

Accountability Report

2016–2017

Department of Community Services
July 2017

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Community Services for the year ended March 31, 2017 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Department of Community Services' Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Department of Community Services outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Community Services' management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Community Services' management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Department of Community Services' 2016-2017 Statement of Mandate.

Original signed by

Kelly Regan
Minister, Department of Community Services

Original signed by

Lynn Hartwell
Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services

Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present our 2016-2017 Accountability Report on behalf of the Department of Community Services, as a summary of the activities of our department over the last year. The department achieved many of its goals in 2016-2017. These achievements focused on three main categories: DCS Transformation; delivery of our core responsibilities and services; and improvements to our core program responsibilities.

The Department continues to work on completing the largest changes to the social services system in 50 years with its Transformation project. Changes of this magnitude take time, and its roll-out is happening in a phased approach over several years. Through Transformation, we continue to work on improving how our programs and services are delivered, so that clients receive the maximum benefit with improved efficiency. Highlights of these efforts over the last year include the introduction of Flex Individualized Funding Program, the largest ever increase in the basic personal allowance for income assistance clients, and amendments to the *Children and Family Services Act* that help improve child safety, streamline court processes, and ensure children have a safe and lifelong family relationship.

Community Services continues to work on meeting its commitments *established in Choice, Equality and Good Lives in Inclusive Communities: A Roadmap for Transforming the Nova Scotia Services to Persons with Disabilities Program* to transition people from larger, residential settings, to smaller, community-based options. The Department also announced enhancements to the Career Seek program, including tuition and special needs support to help with the costs of attending university. The Educate to Work program was also extended to dependents of ESIA clients to help with the costs of attending community college.

Government remains committed to ensuring all Nova Scotians are safe from abuse and violence. Through the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, investments have been made in transition houses and women's shelters to provide greater assistance to women and girls in need. Additionally, the Province continued investments in Breaking the Silence, A Coordinated Response to Sexual Violence in Nova Scotia, with a focus on working with communities so they can lead the way in helping victims and survivors of sexual violence

The mission of Community Services is to promote greater independence, self-reliance, and security for Nova Scotians in need, and to provide the best service possible to our clients. While we know there is much more to do, 2016-2017 demonstrates real progress towards reaching our goals. I thank all the dedicated staff for their dedicated work in making our transformation possible; they have a tremendous impact on the lives of Nova Scotians in need.

Thank you,

Original signed by

Kelly Regan

Minister, Department of Community Services

Introduction

The annual Accountability Report for the Department of Community Services reports on the progress achieved by the Department towards the outcomes and financial targets established in the 2016-2017 Business Plan. The 2016-2017 Business Plan is available on Community Services' website at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/departement/Publications.html>.

Accomplishments

Actions within the 2016-2017 Business Plan were organized into three categories: Actions in support of DCS Transformation; Core Responsibilities and Services and Core Program Responsibilities. Accomplishments against actions identified in the 2016-2017 Business Plan, Department Mandate and 2016 Speech from the Throne are identified below.

The 2016-2017 Business Plan focused actions in support of the following outcomes.

Clients have control over their own lives	Clients are able to meet their basic needs
Clients are attached to the labour market	Clients are included in the community
Clients are safe from abuse and violence	Supports and services are accessible
Supports and services are affordable and sustainable	

DCS Transformation

DCS is currently undergoing the largest change to the social services system in 50 years. Changes of this magnitude cannot happen in one year segments. During 2016-2017, the Department was in Phase 2 of transformation. This phase focused on policy development, program and service delivery design and implementation of select program and service delivery improvements.

Clients have more control over their own lives

The Department is committed to providing supports that allow people to have control over their own lives. When people have control over their own lives, they have freedom to make decisions, are more independent, and are empowered to reach their full potential. In 2016-2017 the Department:

- Introduced a new Flex Individualized Funding Program (Flex), in October 2016. Flex Independent enables participants to live independently (outside of their family home) with support from their family and personal support networks. Funding received by participants allows them flexibility to create, self-direct, and manage their own support plan based on program eligibility requirements. This program allows for greater social inclusion and greater quality of life.
- Introduced and began to transition to a new model for Access and Transportation. This program enables continuity of family relationships, reunification, and a sense of normalcy for

children placed in the care of the Minister. Improvements to the program will result in a more child-focused, flexible, and sustainable service for families and children-in-care.

