) – Re: Spending and Timelines of Housing Nova Scotia.
- Collaborative Partnership Network (information requested from the June 2 meeting) – Re: A breakdown of the budget in terms of what each agency receives.
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (response to the committee’s letter resulting from the March 3 meeting) – Re: Motion to bring the Big Brothers Big Sisters, South Shore “In School Mentor Matches” Program to the attention of the department of Education and Early childhood Development and Community Services.
- Kendall Worth – Request to appear.
- Community Homes Action Group – Request to appear.

### **DOCUMENTATION**

The following information was requested and received:

- A detailed budget breakdown of the budget line for the program.
- Why was the pilot project through Bonny Lea Farm on aging in place cancelled and are you looking at specifically a pilot project in this province that works with the service provider to do an analysis of what needs to be put in place to support aging in place for those with a disability?

### **TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs2015sep15](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2015sep15)

**TEAM WORK COOPERATIVE AND THE  
WORKBRIDGE ASSOCIATION - OVERVIEW**

**October 6, 2015**

**WITNESSES**

**TEAM Work Cooperative**

Ms. Janice Ainsworth, Executive Director  
Ms. Stephanie Berry, Past client and current employee  
Mr. Bill Hildreth – Client of TEAM Work Cooperative

**WorkBridge Association**

Ms. Judy Turner – Executive Director

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

This meeting follows the Collaborative Partnership Network meeting where a discussion of the two agencies under that umbrella group, TEAM Work Cooperative and the WorkBridge Association was mentioned.

Established in 1997, TEAM Work’s mission is “to facilitate the full participation of Persons with Disabilities in the Nova Scotia labour force” together with WorkBridge, established in 2000, to create meaningful employment and career opportunities for persons with diverse abilities.

In 2005, due to fiscal restraint, budgets etc., the two organizations took a proactive approach and decided to share resources and staff. Due to the amalgamation between TEAM Work and WorkBridge, they were able to bring in new programs with some of the savings due to the amalgamation and now have a full continuum of service and benefits for clients.

They receive main funding from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education through its Career Nova Scotia Centres and through Service Canada. Funding is also received from the Department of Community Services. Under LAE’s post-secondary services, there is a special short-term skill development program that the organization can access. The organization secures other funds through fundraising activities within communities.

Statistically, 55 per cent of clients report living with mental illness; 30 per cent report living with learning disabilities; while, 20 per cent of clients identify with cognitive disability, 11 per cent have hearing and 10 per cent have visual disabilities and 30 per cent with physical disabilities. Fifteen per cent of clients are unemployed for zero to three months when first signed on to the program; 13 per cent are one to two years without any employment; 30 per cent, two years or more; and 23 per cent have never been employed of which 70 per cent fall into the one year to never category and 33 per cent of clients are currently on income assistance.

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### Correspondence

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Kendall Worth e-mail

## **DOCUMENTATION**

No documents/information were requested.

## **TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs2015oct06](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2015oct06)

**WITNESSES**

**Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia**

Ms. Marie-France LeBlanc, Chief Executive Director

Ms. Deborah Page, Director, Communications & Corporate Affairs

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The Habitat for Humanity program is about partnering with families who have the potential to own a home but haven't had the opportunity to do so. This opportunity is provided by giving families a no-down-payment, interest-free mortgage and in return the family provide 500 hours of sweat equity.

Three of the affiliates of Habitat for Humanity remained as chapters - Annapolis Valley, South Shore and Cape Breton, and operate as ambassadors that still operate as a board and reports back to the Nova Scotia affiliate. Their main function is fundraising, awareness generation and a build committee that supervises under the leadership and guidance of the Nova Scotia affiliate. Funding for these homes are divided into thirds: community-based fundraising; gift in-kind; and funds from the Nova Scotia affiliate. Other than providing 500 hours of sweat equity, other necessary criteria for families is that they have responsibility for at least one adult and one child under the age of 18.

For the first time in the organization they are planning in advance. The need and focus has become more apparent which has allowed the organization to be able to plan a little better. In the past they have built the house and then looked for the family. That has never been a successful model. The family needs to become involved from the start. By planning ahead, families that know that they will not be moving into their home until 2018 but they are already working with the organization toward that goal.

Habitat for Humanity also has ReStore, which is located in Burnside. They receive donated, gently-used furniture and building supplies, which they sell. They also have partnerships with major home suppliers like Kent, Rona, and Home Depot for products/supplies that are discontinued or are just not selling.

