



Standing Committee on Community Services

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

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Halifax

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**Honourable Karla MacFarlane
Speaker
House of Assembly
Province House Halifax,
Nova Scotia**

Dear Madam 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 2022 to August 2023 of the Sixty-Fourth General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Sheehy-Richard, MLA, Hants West
Chair
Standing Committee on Community Services

Halifax, Nova Scotia
2023

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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-fourth General Assembly. Pursuant to Rule 60(2)(e) of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly*:

(e) the Community Services Committee is established for the purpose of considering matters relative to community services, culture, heritage, human rights, municipal affairs, recreation and sports.

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:

Melissa Sheehy-Richard, MLA, Chair
Hants West

Hon. Ben Jessome, MLA
Hammonds Plains-Lucasville

John White, MLA, Vice Chair
Glace Bay-Dominion

Lorelei Nicoll, MLA
Cole Harbour-Dartmouth

Danielle Barkhouse, MLA
Chester-St. Margarets

Kendra Coombes, MLA
Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier

Tom Taggart, MLA
Colchester North

Suzy Hansen, MLA
Halifax Needham

Larry Harrison, MLA
Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Larry Harrison, MLA, Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley, replaced Nolan Young, MLA, Shelburne, October 2022.

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 Committee Room, Granville Level, One Government Place.

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 website 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/

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/

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/

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:

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/community-services/reports>

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.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

**Progress Update on Phasing Out Adult Residential Centre and
Regional Rehabilitation Centre Facilities and Agenda Setting**

September 6, 2022

WITNESSES

Community Homes Action Group

- Dr. Karen McNeil, Member of Community Homes Action Group and Family Physician, Dalhousie Adult Developmental Clinic
- Simon Synder, Member of Community Homes Action Group, People First Nova Scotia, and My Home, My Rights
- Sheila Wildeman, Member of Community Homes Action Group and Associate Professor, Dalhousie University Schulich School of Law

Department of Community Services

- Tracey Taweel, Deputy Minister
- Maria Medioli, Executive Director, Disability Support Program

Disability Rights Coalition of Nova Scotia

- Claire McNeil, Disability Rights Coalition of Nova Scotia Legal Counsel
- Vicky Levack, Member and Spokesperson of Disability Rights Coalition of Nova Scotia

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence

- The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing responded to the request for information from May 3rd, 2022.
- The Department of Community Services responded to the request for information from June 7th, 2022.

Agenda-Setting

- The first topic of the PC caucus to be Truth and Reconciliation: Language Legislation & Treaty Education. The witnesses would be: Justin Huston, CEO of the Office of L'nu Affairs, Nik Phillips, Office of L'nu Affairs, Celeste Sulliman, Director, Treaty Education at Office of L'nu Affairs.
 - o Moved by John White, MLA
 - o Motion carried
- That the second topic of the PC caucus would be Update on: Standing Together to Prevent Domestic Violence. The witnesses would be: Deputy Minister Tracey Taweel and Stephanie MacInnis-Langley, Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.
 - o Failed amendment by MLA Coombes to add Elizabeth Frye Society, Executive Director Emma Halpern, and a representative from Adsum House.

- Moved by John White, MLA
 - Motion carried
- That the third topic of the PC caucus be Community Improvement Grants and the witnesses be Representatives from Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage.
 - Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA
 - Motion carried
- That the first topic of the Liberal caucus be The Impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on Vulnerable Nova Scotians and Those Living on Income Assistance and the witnesses be the Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services; Nick Jennery, Executive Director, Feed Nova Scotia; and Christina Carter, Executive Director, Chebucto Connections.
 - Carried amendment by MLA Coombes to add Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Nova Scotia, Executive Director Christine Saulnier; and Nourish Nova Scotia Executive Director Lisa Roberts.
 - Moved by Hon. Ben Jessome, MLA
 - Motion carried
- That the second topic of the Liberal caucus be The Impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on Energy Poverty and the witnesses be Judith Ferguson and Lia MacDonald from Nova Scotia Power; Stephen MacDonald, Executive Director at EfficiencyOne; David Mitchell, Mayor of Bridgewater; the Affordable Energy Coalition, sending their Chair or an equivalent; and finally, the Ecology Action Centre’s energy coordinator.
 - Carried amendment by MLA Danielle Barkhouse to add the Deputy Minister of Community Services, Tracey Taweel.
 - Moved by Hon. Ben Jessome, MLA
 - Motion carried
- That the topic of the NDP caucus be Access to Midwifery and Efforts Toward Reconciliation and the witnesses be Nova Scotia Health Authority, CEO; the Nova Scotia Native Women’s Association, the Executive Director of the association; Tajikeimik, the Executive Director; and the Association of Nova Scotia Midwives, President or equivalent.
 - Carried amendment by MLA Danielle Barkhouse in the meeting after to add the Senior Director of Women and Children’s Health of NS Health, Sally Loring, and Senior Director, Clinical of the Department of Health and Wellness, Tanya Penney, and remove Karen Oldfield.
 - Moved by Kendra Coombes, MLA and Suzy Hansen, MLA
 - Motion carried