- Continued work in support of providing a simpler, more effective, and enhanced benefit and employment incentive structure for Nova Scotians on income assistance. This is known as a Standard Household Rate. This work included consultations with clients, staff, and stakeholders, and modelling several innovative options for what a Standard Household Rate would entail. A Standard Household rate has the potential to bring a more streamlined, fair, consistent disbursement of financial supports that better allows low-income Nova Scotians to meet their needs.

Clients are able to meet their basic needs

People need to be able to meet their basic needs if they are to take care of themselves and their families, and to plan for the future. Basic needs may mean financial help, support because of an emergency situation, or support finding the right place to live. In 2016-2017, the Department:

- Increased the basic personal allowance for income assistance clients, by \$20 or 8 percent, effective May 1, 2016. This represents the largest increase to the personal allowance in the program's history.
- Doubled the allowable asset levels for clients receiving assistance from \$1,000 to \$2,000 for individuals and from \$2,000 to \$4,000 for families. These changes allow people to access income assistance without having to exhaust so much of their savings, and make it easier for clients in the program to save more and to have greater flexibility in how they choose to spend their money.
- Completed an analysis of the current Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) caseload, to better understand the interventions and financial supports required for different groups within the caseload. Findings from this analysis have been used to inform the introduction of a new case management approach to Employment Support Services (ESS) to ensure clients receive the most appropriate service to improve their lives.
- Continued work to design a simplified process for households with one time/short term needs. These processes will be further defined as ESIA designs new intake processes for income assistance in order to provide effective service. This will allow Nova Scotians with short term requirements to have those met without requiring longer-term attachment to Income Assistance.
- Developed a coordinated approach between Child Youth and Family Supports (CYFS) and ESIA programs for the referral and ongoing management of youth 16 to 18 years of age. A

new level of support for this population has been defined to ensure youth at risk receive both financial and service-based supports in a planned and coordinated manner.

- Introduced improvements to the foster care program, making it easier for foster parents to provide support for children in their care. This included an increase in the respite rate to \$56 per day, new emergency funding for foster parents of \$200 per child to obtain the basic needs of a child entering care, introducing two new automatic monthly payments for non-prescription items (\$30 per child) and infant needs (\$150 per child), and an amendment to the travel policy so meal receipts can be submitted for children travelling to appointments or access visits.

Clients are attached to the labour market

For those who can work, opportunities for employment can mean independence, self-sufficiency, and economic and social security. In 2016-2017, the Department continued initiatives in support of promoting attachment to the labour market including:

- Investing \$790,000 to help Nova Scotians with disabilities gain employment experience by expanding employment supports, building capacity within 12 Adult Service Centres, and investing in the growth and creation of social enterprise opportunities.
- Designing a new approach to ESS case management. This would provide services for ESIA clients that are more closely aligned with their needs, more effectively helping them prepare for employment and a more participatory life in their community.
- Enhancing Post-Secondary programming offered through the Department. This includes expanded supports for clients who want to attend university by providing funding for the first year of tuition, all student fees and books, as well as supports for transportation, child care, internet access, and incidentals to help integration into campus life. The Department also expanded the Educate to Work program to include supports for dependents of ESIA clients to attend community college, including funding for half the cost of tuition and full funding for text books, student fees, and health and dental insurance.

Clients are included in the community

People are included in their community when they can participate in either paid or supported employment, volunteer, and engage in local, cultural, recreational and social events. In 2016-2017, the Department began or continued many initiatives in support of increased community inclusion, including:

- Beginning transition of individuals from facility-based supports to the community, as part of DCS Roadmap commitments to begin transitioning individuals from larger residential settings to smaller community-based options. On July 1, 2016, a moratorium on permanent

placement of participants in large facilities was put in place, and as of March 31, 2017, 16 individuals had made the move to the community.

