



JUNE 29, 2004

DISABLED PERSONS COMMISSION
RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY SUPPORTS FOR ADULTS
RENEWAL DISCUSSION PAPER

SUMMARY

The Disabled Persons Commission, under its legislated mandate to advise Government on the needs of persons with disabilities, has reviewed the Community Supports for Adults Renewal Discussion Paper.

The Commission would first like to congratulate the Department of Community Services for providing leadership and resources to the renewal process. The Commission has promoted such a renewal and is supportive of the Department's concern that the current program is not sustainable and does not respond appropriately to the needs of Nova Scotians with disabilities, particularly those who are most vulnerable. The current day to day crisis management has imposed significant restrictions on the program's services and resulted in a program that is focused upon placement and cost containment rather than a program that supports the capacities of individuals who have barriers to community living.

The Commission reviewed the Discussion Paper in detail and has provided specific comments and recommendations. In summary the over-arching perspective of the Commission is:

- ▶ The Commission continues to recommend the development of a legislated disability supports program for Nova Scotians with disabilities and believes the renewal process will provide an unique opportunity to achieve this end.
- ▶ The Commission supports a move towards deinstitutionalization with individualized and flexible supports forming the core program service menu.
- ▶ The Commission believes that supported decision-making and self-management are critical components of a renewed program.
- ▶ The Commission supports a mandate that is based upon a non-intrusive functional assessment that is not based on categorical labels or diagnosis and further that the current categorization system be eliminated.
- ▶ The Commission urges that appropriate safeguards for vulnerable adults be intrinsic to the renewed program - these safeguards would include providing independent advocacy support, a mechanism for community monitoring, a process at intake to identify crucial personal

safeguards and the establishment of an inter-departmental structure for reviewing and enhancing program safeguards (similar to the Children and Youth Action Council - CAYAC model).

- ▶ The Commission strongly recommends the need for on-going (annual) evaluation of the renewed program.
- ▶ The Commission supports the development of contractual agreements between program participants, service providers and the Department as a key means of quality assurance.
- ▶ The Commission recommends that a Steering Committee comprised of knowledgeable stakeholders be established to guide the renewal process.
- ▶ The Commission strongly recommends that a renewed CSA program has an independent process of appeal.

The Commission would also like to emphasize that for persons with disabilities the achievement of independence may indeed be based upon access to, and personal control of, disability related services and supports for a lifetime. As well, it is important to understand that a “success” for the CSA program is the achievement of citizenship and inclusion and the realization of personal goals and aspirations.

As well, the Commission fully supports the principle of innovation and leadership and that a renewed program must allow individuals and their families to develop innovative and responsive services that result in a more community-based and inclusive living arrangement.

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF COMMISSION’S PERSPECTIVE

The Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission had participated in the development work that resulted in In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues.

This framework sets out a blueprint for promoting the integration of persons with disabilities in Canada. The Commission has endorsed this Framework and believes that the Values, Principles and Policy directions of In Unison should be the basis for reform of the Community Supports for Adults program in Nova Scotia.

The “VISION” of In Unison states:

“Persons with disabilities participate as full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society. The full participation of persons with disabilities requires the commitment of all segments of society. The realization of the vision will allow persons with disabilities to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being through access to required supports and the elimination of barriers that prevent their full participation.”

The Commission endorses the principles enunciated in the framework that must under-pin how this vision of citizenship is achieved. These principles were derived from the Federal / Provincial / Territorial review, Mainstream 1992 - Pathway to Integration.

The Mainstream 1992 process, a Review of Services to Canadians with Disabilities, was intended to bring together the different perspectives, views and experiences of a wide-range of Canadians. It included consultations with policy experts, with representatives of consumer, service and advocacy organizations, and with individual Canadians with disabilities. The Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission endorsed the Mainstream Report when it was originally released.

These principles are:

Rights and Responsibilities: People with disabilities have the very same rights, and the same responsibilities, as other Canadians. They are entitled, as others are, to the equal protection and the equal benefit of the law and require measures for achieving equality.