The organization has been very fortunate to partner with both provincial and municipal governments on a variety of levels. Municipally, they are working with governments to donate land and provide services. They also need the private sector engagement.

Research shows that corporations want to do more than just write a cheque. Habitat for Humanity offers the opportunity to get involved on so many different levels, both with the families, or by working in their ReStore.

They are currently piloting a new model in Oxford, Nova Scotia. The Town of Oxford approached Habitat for Humanity about working with them to build a subdivision. So in partnership with the employer, and the town, the organization has agreed to build 10 houses. The town donated the land and put in all the services and the main employer has committed to a certain amount of money per home, and Habitat for Humanity is providing the expertise, the family selection and the other one-third of the funding.

The long-term goal of the organization is to build probably no more than 20 houses a year, but hopefully helping 30 to 40 families incrementally a year as housing stock increases. One of the challenges ahead is to get provincial gifts in-kind for all builds. It was stated that... "It's great to go to the Home Hardware in one small town, but it's also great to have provincial partnerships".

Right now they have a good supply of donated land, but by 2018 they will be looking to start building on that land. As well, they want to continue to do some innovative projects similar to what they did in Oxford.

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### Motions

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Department of Community Services (information requested from the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting) Re: A detailed Disability Support Program budget; status of pilot project for aging in place in partnership with Bonny Lea Farms

## **DOCUMENTATION**

The following information was requested and received:

- A copy of the Ad template.

## **TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs2015nov03](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2015nov03)



**WITNESSES**

**Department of Community Services**

Ms. Nancy MacLellan, Deputy Minister

Ms. Sarah Granke, Specialist – Sexual Violence Prevention & Support

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

Sexual violence by definition is “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting.”

The first year of this strategy was about community engagement and hearing from people about the barriers, and key things needed in regard to prevention. The interests of victims and survivors and others impacted by sexualized violence need to be at the core of the strategy. As well as the experiences of marginalized communities and vulnerable groups, and those who are underserved. The work also needs to be inclusive and culturally competent and trauma-informed.

In the first year of the strategy there were consultations with over 60 service providers from 40 diverse organizations. Over 800 Nova Scotians completed an online survey as well as over 100 youth from all across the province.

What was heard was that services were not always coordinated, accessible or inclusive; people didn’t actually know where to go or were not sure where or who to refer to. It was also heard that a new approach for service delivery was needed, consistency in public awareness and education. There is a lack of understanding around issues of consent ranging from no idea to what it means to highly sophisticated.

Five key areas specific to service delivery are: to improve access for counselling and support, to make services more visible, to help with navigation support, ensuring that the services and spaces offered to people are not going to be judgmental, and a need for more sexual assault nurse examiner program access and for medical services.

The three key areas of action under the Sexual Violence Strategy are: services and supports; prevention, public education, and awareness; and approach and accountability.

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### Motions

- To defer those (request to appear – Community Society to End Poverty – Nova Scotia and Dalhousie Legal Aid Society) until your next meeting on February 2, 2016, when the Chair is actually back and we can put that motion forward
  - Moved by Mr. Joachim Stroink, MLA
  - Motion carried

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Habitat for Humanity (information requested from the November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting)
- Community Society to End Poverty in Nova Scotia – request to appear
- Dalhousie Legal Aid Service – request to appear

## **DOCUMENTATION**

The following information was requested and received:

- How many trained professional counsellors are there currently in Nova Scotia?
- Who are the members of the interdepartmental committee?
- Which departments are represented on the interdepartmental committee?

## **TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs2016jan19](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2016jan19)

**NOVA SCOTIA ADVISORY COUNCIL  
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN - MANDATE**

**February 2, 2016**

**WITNESSES**

**Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women**

Ms. Stephanie MacInnis-Langley, Executive Director

Ms. Patricia Gorham, Director of Policy, Planning and Strategic Initiatives

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The vision and mandate of the Nova Scotia Council on the Status of Women is to advance equality, fairness, and dignity for all women and girls in Nova Scotia by influencing public opinion, policy and programming across the province in the following intersecting areas: violence against women, leadership, economic security, and health and wellness.

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act and Regulations articulates Nova Scotia's commitment to a sustained focus on equity for women.