DOCUMENTATION

No documents/information was requested.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/cs/cs_20220906.pdf

WITNESSES

Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia

- Jim Graham, Executive Director

Department of Community Services

- Tracey Taweel, Deputy Minister
- Joy Knight, Executive Director, Employment Supports and Income Assistance

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- Paul LaFleche, Deputy Minister
- Stephan Richard, Executive Director, Housing Solutions and Development
- Pam Menchenton, Executive Director, Client Services, Nova Scotia Housing Authorities

Phoenix Youth Programs

- Tim Crooks, Executive Director

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Motions

- To reach out to the Department of Health and Wellness to provide a written briefing or submission of the Assertive Community Treatment Program for the Committee's Review.
 - o Moved by Hon. Ben Jessome, MLA
 - o Motion carried
- (Continuation of the last meeting's Agenda-Setting) To bring Nova Scotia Health Authority, CEO; the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association, the Executive Director of the association; Tajikeimik, the Executive Director; and the Association of Nova Scotia Midwives, President or equivalent to speak on the topic **Access to Midwifery and Efforts towards Reconciliation**.
 - o Carried amendment by MLA Danielle Barkhouse in the meeting after to add the Senior Director of Women and Children's Health of NS Health, Sally Loring, and Senior Director, Clinical of the Department of Health and Wellness, Tanya Penney, and remove Karen Oldfield.
 - o Moved by Suzy Hansen, MLA
 - o Motion carried

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was shared with the Committee by the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

- A response to the Seventeen Recommendations of the Portable Housing Commission Report and Minister's Report.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/cs/cs_20221004.pdf

WITNESSES

Office of L'nu Affairs

- Justin Huston, CEO
- Nik Philips, Policy Analyst
- Celeste Sulliman, Director of Treaty Education

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence

- The Face of Poverty Coalition made a request to appear before the Committee. It was agreed that their inclusion will be discussed in the next Agenda-Setting.

Discussion

- The Affordable Housing Commission Progress Report was approved to be posted on the Legislature's Website.

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested and received from Justin Huston, CEO of the Office of L'nu Affairs:

- MLA Gary Burrill requested statistics on the disproportionate administrative confinement of indigenous individuals.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/cs/cs_20221206.pdf

**The Impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis on Vulnerable Nova
Scotians and Those Living on Income Assistance**

January 10, 2023

WITNESSES

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Nova Scotia

- Christine Saulnier, Executive Director

Chebucto Connections

- Christina Carter, Executive Director

Department of Community Services

- Tracey Taweel, Deputy Minister
- Joy Knight, Executive Director, Employment Support and Income Assistant

Feed Nova Scotia

- Nick Jennery, Executive Director
- Sylvia Parris-Dummond, Chairperson

Nourish Nova Scotia

- Lisa Roberts, Executive Director

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence

- The Department of Health and Wellness responded to the Committee regarding the Assertive Community Treatment Program.
- The Committee requested to send a letter for clarification in response to the previous letter.
- The Office of L'nu Affairs responded to the Committee regarding disproportionate administrative confinement.

DOCUMENTATION

No documents/information was requested.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/cs/cs_20230110.pdf

WITNESSES

Department of Communities, Cultures, Tourism and Heritage

- Justin Huston, Deputy Minister
- Bill Greenlaw, Executive Director, Communities, Sport and Recreation
- Christopher Shore, Executive Director, Culture and Heritage Development

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Discussion

- The request for clarification regarding the ACT Program was sent.
- For the topic, Access to Midwifery and Efforts Towards Reconciliation, Sally Loring, former Senior Director of Women and Children’s Health, pointed out that she has not been in that position in over two years.
- For the topic The Impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis on Energy Poverty, Energy Coordinator Brenna Walsh has asked that she have her colleague Energy Coordinator Jacob Thompson take her place.