Empowerment: People with disabilities require the means to assume responsibility for their own lives and their own well being. Efforts are required to encourage them to take control, and to support and promote their own efforts in this regard.

Participation: People with disabilities require full access to the social, economic and physical infrastructure which supports our society so that they can participate fully and equally in their communities.

In recognition of the collaborative work done in the development of In Unison and Mainstream then a “Vision” for a residential program such as the Community Supports for Adults, should complement this vision or build upon its premise of full citizenship and its underlying principles.

It is instructive to note that a discussion paper released by the Department of Community Services in 1995 Moving Towards De-institutionalization spoke of the values defined in the Mainstream Report and subsequently the In Unison framework as key principles to guide a move towards more community based services for persons with disabilities.

The Report states:

“While the principle of normalization dominated the past two decades, the concept of quality of life has become predominant in the 90's. The downsizing by fifty per cent of Harbourside Lodge in Yarmouth, the report of the Collaborative Strategic Planning process for Adult Residential Centres and Regional Rehabilitation Centres, the Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Services to Children with a Mental Handicap, the Review of Children's Training Centres, the closure processes successfully underway at Mary's Hill Home in Mabou and at the Halifax County Regional Rehabilitation Centre in Cole Harbour, the establishment of Early Intervention and In-Home Support programs, as well as the Project Team established to develop community placement plans for residents leaving the Nova

Scotia Youth Training Centre and the remaining two Children's Training Centres all provide evidence of the belief that quality of life is enhanced in the community. *...emphasis provided by Commission*

The Commission agrees with this conclusion and it is supported by the subsequent work done during the In Unison consultations. The In Unison framework moves the dialogue from normalization and quality of life as outlined in the Department's discussion paper to a more equality based framework of "full citizenship".

The Disabled Persons Commission has also endorsed the directions recommended by the Kendrick Report on the Community Based Options system. The Commission believes that the conclusions and recommendations of Dr. Kendrick reflect the current best practice based on sound evidence for service delivery and, for the most part, respond appropriately to the questions raised in the CSA discussion paper.

The Commission has used the In Unison Framework, the Mainstream Report Moving Towards De-institutionalization and the Kendrick Report as the basis for its response to the CSA discussion paper. It is also important to note that Commission had participated on the Minister's Advisory Committee on Services for Children with a Mental Handicap and found that process of collaboration an excellent example of how a custodial system can be modernized.

In 1998 the Commission, concurrent with the release of the discussion paper on Social Assistance Restructuring Initiative "Rebuilding the System" developed a report and recommendations for the Minister of Community Services. Specifically, the Commission provided advice on how best to address the needs of persons with disabilities in a restructured social assistance delivery system. A major recommendation of the Commission was the need for a legislated disability supports program.

The Commission continues to recommend the development of such a program and believes that a renewed Community Supports for Adults program could be a building block for such a program.

In review of the CSA discussion paper several additional recommendations were identified and strongly supported by the Commission. These recommendations are listed below and are re-affirmed in each section of the discussion paper where they are seen as an appropriate response to the questions posed by the paper.

The following recommendations emerged as Commission members worked through the paper (section by section) and the recommendations are listed here without priority.

The Disabled Persons Commission recommends:

Recommendation #1:

A renewed CSA program should include a legislated disability support programs for citizens with disabilities. This disability support program must be grounded on the principles of In Unison and respond to the needs of all citizens who face a barrier to community living and citizenship as the result of a disability.

Recommendation # 2:

A renewed CSA program must develop a strategic training and development plan to foster leadership and innovation for Community Supports for Adults staff, for service providers and program clients and their families.

Recommendation # 3:

In a renewed CSA program, any further service expansion must be contingent upon having an innovative component.

Recommendation # 4:

A renewed CSA program must provide flexibility for individuals and agencies to experiment, particularly with personalized support arrangements.

Recommendation # 5:

A renewed CSA program must support program clients and their families, service providers and CSA staff to access ongoing technical assistance in learning how to optimally transform existing service models into desirable personalized support arrangements.