Through governance and accountability, the Status of Women manages the funding portfolio for programs and operating grants to the network of women-serving organizations in the province. There are nine women's centres and 11 transition houses, including Alice Housing.

Their community collaborations are essential to the work they do. They have an ongoing partnership with the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association and are part of the design team that shaped the restorative justice inquiry into the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children and continue to host the Voices group that was the founding group to start the initiative with government.

The Status of Women were involved in several initiatives, including co-leading the Domestic Violence Action Plan of 2010 and supporting the development of the province's Sexual Violence Strategy. They have a delegation to the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and are co-leading a collaborative approach with Mount Saint Vincent University and community partners to build a prevention-focused network. They recently published its latest edition of "Making Changes", which is a key resource for women leaving violent relationships.

Statistically, women in Nova Scotia are 51 per cent of the population and are 49.6 per cent of the Nova Scotia labour force. The highest rates of high school completion and post-secondary education or enrolment are women, and women entrepreneurs are the fastest growing sector in new business.

As well, women are under-represented in leadership, trades, and science and technology. Employment is concentrated in the minimum wage sector. Women experience higher rates of poverty and have the highest rates of violent victimization.

The Status of Women approaches all issues using gender analysis as its overarching framework and guide their work and activities within government and across communities.

The Status of Women is a relationship builder - internal and external - to government, and provide resource for program areas that impact women and girls, and they are often a liaison between government and community organizations.

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### Motions

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Community Society to End Poverty in Nova Scotia (2) – request to appear
- Dalhousie Legal Aid Service – request to appear

## **DOCUMENTATION**

The following information was requested and received:

- Last year in our province there were probably 5,200 jobs lost in our province, do you know approximately how many of them would have been women, compared to men?
- Re: SANE program - you indicated that you would contact your colleagues at the Department of Health and Wellness to make an inquiry regarding the timeline for these programs.

## **TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs2016feb02](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2016feb02)

**WITNESSES**

**Department of Community Services**

Ms. Lynn Hartwell, Deputy Minister

Mr. Leonard Doiron, Executive Director, Child, Youth and Family Supports

Ms. Janet Nearing, Director, Placement Services

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The Department of Community Services appeared before the committee to provide an overview of the services offered through their Child, Youth and Family Supports Division, the transformation of their child welfare program, and an overview of the amendments to the Children and Family Services Act.

Nova Scotians are asking for a system that is more responsive to needs. A system that is understandable and easy to navigate and focused on prevention and early intervention. There are five client outcomes that are applied to each of their program areas - clients have control over their own lives, clients are able to meet basic needs, safe from abuse and violence, included in the community, and attached to the labour market

With regard to the Children and Family Services Act there are three areas under Child, Youth and Family Supports which are: the prevention and early intervention, Child protection services, and placement.

There are a number of program, under the prevention/early intervention initiative such as family resource centres, the front line for families, increasing the number of parenting journey programs, that is a model for supportive interventions for families, a youth outreach program to help deal with challenges that are facing vulnerable youth. A Place to Belong is another program offered as a place for kids to go to as well as The Boys and Girls Clubs and Big Brothers Big Sisters, and a men's intervention programs which focus on men who are/have been abusive in their relationships.

Interestingly enough, the number of children in care has been decreasing as well as the number of children in permanent care. A couple of reasons for that is possibly earlier interventions and support for families and children, and also children who are aging out of the system.

There are a significant number of children in care who are over the age of 14 and will less likely have a permanent situation at this point in their lives. The declining number of foster homes is possibly due to foster parents themselves are aging. At this point most foster parents are in the late 50s, early 60s.

However, Nova Scotia has among the highest number of adoptions compared to other jurisdictions in Canada. Again, the adoption trend is very much influenced by the age of the children who are in care. So, if the age of the child in permanent care who is available for adoption is older, the likelihood of a successful match and a placement for that child diminishes.

There are also a number of children in residential care. The department currently has 144 residential beds, including 20 at the secure treatment facility and 18 at the residential treatment facility.

Statistically, the majority of the department's resources, 88 per cent, is the child protection and in-care supports, 7 per cent is administration and 5 per cent is prevention and early intervention activities.