- Continuing work to develop a new range of services for DSP participants, which will lead to greater access to community living and flexibility for DSP participants. This service array will be supported by individualized funding and a person-directed planning approach in three key areas: where participants live; what they do during the day; and other community supports.
- Continuing to enhance prevention and early intervention programming, referred to as Stronger Families Nova Scotia. This has included launching Families Plus, a new intensive family preservation pilot program in Sydney; adding 15 new sites for the Parenting Journey Program (including three culturally specific programs in Aboriginal, African-Nova Scotian and Acadian communities); and implementing Nurturing Strong African Nova Scotian Families, a pilot program that focuses on developing positive self-image in children and their cultural heritage.

Clients are safe from abuse and violence

We know that living in fear of abuse and violence, or having experienced abuse or violence impacts a person's ability to grow, develop, and achieve their full potential. In 2016-2017 the Department:

- Proclaimed over 90 amendments to the *Children and Family Services Act (CFSA)* December 2016 and implemented on March 1, 2017, including expanding the definition of child in need of protective services and addressing a gap in services provided to 16 to 18-year olds.
- Continued investing in Breaking the Silence, A Coordinated Response to Sexual Violence in Nova Scotia, with a focus on working with communities so they can lead the way in helping victims and survivors of sexual violence. For example, the Department provided \$1,200,000 in Prevention and Innovation Grants to groups with innovative ideas on how to prevent sexual violence, and launched a public awareness campaign on sexual violence.
- Continued development of a structured continuum of services for CYFS clients from prevention through to early intervention, child protection, and out-of-home care. The goal is to provide children, young people, and families with seamless access to a broad spectrum of supports and services that responds best to their needs.

Supports and Services are accessible

We know that improving accessibility of supports and services to clients is essential for helping vulnerable Nova Scotians meet their needs. The Department strives to ensure that Nova Scotians know which programs and services are available, and to whom, and works to enable citizens to better access services by reducing physical, social, and time barriers. In 2016-2017, our accomplishments in this area included:

- The introduction of the Province's first accessibility legislation (the *Accessibility Act*) in Fall 2016. As of February 2017, responsibility for the *Accessibility Act* has been transferred to the Department of Justice.
- The implementation of a new interpreter service, Language Line, to be used by front line staff with clients who have limited English proficiency. The service is available 24/7/365 and is available in over 200 languages.
- Continued efforts to ensure clients have access to community-based supports like Family Resource Centres, Youth Outreach programs and other parts of Nova Scotia's social support network. For example, the Department provides annual funding to 25 Family Resource Centres across the Province. These centres provide community-based services that support the healthy development and well-being of children and youth by strengthening families and communities.
- More than 150,000 calls answered in the past 8 months through a new telephone service for income assistance clients to improve immediate responsiveness.
- Enhanced provincial after-hours service for foster parents, so they will have a single point of contact for all children in care issues that arise after regular business hours, on weekends, and on holidays. Additionally, the Department has supported the Federation of Foster Families Nova Scotia (FFFNS) to develop a mentoring program and on-call peer support program for new foster parents.
- Improvements to the Workplace Support Program, which provides technical aids and assistive devices to persons with disabilities so they can maintain their employment. Changes have made the program more accessible, expanded supports to post-secondary students with disabilities, and increased the types of supports available.

Core Responsibilities/Services

One of the Department's key outcomes is ensuring that supports and services are affordable and sustainable. This means that the Department is operating in a fiscally sustainable way, so that Nova Scotians continue to receive the programs, services, and supports they need. In 2016-2017, the Department continued a variety of initiatives in support of the way the Department delivers its programs and services.

- Established centralized business intelligence and data analytics service to ensure decision-making is underpinned by sound information and data.
- Implemented a variety of initiatives to reduce the administrative burden experienced by clients and staff. For example:

- Added flexibility for ESIA clients by providing an option to receive a mid-month payment (instead of one monthly payment), leading to increased independence in decision making, and implementing alternate options for reporting income without completing a monthly income statement, reducing invasiveness and social stigma.
 - Implemented a streamlined reimbursement process for children in care expenses, which will reduce administrative burden while ensuring consistent, predictable and timely turn-around times.
- Continued, through the Status of Women, to work with federal-provincial-territorial partners to refine and understand approaches to strengthening capacity in gender based analysis (GBA).