Recommendation # 6:

A community steering committee, should be established to guide the renewal of the CSA program.

Recommendation # 7:

A renewed CSA program must have specific regulations and policy to assure strong service user and family participation rights.

Recommendation # 8:

A renewed CSA program should consider, as a demonstration project, the establishment of mandated regional community governance mechanisms.

Recommendation # 9:

A renewed CSA program must develop a new mechanism that would encourage (and permit) service user and family governed mini-projects to be established.

Recommendation # 10:

A renewed CSA program must have an independent appeal mechanism.

Recommendation # 11:

A renewed CSA program must have sufficient resources to support individualized and flexible individual and family supports.

Recommendation # 12:

A renewed CSA program must encourage and permit funds currently held in established or fixed residential models to be used more flexibly on behalf of individuals.

Recommendation # 13:

A renewed CSA program must foster and support individual decision making.

Recommendation # 14:

A renewed CSA program must, over time, re-design its residential system with the view to make flexible personal and family supports the core service of the program.

Recommendation # 15:

A renewed CSA program must have flexible personal and family supports with more authority and decision-making shared with the client and their families.

Recommendation # 16:

In a renewed CSA program, clients and their families or advocates must be supported and allowed to influence decisions on the supports they receive.

Recommendation # 17:

A renewed CSA program must support efforts to foster the inclusion of persons with disabilities within community life who are presently in nova scotia residential institutions.

Recommendation # 18:

A renewed CSA program must have an on-going (annual) program evaluation component.

Recommendation # 19:

In a renewed CSA program, there should be established a joint mechanism for ensuring that high risk individuals are properly identified and safeguarded. In recognition of the significant stake that other Departments have in this program, it is further suggested that a mechanism such as the Children and Youth Action Council be considered for the adult population as well.

Recommendation # 20:

A renewed CSA program should eliminate the present residential service program categories.

Recommendation # 21:

A renewed CSA program should have a simplified eligibility criteria that is based upon a simple and non-intrusive functional assessment.

Recommendation # 22:

A renewed CSA program should assume the in-home support services and homecare services that are now delivered by the the Department of Health and the service menu should contain supported and self-managed personal care and attendant services.

Recommendation # 23:

In a renewed CSA program, the specification and monitoring of the quality of supports should be largely taken up as part of service contracting rather than licensing.

Recommendation # 24:

In a renewed CSA program, the client and/or the client's advocate is a signatory to the contractual agreement with the Department and the service provider.

Recommendation # 25:

In a renewed CSA program, there should be developed a set of desirable outcomes for service users as a key ingredient of the proposed quality contracting system.

Recommendation # 26:

A renewed CSA program will ensure and arrange to provide individuals with independent advocacy representation if they do not have family support in order to assure their well-being.

Recommendation # 28:

A renewed CSA program should establish, at the regional level, mechanism(s) or the independent community monitoring of the circumstances of people supported by the CSA system.

Recommendation # 29:

A renewed CSA program should establish a mechanism so that crucial personalized safeguards can be negotiated at intake, reviewed regularly, and resourced by the CSA program.

Recommendation # 30:

A renewed CSA program must install a specific safeguard to resolve the ambiguity of whom is directly responsible in the case of individuals who need supervision to prevent them being harmed or harming others.

Recommendation # 31:

In a renewed CSA program the present system to license homes should be replaced with a system to license service providers.

Recommendation # 32:

In a renewed CSA program the specification and monitoring of the quality of supports should be largely taken up as part of service contracting rather than licensing.

In summary, the Disabled Persons Commission firmly believes the individualized community-based disability supports, including residential supports, is the most appropriate and principled direction for a renewed program. The Commission calls upon the Department of Community Services to continue to move "Towards De-institutionalization".

DISABLED PERSONS COMMISSION DETAILED RESPONSE

5.1 THE NEED FOR VISION

NOTE: Direct quotes from the discussion are designated by quotation marks (‘’)

‘Major system change as envisioned in the CSA Renewal does not happen overnight. It requires the concerted effort of all involved, Government, service providers, clients, families, advocates, staff, and the public.’