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### Motions

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Department of Community Services – Information requested from the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting Re: Sexual Violence Strategy
- Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women - Information requested from February 2 meeting Re: Unemployment for men, women, SANE Program implementation
- Community Society to End Poverty in Nova Scotia (2) – Request to appear
- Dalhousie Legal Aid Service – Request to appear
- Benefits Reform Action Group – Request to appear
- Community Homes Action Group – Request to appear
- Cape Breton-Victoria Child Advocacy Society

## **DOCUMENTATION**

The following information was requested and received:

- Information to show throughout Nova Scotia the different geographical areas and each of the caseworkers and the load they are carrying.
- The exact budget amount (received to support the transformation of the department, including the transformation of Child, Youth and Family Supports) and are they specifically focused on retraining?
- How many youth in the last year have been sent out of province for treatment and the cost?

## **TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at:

[http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs2016mar08](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2016mar08)

**NOVA SCOTIA ASSOCIATION FOR  
COMMUNITY LIVING - OVERVIEW**

**April 5, 2016**

**WITNESSES**

**Nova Scotia Association for Community Living**

Ms. Jean Coleman, Executive Director

Dr. Carmel French, President

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The Nova Scotia Association for Community Living (NSACL) is a province-wide, not-for-profit association of people with intellectual disabilities, families and others leading the way to build a just and inclusive society. This is done by empowering and supporting individuals and families, promoting rights and values in keeping with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and encouraging reform and collaborating with other organizations for social justice.

Formed in 1954, the association provided schooling opportunities for children who were not permitted to attend public school. Currently, NSACL works to promote inclusive opportunities in pre-school, public school, post-secondary education, employment, recreation, as well as in other systems that affect the lives of people with disabilities.

NSACL strives to ensure that appropriate supports are in place for people with an intellectual disability to live, learn, work and participate in their communities alongside non-disabled persons as respected, valued and contributing citizens.

Available initiatives through funding from the federal government is the Ready, Willing & Able initiative. This initiative is designed to build on and increase employer capacity and demand to hire people with intellectual disabilities, people with autism spectrum disorder, and create the effective response of linkages necessary between employers and employment agencies. Since October 2014, 50 people with an intellectual disability or on the autism spectrum have been hired. Unfortunately this funding will end March 31, 2017.

Another initiative is called Connecting Community. The purpose of this is to engage people in the work of NSACL. Over 200 people attend these sessions from all walks of life and could be potential employers, volunteers, donors or board members.

Other programs and initiatives is to share information and facilitate workshops for families, fellow professionals and the general public, and offer sessions for older parents who are planning for the future when they are no longer here to support their adult children. NSACL has been the leader in offering PATH - Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope - Residential training to teach other staff to become facilitators of person-



directed planning and Real Homes Real Choices. The purpose of which is to increase the capacity of community-based residential service providers, to assist adults with intellectual disabilities and more complex needs, and to move from large group-home arrangements to supported living in the community.

Previously NSACL received \$79,000 in discretionary funding from the Department of Community Services. However, this amount was reduced to \$55,000. The 30 per cent cut in funding meant they were unable to hire a part-time family support facilitator in the Valley region. NSACL needs government, community service providers, mainstream community systems and disability organizations all working together to create the fundamental changes needed to improve the quality of lives of people with disabilities. They urge the Department of Community Services to reinstate the \$23,700 that was cut from the core funding.

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### Motions

- To write to the Department of Community Services to request that it consider an increase in funding to better support the Nova Scotia Association for Community Living to provide services to their clients with intellectual disabilities.
  - Moved by Mr. Iain Rankin
  - Motion carried
  
- To write to the Department of Community Services to consider an increase in funding to better support the group as you provide a service to your clients with intellectual disabilities.
  - Moved by Mr. Iain Rankin
  - Motion carried
  
- That we allow all of those four groups to appear and that we extend the meeting by one hour.
  - Moved by Ms. Marian Mancini, MLA
  - Motion carried

The committee discussed holding meetings while the House was in Session.

- It was agreed by the committee not to sit during the House Sitting.

