

## Careers Nova Scotia

### CNSC Discussion Session Notes

This is a summary of notes taken during the round-table discussion portion of the engagement sessions with Careers Nova Scotia Centre leaders between February 23<sup>rd</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

#### Sydney, February 23<sup>rd</sup>

##### Positives

- Standardizing services and “credentialing” – this will raise the bar
- Employer focus is important
- Consistent branding across providers – demonstrates a common commitment to the client
- Outreach/inclusion of youth and students; career planning in P-12 system
- Like the One-Stop-Shop concept, but need to continue to provide specialized services
- Career practitioner pilot, but it needs to be rolled out appropriately

##### Concerns

- Need to understand the timeline better
- Uniqueness of local geographies could get lost by combining centres/regions; need a connection to the community to get people involved and develop partnerships; the Strait region should remain a career/workforce service region
- Blended service would have fewer clients accessing it and result in a weaker connection to the community; could dilute service to Persons with Disabilities; specialized assessments could be lost; if not a priority, (specialized) service isn’t promoted; board enthusiasm/passion and focus is not the same
- Potential to reduce the number of physical office locations and the potential degrading of service)
- Time and management resources that would be required by an RFP; some organizations may not have the capacity to respond to an RFP

##### Suggestions

- Government should look at internal (ENS) resources for change as well
- Duplication of services between LAE and DCS should be addressed
- Virtual services should only be used to enhance in-person delivery (not to replace it)
- Transparency is very important; communicating this well is very important to people don’t mis-hear what’s going on

## Truro, February 24<sup>th</sup>

### Positives

- Inclusion of P-12 system – some of us have been doing it informally (“on the QT”)
- The stronger connection with employers
- Inclusion of under-employed as a client group
- Consistency of delivery – through certification and standard processes
- Concept of the “blended model” – one-stop shop for clients looking for various types of employment services
  - Some people may not self-identify with having a specific needs (which would be a barrier to access services if a blended centre didn’t exist)
  - Reduces duplicated services
  - Some people in centres still need to be focused on specialized populations
- Numerous good practices happening today “under the radar” – many of these things were identified in the recommended changes
- Brand – like common sign on the door: need to select one and stick with it (although Careers Nova Scotia name doesn’t resonate with everyone)

### Concerns

- Standards are great, but a standard tool might not work with all clients (i.e. in rural areas)
- RFP:
  - Challenge of responding to complex RFP process
  - Need to ensure that past performance/track record are considered; not the lowest bidder
  - Process needs to respect the fact that many organizations are community-based and regularly collaborate: this shouldn’t create a competitive situation if this can be helped
  - Government is already monitoring performance – couldn’t this be factored in?
- General concern with where the centres will be, where the contracts will be, etc.
- Concern about the system becoming too rigid – client needs vary among client groups and from place to place (i.e. seasonal work)
- Social media and virtual tools shouldn’t replace in-person services
- Potential loss of community connections and relationships
- There hasn’t been a mechanism for sharing best practices etc. among career service (and other) organizations

### Suggestions

- Personal touch is very important in client service
- We need staff in centres that represent our populations
- Transparency – need to tell people as soon as decisions are made to help with planning
- We will need to (continue to) be involved in developing the standardized tools
- There needs to be some flexibility in how the tools can be used (not a “one size fits all” assessment tool)
- Social media could be useful in promoting the new system

## Halifax (February 25<sup>th</sup>)

### Positives

- This appears to put the emphasis on putting clients' needs first
- The recommendations acknowledge that there is lots going on now that is done well
- Certification is a good idea – helps standardize the processes for clients
- Standardized tools (although they may need to be different for youth)
- Use of virtual services to support service delivery
- Branding – having a consistent brand across centres will help clients
- Very important to have more consistency, whether urban or rural

### Concerns

- Consistency is vital, but there still needs to be flexibility to require special qualifications for clients who have special needs
- Blended model does not allow for the use of different approaches for clients with different needs
- Clients want service in their own communities and don't want the stigma association with walking through special service door
- People don't want to go to a "warehouse" – need to feel comfortable
- It could be difficult to separate the case management and intervention functions for the delivery of service to specialized populations (different barriers will require different action plans)
- Issues will still exist regarding how centres get compensated and recognized for what they do – through LaMPSS and other means
- Fewer doors shouldn't result in more barriers – more streamlined approach, but still accessible

### Suggestions

- If people have the requisite competencies, career practitioners should be able to serve anyone, although specialized service providers would have additional competencies
- Staff in these centres has to reflect their community
- There should be incentives for referring clients to the appropriate centres versus just increasing the volume to clients that providers serve

## Kentville, March 2<sup>nd</sup>

### Positives

- Like the explicit connection with the school system
- More formally engaging with employers – some doing so informally now
- Like concept of standards

### Concerns

- Concern that consolidation will further “marginalize the marginalized” – particularly persons with disabilities; specialized populations are dealing with systemic racism and ableism that these changes may not address
- Concern with feasibility of delivering specialized services from blended centres – that they will never focus enough on specialized needs
- The transition from the current state to new will be complex and shouldn’t be an afterthought
- Need to make sure smaller communities do not lose as standard services expand everywhere
- Previous work that has been done doesn’t seem to be referenced
- Suggest looking at where existing overlap and gaps exist and develop solutions for these areas
- Concern that an RFP would disadvantage community organizations in favour of groups that are larger and experienced at writing RFPs and create a competitive environment amongst service providers – perhaps negotiation amongst service providers should be considered
- LaMPSS is not capturing all of the positive things providers are doing

### Suggestions

- Must be built with a top-down approach to specialized service – not an add-on service
- Should have better evaluation through LaMPPS
- People should have an opportunity to bid on certain areas or services, thereby creating a less drastic change from the current state

## Bridgewater, March 3<sup>rd</sup>

### Positives

- Career planning in the P-12 system
- Many centres focusing on general population today
- Flexibility in how the standards tools can be used
- Reduces duplicated services from region to region
- Allow us to offer the services we originally started offering – Intervention

### Concerns/Suggestions

- Difficult to separate the case management and intervention functions
- Issues with compensation and being recognized for what they do – LaMPPS
- Many LaMPPS concerns across the board
- Concern about the potential loss of flexible approaches to careers planning and services
- Ability (capacity/expertise) of some service providers to respond to RFP

## Halifax (March 5<sup>th</sup>)

### Positives

- This is good, encouraging
- Focus on P-12 is important
- Certification will provide recognized standard
- Like the connection to employers

### Concerns

- People and their needs are different in rural areas
- Employer involvement is good, but business should be investing in development of people too (they should have some “skin in the game”)
- Diversity isn’t visible or explicit enough in this work – it needs to be embedded in everything, a pillar of this entire project and a consideration in every decision
- General model doesn’t fit the French-speaking community

### Suggestions

- Helpful to have all of the toolkit components in the portal
- Amalgamation of services makes sense, but should look for an “on the ground” solution – existing service providers could get together to explore how they can work together to meet the goals