Commission Comment:

The Commission agrees that major system reform is needed and that it is a long-term effort. The Commission also agrees with the collaborative approach indicated in this report and urges the Department to commence this engagement as soon as possible. In addition the Commission is ready and willing to engage in a ‘concerted effort’ as outlined in this introductory statement.

‘We envision a system in which Government departments and other sectors work collaboratively to provide an integrated and seamless continuum of residential supports and services for adults with disabilities. This system would involve clients in planning for their future. It would ensure that they have opportunities to participate as citizens in their communities, and do whatever possible to ensure that they are healthy and safe.’

Commission Comment:

The Commission supports this vision, with particular emphasis on the objective of full citizenship for participants in the renewed CSA program.

‘Core Values and Principles’

Commission Comment:

The Commission agrees that a renewed program should be grounded in sound principles and values and that these values and principles actually guide the development of a renewed program and form the basis for remaining true to the underlying vision of In Unison - a vision of “full citizenship” - as the renewed program is implemented.

‘We have heard from clients and their representatives that a renewed program needs to: recognize the abilities and inherent worth of people with disabilities, provide support services in a way that is respectful of a person's gender, age, heritage, culture, race, and spirituality ensure, to the extent possible, that the client has the opportunity to participate in support.’

Commission Comment:

The Commission agrees with this approach.

‘Leadership’

Commission Comment:

The Commission supports this principle. How leadership is fostered and supported will be critical to a truly “renewed” program.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 2: A renewed CSA program must develop a strategic training and development plan to foster leadership and innovation for Community Supports for Adults staff, for service providers and program clients and their families.

‘Innovation’

Commission Comment:

The Commission agrees that innovation is a key component of a renewed program. The key will be how to encourage and support innovation as the program is renewed. There is no indication in the discussion paper concerning how a renewed CSA program will foster innovation. The Commission believes that innovation will become truly intrinsic to the renewed program.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 3: In a renewed CSA program Any further service expansion must be contingent upon having an innovative component.

DPC Recommendation # 4: A renewed CSA program must provide flexibility for individuals and agencies to experiment, particularly with Personalized Support Arrangements.

‘Learning’

Commission Comment:

Building a culture of learning and service improvement is critical if renewal is to be successful.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 5: A renewed CSA program must support program clients and their families, service providers and CSA staff to access ongoing technical assistance in learning how to optimally transform existing service models into desirable personalized support arrangements.

‘Partnership:’

Commission Comment:

The Commission supports this principle and would like to see it operationalized. Ideally, a “Leadership Committee” or at least a monitoring, steering or community reference committee as the program is renewed, would be acceptable. The Commission believes there are lessons learned by the process engaged in the Task Force on Services for Children with a Mental Handicap.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 6: A community steering committee, with clear and mandated responsibilities, should be established to guide the renewal of the CSA program.

DPC Recommendation # 7: Renewed CSA program must have specific regulations and policy to assure strong service user and family participation rights.

DPC Recommendation # 8: A renewed CSA program should consider, as a demonstration project, the establishment of mandated regional Community governance mechanisms.

DPC Recommendation # 9: A renewed CSA program must develop a new mechanism that would encourage (and permit) service user and family governed mini-projects to be established.

‘Effective Accountability’

Commission Comment:

Accountability is a “*two edged sword*”. The program must be accountable to the citizens and tax-payers of Nova Scotia and the renewed program must be accountable to the citizens it serves. An open and transparent fair and accountable program is critical. Intrinsic to this is the right of appeal for citizens who believe that some program decisions were not just. All programs of this nature are open to interpretation and judgement, regardless of how the policies and standards are developed so that a process of natural justice must be included in all aspects of the program.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 10: A renewed CSA program must have an independent appeal mechanism.