### Correspondence

The Community Services Committee has a practice of posting information that has been requested from witnesses to their web page once it has been received and reviewed by the committee. The following correspondence was reviewed and agreed to by the committee to be posted on its web page:

- Correspondence from the Department of Community Services
- Correspondence from the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Acorn – request to appear
- Department of Community Services – Information requested from the March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting

### **DOCUMENTATION**

The following information was requested and received:

- A list of the topics that the NSACL speaks about
  - Self-Advocacy
  - Human Rights
  - UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
  - Planning for the Future
  - Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope
  - Employers-Benefits of Hiring a Person with an Intellectual Disability
  - Individual Education Plans
  - Belonging-Community
  - Transition to Life after School
  - Inclusion-What it Means
  - Ready Willing and Able
  - Advocacy Guide
  - Connecting Community
  - Inclusive Education
  - Inclusive Employment
  - Moving from Institutions to Community Living

### **TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs2016apr05](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2016apr05)

**EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE –  
SPECIAL NEEDS FUNDING**

**June 7, 2016**

**WITNESSES**

**Dalhousie Legal Aid Service**

Ms. Fiona Traynor – Community Legal Worker

**ACORN Canada**

Ms. Storm Paradise – Staff Member

**Benefits Reform Action Group**

Mr. Kendall Worth – Co-Chair

**Community Society to End Poverty in Nova Scotia**

Dr. Stella Lord – Coordinator, CCSEP-NS

Ms. Megan MacBride – Social Worker, North End Community Health Centre

Ms. Kellie McLeod – Social Worker, Adsum House for Women and Children

**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**

The above organizations brought forth concerns regarding ESIA clients losing their special needs funding and support.

According to the Department of Community Services, 65 per cent of the total of income assistance caseloads in Nova Scotia receive some form of special needs allowance.

Previously, special needs included coverage for items or services cited in the regulations and “another item or service that in the opinion of a caseworker is essential for an applicant recipient, spouse, or dependent child.” However, in 2011, several changes were made that affected access to special needs, including removing the above-cited section and putting in place the current section that reads, “an item or service prescribed in policy by the director.”

In 2013, an attempt was made to reverse this. The new Regulation 24A(1) - entitled Special needs essential for health - which was to address the curtailment of special needs as a result of the previous change. However, it is very exclusionary and stipulates that only items or services provided by a medical professional registered to practise in Nova Scotia will be considered for approval.

Aside from bus passes, transportation allowances, telephone allowances and other special needs which ESIA clients have been losing include special diets.

The loss of any special diet/special need benefits means the ESIA client has no choice in life but to suffer unfair consequences financially. For persons with disabilities to lose special needs allowances makes the hardships more difficult. The amount of funding

provided for special diet recipients does not reflect the true cost of food. Medically, income assistance recipients with chronic and unchanging health conditions are forced to continuously provide medical documents confirming their medical conditions. This puts an undue burden both on medical professionals as well as income assistance recipients.

Income assistance recipients do have access to Pharmacare, but there are limitations. Assistance is limited to items in the Nova Scotia Formulary, and expensive non-prescription medications are not covered.

The limitations of the universal health care system with no dental, vision, or therapeutic care often create extra costs for disabled and aging populations. While these can sometimes be treated as special needs under the Income Assistance Program, navigating the program to get this help is increasingly difficult because such requests for assistance are discretionary, are not always granted, and are increasingly turned down.

Most ESIA recipients have had either their phone, transportation or special diet funding cut, or they fear losing that funding. There are concerns about the impacts on people living in poverty or on income assistance, especially with the changes in the provision and administration of special needs under the Employment Support and Income Assistance Program. These changes are now occurring in the context of an initiative to “transform” the ESIA program, which amongst other things proposes co-design and respectful engagement processes.

A letter was written to the Minister of Community Services in November 2013, outlining ongoing concerns and subsequently requested a meeting with departmental officials to discuss it. This meeting occurred in January 2014. Results from this meeting indicate that while the department agreed that in some cases requirements for referral and documentation went too far, their main concerns were the increasing costs associated with the special needs program and cutting back on these costs. It also indicated that they were moving towards an overhaul of the ESIA system that would be designed to respond to the changing caseload and to individual needs.

Not only were the concerns not addressed and no response was ever received to the letter, but there appears to have been ongoing directives to staff to cut costs by denying or reducing special needs allowances.

Rather than inferring that higher special need program costs are due to individuals taking advantage of the system, it was stated that the government needs to consider the impacts of demographic and socioeconomic changes and its own policies as well as those at the federal government to explain these costs.