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested and received from Justin Huston, Deputy Minister for the Department of Communities, Cultures, Tourism and Heritage:

- MLA Chris Palmer, the Chair, requested that the online questionnaire portal be shared once it goes live.
- MLA Kendra Coombes asked that the dollar amount for operating/support funds be shared with the Committee.
- MLA Kendra Coombes requested clarification regarding organizations that cannot get funding due to their programs taking place during school hours.
- Deputy Minister Justin Huston offered to follow up on having in-school programs with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/cs/cs_20230207.pdf

WITNESSES

Association of Nova Scotia Midwives

- Jessica MacDonald, President

Department of Health and Wellness

- Tanya Penney, Senior Executive Director
- Nancy Cashen, Interim Director of Nursing and Professional Practice, IWK Health Centre

Nova Scotia Native Women’s Association

- Karen Pictou, Executive Director

Tajikeimik

- Lindsay Peach, Executive Director

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence

- One of the requested witnesses for Update on Standing Together to Prevent Domestic Violence, Ms. Stephannie MacInnis-Langley, had retired.

Motions

- To have an emergency meeting on the EPA strike’s impact on the health and welfare of single parents, community service clients, and all parents in HRM. The meeting will be held next week with the witness list including Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Steve Galiger of HRCE, Deputy Minister of Community Services, Inclusion NS, and representatives from the IWK.
 - o Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - o Motion defeated by recorded vote
- To have the Committee write a letter to the Department of Health and Wellness to get an update on the implementation of newborn health clinics.
 - o Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - o Motion carried
- To have the Committee write a letter to the Department of Health and Wellness and the Premier’s Office to increase funding for midwifery programs to allow for equal access to midwifery all over the province.

- Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
- Motion defeated

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested from Tanya Penney, Senior Executive Director, and Nancy Cashen, Interim Director of Nursing and Professional Practice (IWK Health) for Department of Health and Wellness:

- MLA Brendan Maguire asked for the time frame and results of the feasibility study for a midwifery educational institution in the Atlantic region.
- MLA Braedon Clark asked what the overall budget for midwifery was.
- MLA Susan Leblanc asked why Nova Scotia is no longer taking the lead on the feasibility study.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/cs/cs_20230523.pdf

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

- Tracey Taweel, Deputy Minister
- Meredith Naylor, Acting Senior Director, Status of Women Office

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence

- The Office of Mental Health and Addictions responded to the request for clarification regarding the ACT Program.

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested and received from Tracey Taweel, Deputy Minister for the Department of Community Services:

- MLA Kendra Coombes asked about the implementation of gender-based policy analysis in the department, so the timeline was offered to be provided to the Committee.
- MLA Braeden Clark asked about the selection process of schools for the GuysWork program and that a list be shared of the schools already enrolled with the Committee.

TRANSCRIPT

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/cs/cs_20230606.pdf

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – MOTIONS

The following motions were made by the Standing Committee on Community Services throughout 2022-2023:

SEPTEMBER 6TH, 2022

Agenda-Setting

- The first topic of the PC caucus to be Truth and Reconciliation: Language Legislation & Treaty Education. The witnesses would be: Justin Huston, CEO of the Office of L'nu Affairs, Nik Phillips, Office of L'nu Affairs, Celeste Sulliman, Director, Treaty Education at Office of L'nu Affairs.
 - Moved by John White, MLA
 - Motion carried

- That the second topic of the PC caucus would be Update on: Standing Together to Prevent Domestic Violence. The witnesses would be: Deputy Minister Tracey Taweel and Stephanie MacInnis-Langley, Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.
 - Failed amendment by MLA Coombes to add Elizabeth Frye Society, Executive Director Emma Halpern, and a representative from Adsum House.
 - Moved by John White, MLA
 - Motion carried

- That the third topic of the PC caucus be Community Improvement Grants and the witnesses be Representatives from Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage.
 - Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA
 - Motion carried

- That the first topic of the Liberal caucus be The Impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on Vulnerable Nova Scotians and Those Living on Income Assistance and the witnesses be the Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services; Nick Jennery, Executive Director, Feed Nova Scotia; and Christina Carter, Executive Director, Chebucto Connections.
 - Carried amendment by MLA Coombes to add Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Nova Scotia, Executive Director Christine Saulnier; and Nourish Nova Scotia Executive Director Lisa Roberts.
 - Moved by Hon. Ben Jessome, MLA
 - Motion carried

- That the second topic of the Liberal caucus be The Impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on Energy Poverty and the witnesses be Judith Ferguson and Lia MacDonald from Nova Scotia Power; Stephen MacDonald, Executive Director at EfficiencyOne; David Mitchell,

Mayor of Bridgewater; the Affordable Energy Coalition, sending their Chair or an equivalent; and finally, the Ecology Action Centre’s energy coordinator.