‘Sustainability’

Commission Comment:

Sustainability is critical, however the description of this principle does not recognize that as both medical technology and social attitudes change, there will be an increasing demand on the program. Sustainability under current levels of funding is not practical nor would it support the vision of renewal. The program should re-direct funding into individualized services and away from large fixed residences and salary contractual arrangements. It is the Commission’s view that this would better address issues of sustainability over the long term.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 11: A renewed CSA program must have sufficient resources to support individualized and flexible individual and family supports.

DPC Recommendation # 12: A renewed CSA program must encourage and permit funds currently held in established or fixed residential models to be used more flexibly on behalf of individuals.

‘Client-Centered Values’ ‘Self-Determination’

Commission Comment:

In order to operationalize these values then the program must provide opportunity and resources for supported decision-making.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 13: A renewed CSA program must foster and support individual decision making.

‘Empowerment’

Commission Comment:

Empowerment, sometimes an over-used word when describing issues of disability but when used in the sense as described in “In Unison” can become a very powerful tool for reforming a custodial system to a more community based inclusive program.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 14: A renewed CSA program must, over time, re-configure its residential system with the view to make flexible personal and family supports the core service of the program.

DPC Recommendation # 15: A renewed CSA program must have flexible personal and family supports with more authority and decision-making shared with the client and their families.

DPC Recommendation # 16: In a renewed CSA program, clients and their families or advocates must be supported and allowed to influence decisions on the supports they receive.

‘Community Integration’

Commission Comment:

The Commission would suggest that this value be re-phrased to “community inclusion”. The concept of inclusion better reflects the vision of full citizenship and a more participatory role than the manner in which the discussion paper describes “integration” in this section. Integration is not described as being fully included in our communities.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 17: A renewed CSA program must support efforts to foster the inclusion of persons with disabilities within community life who are presently in Nova Scotia residential institutions.

‘Outcome-Based Supports’

Commission Comment:

Not clear why this would be a value statement. Is this not intrinsic to any modern program development activities? Major questions arise regarding who and how the outcomes indicators are developed .. Points to the urgent need to develop a Steering Committee of some formal collaborative mechanism to guide renewal.

‘Interdependence’

Commission Comment:

Again this does not appear to be a value or principle but most properly is a policy direction.

‘Program Delivery Decision-Making Principles’

‘Consistency’

Commission Comment:

As long as a principle of consistency does not preclude individualized support and innovation.

‘Quality’

Commission Comment:

Quality assurance and client satisfaction should be a critical component of a renewed program.

FUNDING PROCESSES

‘Transparency’

Commission Comment:

Agreed

‘Results’

Commission Comment:

This principle appears repetitive and more self-evident (hopefully) in modernizing and renewing the program. Evidence based decision making also involves a high degree of citizen engagement in program development and evaluation. No mention is made of an on-going evaluative component to the program or seeing evaluation as a means of continuous program improvement and quality assurance.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation 18: A renewed CSA program must have an on-going (annual) program evaluation component.

5.2 CLARIFYING OUR ROLE AND MANDATE: WHO SHOULD WE SERVE?

'We believe that we should continue to purchase residential and vocational supports from a network of service provider organizations across the province. In a renewed CSA program, Community Services will focus more on ensuring policies and standards are established to govern service delivery, making sure services are monitored, evaluated, and continuously improved so that the system of client support services is responsive, high quality, and sustainable.'

Commission Comment:

This does not sound like a renewed program. This sounds like more of the same custodial care and model of “grouping” of persons with disabilities and does not support the principle of leadership and innovation as outlined in section 5.1 and the Commission’s view as expressed in our response to the Vision, Values and Principles.

It is the Commission’s belief that individualized funding and supported community living options are the best option to support a vision of full citizenship and that a concerted effort should be made to move towards deinstitutionalization.

'A number of options are possible regarding the groups of people to be supported through a renewed CSA program.'

Commission Comment:

The Commission believes that the program should be built on addressing the community living or residential needs or to assist in the elimination of barriers to community living for persons who because of a disability need residential or supported living arrangements in order to participate as full citizens. Relying on categorical definitions is not seen as appropriate. The functional assessment (non-intrusive) and the array of services would determine if the program could respond to the individual needs. Ultimately the array of services will dictate whether the services respond to the needs of the identified barriers to community living as deemed through a functional assessment - not a categorical definition of disability.