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### Motions

- That the committee send a letter requesting the Department of Community Services appear before the committee, in the near future, to discuss the information that we gathered here today.
  - Moved by Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA
  - Motion carried
- (Request) for an update from DCS on special needs and also bus pass policies and special diets.
  - Moved by Mr. Stephen Gough, MLA
  - Motion carried
- That the Department of Community Services provide updates and information on housing, housing repairs, maintenance, and pest controls being an issue, to this committee at their earliest convenience.
  - Moved by Mr. Bill Horne, MLA
  - Motion carried
- That we send a letter to the Minister of Community Services for an update on the ongoing transformation process.
  - Moved by Ms. Joyce Treen, MLA
  - Motion carried
- That we send a letter to the Department of Community Services to put a halt to all cuts in income assistance, special needs, bus passes, telephones, and special diets until the transformation has taken place and the decision is made on what the results will look like.
  - Moved by Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA
  - Motion defeated

### Correspondence

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Nova Scotia Association for Community Living – information requested from the April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting

### **DOCUMENTATION**

No documents/information were requested.

### **TRANSCRIPT**

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: [http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee\\_hansard/C6/cs2016jun07](http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2016jun07)

# **STATEMENT OF SUBMISSION**

**STATEMENT OF SUBMISSION**

All of which is respectfully submitted to the  
House of Assembly this 7<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2017



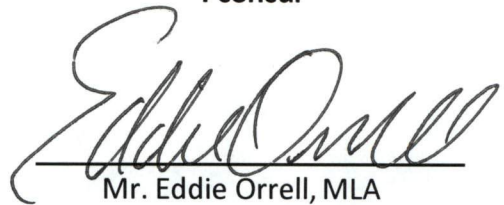
Ms. Patricia Arab, MLA - Chair  
Fairview-Clayton Park

**I concur**



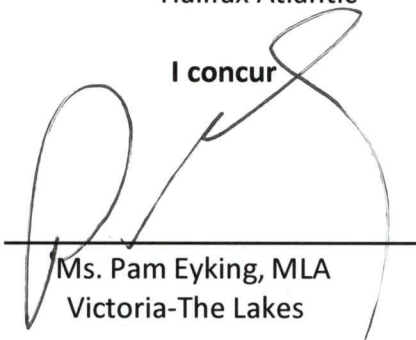
Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA – Vice Chair  
Halifax Atlantic

**I concur**



Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA  
Northside-Westmount

**I concur**



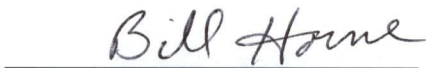
Ms. Pam Eyking, MLA  
Victoria-The Lakes

**I concur**



Mr. Larry Harrison, MLA  
Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley

**I concur**



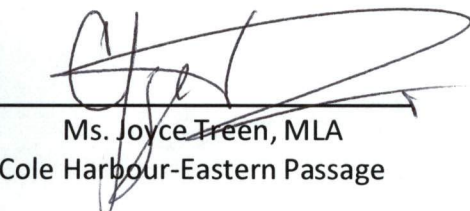
Mr. Bill Horne, MLA  
Waverly-Fall River-Beaver Bank

**I concur**



Ms. Lisa Roberts, MLA  
Halifax-Needham

**I concur**



Ms. Joyce Treen, MLA  
Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage

**I concur**



Ms. Marian Mancini, MLA  
Dartmouth South



# **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A – MOTIONS

The following is a list of motions introduced by the Standing Committee on Community Services:

September 15, 2015

- That the following organizations and their representatives be approved to appear as witnesses before the committee at a future date in accordance with a schedule established by the clerk after consultation with the Chair: the Insurance Bureau of Canada, Amanda Dean, VP Atlantic; Housing Nova Scotia, Dan Troke, President and CEO; the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, the witness will be determined; the Nova Scotia Association of Community Living; the Cape Breton-Victoria Child Advocacy Society; the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers; Habitat for Humanity, Marie-France LeBlanc; CMHC, the witness to be determined; Joseph Howe Manor, the witness to be determined; Red Door, Youth Health and Support Centre; Child Welfare Services; the Department of Community Services, Sarah Granke, provincial specialist; Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Stephanie MacInnis-Langley; the Cape Breton Place Family Resource Centre, to be determined who the witness is; Halifax and Region Military Family Resource Centre, with the suggested witness to be determined; L'Arche Atlantic, Jenn Power; EPIC Youth Peer Centre, Barry Waldman; the Department of Community Services, Vicki Wood, Executive Director for Youth and Family Services; and the Department of Community Services - Housing Nova Scotia, Dan Troke, President and CEO.
  - Moved by Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA
  - Motion Carried