- Carried amendment by MLA Danielle Barkhouse to add the Deputy Minister of Community Services, Tracey Taweel.
 - Moved by Hon. Ben Jessome, MLA
 - Motion carried

- That the topic of the NDP caucus be Access to Midwifery and Efforts Toward Reconciliation and the witnesses be Nova Scotia Health Authority, CEO; the Nova Scotia Native Women’s Association, the Executive Director of the association; Tajikeimik, the Executive Director; and the Association of Nova Scotia Midwives, President or equivalent.
 - Carried amendment by MLA Danielle Barkhouse in the meeting after to add the Senior Director of Women and Children’s Health of NS Health, Sally Loring, and Senior Director, Clinical of the Department of Health and Wellness, Tanya Penney, and remove Karen Oldfield.
 - Moved by Kendra Coombes, MLA and Suzy Hansen, MLA
 - Motion carried

OCTOBER 4TH, 2022

- To reach out to the Department of Health and Wellness to provide a written briefing or submission of the Assertive Community Treatment Program for the Committee’s Review.
 - Moved by Hon. Ben Jessome, MLA
 - Motion carried

- (Continuation of the last meeting’s Agenda-Setting) To bring Nova Scotia Health Authority, CEO; the Nova Scotia Native Women’s Association, the Executive Director of the association; Tajikeimik, the Executive Director; and the Association of Nova Scotia Midwives, President or equivalent to speak on the topic **Access to Midwifery and Efforts towards Reconciliation**.
 - Carried amendment by MLA Danielle Barkhouse in the meeting after to add the Senior Director of Women and Children’s Health of NS Health, Sally Loring, and Senior Director, Clinical of the Department of Health and Wellness, Tanya Penney, and remove Karen Oldfield.
 - Moved by Suzy Hansen, MLA
 - Motion carried

MAY 23RD, 2023

- To have an emergency meeting on the EPA strike's impact on the health and welfare of single parents, community service clients, and all parents in HRM. The meeting will be held next week with the witness list including Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Steve Galiger of HRCE, Deputy Minister of Community Services, Inclusion NS, and representatives from the IWK.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Motion defeated by recorded vote

- To have the Committee write a letter to the Department of Health and Wellness to get an update on the implementation of newborn health clinics.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion carried

- To have the Committee write a letter to the Department of Health and Wellness and the Premier's Office to increase funding for midwifery programs to allow for equal access to midwifery all over the province.
 - Moved by Hon. Brendan Maguire, 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 throughout 2022-2023:

OCTOBER 4TH, 2022

The following information was shared with the Committee by the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

- A response to the Seventeen Recommendations of the Portable Housing Commission Report and Minister's Report.

DECEMBER 6TH, 2022

The following information was requested and received from Justin Huston, CEO of the Office of L'nu Affairs:

- MLA Gary Burrill requested statistics on the disproportionate administrative confinement of indigenous individuals.

FEBRUARY 7TH, 2023

The following information was requested and received from Justin Huston, Deputy Minister for the Department of Communities, Cultures, Tourism and Heritage:

- MLA Chris Palmer, the Chair, requested that the online questionnaire portal be shared once it goes live.
- MLA Kendra Coombes asked that the dollar amount for operating/support funds be shared with the Committee.
- MLA Kendra Coombes requested clarification regarding organizations that cannot get funding due to their programs taking place during school hours.
- Deputy Minister Justin Huston offered to follow up on having in-school programs with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MAY 23RD, 2023

The following information was requested and received from Tanya Penney, Senior Executive Director, and Nancy Cashen, Interim Director of Nursing and Professional Practice (IWK Health) for the Department of Health and Wellness:

- MLA Brendan Maguire asked for the time frame and results of the feasibility study for a midwifery educational institution in the Atlantic region.
- MLA Braedon Clark asked what the overall budget for midwifery was.
- MLA Susan Leblanc asked why Nova Scotia is no longer taking the lead on the feasibility study.

JUNE 6TH, 2023

The following information was requested and received from Tracey Taweel, Deputy Minister for the Department of Community Services:

- MLA Kendra Coombes asked about the implementation of gender-based policy analysis in the department, so the timeline was offered to be provided to the Committee.
- MLA Braeden Clark asked about the selection process of schools for the GuysWork program and that a list be shared of the schools already enrolled with the Committee.

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