'Proposed Mandate: The mandate of Community Supports is to provide services to persons with a disability requiring daily living supports. In this context daily living support is defined as care and supervision in a range of supportive living options for persons up to age 65 with an intellectual disability, including those with developmental disorders, a long term mental illness, or a physical disability.'

Commission Comment:

It is the Commission’s understanding that this definition of “physical disability” also includes persons with an acquired brain injury. The Commission’s view of the mandate is that the program would serve those individual citizens, who because of a disability, have barriers to full-participation and citizenship in our communities as citizens and who would benefit from the menu of services that are provided by the Community Supports for Adults Program.

Further, in recognition of the vulnerability of many individuals who will benefit and need the services of a renewed CSA program and in recognition of the cross-departmental over-laps in responsibility.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 19: In a renewed CSA program, there should be established a joint mechanism for ensuring that high risk individuals are properly identified and safeguarded. In recognition of the significant stake that other Departments have in this program it is further suggested that mechanism such as the Children and Youth Action Council be considered for the adult population as well.

5.3 STRENGTHENING THE RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT CONTINUUM

The Commission's comments for this chapter appear below but the Commission felt it urgent to comment on the following paragraph:

'One of the other features of a strengthened range of services would be the introduction of formal planning for the transition to independent living. In our focus sessions with clients, we heard that many believe they are ready to live on their own, but for some people the loss of structured supervision becomes a barrier. Independent living, defined as living without CSA support, would be identified as part of an individual support plan or a re-assessment of the support plan. Support would be provided as a way of helping the client to make a successful transition to an independent living arrangement.'

Commission Comment:

This direction, without consideration of a legislated disability support program would impose a significant disadvantage and barrier to independent community living to many individuals. The Employment Support and Income Assistance Program, as well as other community programs, do not have services or supports that would enhance either the employability or social inclusion of most individuals who are Community Supports for Adults clients. The move would impose a significant economic hardship on individuals and without a disability supports program this option is not acceptable.

It is imperative to understand that persons with disabilities who require supports for a life-time can still achieve independence and full citizenship - even though they will require a life-time of disability supports. A person with a disability may be a life-time client of the Community Supports for Adults program and still achieve independence, full-citizenship and a fully actualized life.

'In addition to the residential supports outlined above, we would provide other supports, including respite support, support for a variety of employment and training options and special needs. The focus would be on providing the services

that encourage maximum independence through family and community participation.'

Commission Comment:

This area must be expanded upon. The Commission is concerned that, without a legislated disability support program, lack of funding would prohibit any meaningful service availability.

5.4 STRENGTHENING ASSESSMENT / DETERMINING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

'Many people with disabilities do not need residential care and supervision and are able to live independently with other supports, such as income assistance.'

Commission Comment:

For persons with disabilities who are long-term clients of the Employment Support and Income Assistance Program the term "independent living" is not possible. The Commission wishes to remind the reader that rates of assistance have remained at current levels for several years and are inadequate. The ESIA program does not provide appropriate employability services to persons with severe and prolonged disabilities and, as previously emphasized, the level of financial support is inadequate.

OVERALL COMMISSION COMMENT

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 20: A renewed CSA program should eliminate the present residential service program categories.

DPC Recommendation # 21: A renewed CSA program should have a simplified eligibility criteria that is based upon a simple and non-intrusive functional assessment.

DPC Recommendation # 22: A renewed CSA program should assume the in-home support services and homecare services that are now delivered by the Department of Health and the service menu should contain supported and self-managed personal care and attendant services. (possibly within a legislated disability supports program.)

5.5 STRENGTHENING SUPPORT PLANNING / CLIENT INVOLVEMENT

'A common theme throughout the focus sessions, in written submissions, and in presentations was the need to actively involve clients and their families in the support planning process. This is common practice across the country.'

Commission Comment:

The Commission agrees with this. The important question is how this can be enabled.