### Amendment to motion

- “I move that the following organizations and their representatives be approved to appear as witnesses before the committee at a future date in accordance with a schedule established by the clerk after consultation.” I would ask that consultation with the Chair be replaced with the following language that it would be - “after consultation with the committee and the witnesses” - and would also like to add, “and ensuring there is a rotation to the scheduling of witnesses proposed by each caucus”.
  - Moved by Ms. Marian Mancini, MLA
  - Amendment defeated
  - Original motion carried
- To approve the Annual Report
  - Moved by Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA
  - Motion carried

January 19, 2016

- To defer those (request to appear – Community Society to End Poverty – Nova Scotia and Dalhousie Legal Aid Society) until your next meeting on February 2, 2016, when the Chair is actually back and we can put that motion forward
  - Moved by Mr. Joachim Stroink, MLA
  - Motion carried

April 5, 2016

- To write to the Department of Community Services to request that it consider an increase in funding to better support the Nova Scotia Association for Community Living to provide services to their clients with intellectual disabilities.
  - Moved by Mr. Iain Rankin
  - Motion carried
- To write to the Department of Community Services to consider an increase in funding to better support the group as you provide a service to your clients with intellectual disabilities.
  - Moved by Mr. Iain Rankin
  - Motion carried
- That we allow all of those four groups to appear and that we extend the meeting by one hour.
  - Moved by Ms. Marian Mancini, MLA
  - Motion carried

The committee discussed holding meeting while the House was in Session.

- It was agreed by the committee not to sit during the House Sitting.

June 7, 2016

- That the committee send a letter requesting the Department of Community Services appear before the committee, in the near future, to discuss the information that we gathered here today.
  - Moved by Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA
  - Motion carried
- (Request) for an update from DCS on special needs and also bus pass policies and special diets.
  - Moved by Mr. Stephen Gough, MLA
  - Motion carried

- That the Department of Community Services provide updates and information on housing, housing repairs, maintenance, and pest controls being an issue, to this committee at their earliest convenience.
  - Moved by Mr. Bill Horne, MLA
  - Motion carried
  
- That we send a letter to the Minister of Community Services for an update on the ongoing transformation process.
  - Moved by Ms. Joyce Treen, MLA
  - Motion carried
  
- That we send a letter to the Department of Community Services to put a halt to all cuts in income assistance, special needs, bus passes, telephones, and special diets until the transformation has taken place and the decision is made on what the results will look like.
  - Moved by Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA
  - Motion defeated

## **APPENDIX B - DOCUMENTATION**

The following is a list of documents and information requested and received by the Standing Committee on Community Services:

September 15, 2015

Department of Community Services

The following information was requested and received:

- A detailed budget breakdown of the budget line for the program.
- Why was the pilot project through Bonny Lea Farm on aging in place cancelled and are you looking at specifically a pilot project in this province that works with the service provider to do an analysis of what needs to be put in place to support aging in place for those with a disability?

November 3, 2015

Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia

The following information was requested and received:

- A copy of the Ad template.

January 19, 2016

Department of Community Services

The following information was requested and received:

- How many trained professional counsellors are there currently in Nova Scotia?
- Who are the members of the interdepartmental committee?
- Which departments are represented on the interdepartmental committee?

February 2, 2016

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The following information was requested and received:

- Last year in our province there were probably 5200 jobs lost in our province, do you know approximately how many of them would have been women, compared to men?
- Re: SANE program - you indicated that you would contact your colleagues at the Department of Health and Wellness to make an inquiry regarding the timeline for these programs.

March 8, 2016

Department of Community Services

The following information was requested and received:

- Information to show throughout Nova Scotia the different geographical areas and each of the caseworkers and the load they are carrying.
- The exact budget amount (received to support the transformation of the department, including the transformation of Child, Youth and Family Supports) and are they specifically focused on retraining?
- How many youth in the last year have been sent out of province for treatment and the cost?

April 5, 2016

Nova Scotia Association for Community Living

The following information was requested and received:

- A list of the topics that the NSACL speaks about
  - Self-Advocacy
  - Human Rights
  - UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
  - Planning for the Future
  - Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope
  - Employers-Benefits of Hiring a Person with an Intellectual Disability
  - Individual Education Plans
  - Belonging-Community
  - Transition to Life after School
  - Inclusion-What it Means
  - Ready Willing and Able
  - Advocacy Guide
  - Connecting Community
  - Inclusive Education
  - Inclusive Employment
  - Moving from Institutions to Community Living

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