The Commission repeats the following Recommendations:

DPC Recommendation # 7: A renewed CSA program must have specific regulations and policy to assure strong service user and family participation rights.

DPC Recommendation # 8: A renewed CSA program should consider, as a demonstration project, the establishment of mandated regional Community governance mechanisms.

DPC Recommendation # 9: A renewed CSA program must develop a new mechanism that would encourage (and permit) service user and family governed mini-projects to be established.

5.6 IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF SERVICES FOR CLIENTS

‘One of the main foundations for the renewal of the CSA program is making sure quality of life is a key feature of the services provided. Most provinces have developed program standards that focus on quality of life of the client.’

Commission Comment:

The Commission agrees with a quality assurance approach.

The Commission Recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 23: In a renewed CSA program, the specification and monitoring of the quality of supports should be largely taken up as part of service contracting rather than licensing.

DPC Recommendation # 24: In a renewed CSA program, the client and/or the client’s advocate is a signatory to the contractual agreement with the Department and the service provider.

DPC Recommendation # 25: In a renewed CSA program, there should be developed a set of desirable outcomes for service users as a key ingredient of the proposed quality contracting system.

5.7 STRENGTHENING THE FUNDING PROCESS

Commission Comment:

It is the Commission’s view that the suggested policy directions outlined in this section will impose an inflexible, building/bed based system with no room for flexibility and innovation. Ultimately it will be a more costly system.

The Commission re-affirms its Recommendations:

DPC Recommendation # 14: A renewed CSA program must, over time, re-configure its residential system with the view to make flexible personal and family supports the core service of the program.

DPC Recommendation # 12: A renewed CSA program must encourage and permit funds currently held in established or fixed residential models to be used more flexibly on behalf of individuals.

As well, the renewed program must develop creative and meaningful mechanisms whereby families can contribute to the well-being of their family members who have disabilities and receive services from the CSA program.

5.8 STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

Commission Comment:

The population being served by the CSA system includes some of the most dependent and vulnerable people in Nova Scotia. These are also citizens that, as a group, face much higher rates of mistreatment and devaluation than do most of their fellow citizens.

The Commission identifies an important need to improve the safeguards these individuals have available to them.

The Commission strongly recommends:

DPC Recommendation # 26: A renewed CSA program will ensure and arrange to provide individuals with independent advocacy representation if they do not have family support in order to assure their well-being.

DPC Recommendation # 27: A renewed CSA program will officially recognize and give advocacy standing to clients, their families and social support networks.

DPC Recommendation # 28: A renewed CSA program should establish, at the regional level, mechanism(s) or the independent community monitoring of the circumstances of people supported by the CSA system.

DPC Recommendation # 29: A renewed CSA program should establish a mechanism so that crucial personalized safeguards can be negotiated at intake, reviewed regularly, and resourced by the CSA program.

DPC Recommendation # 30: A renewed CSA program must install a specific safeguard to resolve the ambiguity of whom is directly responsible in the case of individuals who need supervision to prevent them being harmed or harming others.

The Commission would re-affirm the following Recommendation:

DPC Recommendation # 19: In a renewed CSA program There should be established a joint mechanism for ensuring that high risk individuals are properly identified and safeguarded. In recognition of the significant stake that other Departments have in this program it is further suggested that mechanism such as the Children and Youth Action Council be considered for the adult population as well.

5.9 STRENGTHENING LICENSING SAFEGUARDS

Commission Comment:

The Commission makes the following Recommendations:

DPC Recommendation # 31: In a renewed CSA program the present system to license homes should be replaced with a system to license service providers.

DPC Recommendation # 32: In a renewed CSA program the specification and monitoring of the quality of supports should be largely taken up as part of service contracting rather than licensing.

In conclusion,

The Commission would re-iterate the following Recommendation:

DPC Recommendation # 23: In a renewed CSA program the client and/or the client's advocate is a signatory to the contractual agreement with the Department and the service provider.

The Commission is pleased to have this opportunity to provide advice on this renewal initiative and looks forward to working collaboratively with the implementation team as a renewed CSA program is developed.