Core Program Responsibilities

The Department has three core business areas: Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA); Children Youth and Family Support (CYFS); and the Disability Support Program (DSP). While transformation is underway, the variety of interventions, supports, and services available to Nova Scotians must be maintained. Key accomplishments in this area for 2016-2017 include:

- Continued support for the province's network of Transition Houses and Women's Centres (via Status of Women) including:
 - Working closely with Housing NS and Transition Houses to support a robust investment in infrastructure improvements, drawing from the new Victims of Violence investments under the National Housing Strategy.
 - Working with Housing NS, Transition Houses in Halifax, Kentville and Amherst, and the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre to support the submission of successful proposals for capital construction projects to build two transition houses and two second-stage housing facilities.
 - Supporting Transition Houses and Women's Centres to develop logic models which has assisted in defining shared outputs and outcomes, which will support next steps to define measures of progress/success that could be used in service level agreement reporting.
- Continued to work in collaboration with the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) to ensure appropriate services for clients with disabilities who present with multiple, complex needs, to ensure they receive the best available service. A steering committee, comprised of representative from DSP, DHW, Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK Health Centre has been formed to provide oversight and guidance in key areas, such as assessment for long-term care, complex case processes, and adult protection.

Financial Results

Department of Community Services (DCS) Estimated & Actual Expenditures For the Year Ending March 31, 2017			
Program & Service Area	2016-2017 Estimate (\$thousands)	2016-2017 Actuals (\$thousands)	2016-2017 Variance (\$thousands)
Departmental Expenses:			
Senior Management	1,280	1,317	37
Policy and Innovation	4,696	3,992	(704)
Corporate Services Unit	5,028	4,348	(680)
Service Design and Delivery	103,417	105,892	2,475
Disability Support Program	319,366	323,749	4,383
Child, Youth and Family Support Program	93,863	93,161	(702)
Housing Services	44,992	45,300	308
Employment Support and Income Assistance Program	348,221	345,873	(2,348)
NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women	9,094	9,099	5
Total: Departmental Expenses	929,957	932,731	2,774
Additional Information:			
Fees and Other Charges	245	353	108
Ordinary Recoveries	18,042	18,980	938
Total Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	18,287	19,333	1,046
TCA Purchase Requirements	0	0	0
Provincial Funded Staff (FTE's)	1,630.5	1,614.5	(16.0)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

The Department of Community Services expenses were \$2.8 million or 0.3 percent higher than estimate. The Disability Support Program was \$4.4 million over estimate primarily due to increased client care costs and utilization growth in the Flex program. The department also experienced salary overages of \$1.4 million reflecting, in large part, lower savings than projected from expected vacancies.

These overages were partially offset by a \$2.3 million underspend in the Employment Support and Income Assistance program, due to lower caseloads and lower than anticipated expenses in

Employment Support Programs. Child, Youth and Family Support was \$0.7 million lower than the estimate as a result of fewer children in care.

Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

Department of Community Services recoveries were \$1.2 million higher than forecast. This is primarily the result of overpayment collections from former Income Assistance clients, which exceeded forecast by \$.7 million, Federal Child Tax Benefit recoveries related to children in care exceeding forecast by \$.3 million, and a \$.2 million net increase in various smaller accounts.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

The Department's FTEs were lower than budgeted due to temporary staff vacancies.

Measuring Our Performance

This section provides information on the Department of Community Services' progress against the outcomes and targets identified in the 2016-2017 Statement of Mandate.

The Department has developed an Outcomes Management Framework, to ensure sustainability and accountability of programs and services. The framework includes five outcomes for our clients and five outcomes for the system (the way we work).

Departmental outcomes included within the 2016-2017 Business Plan were:

Clients have control over their own lives	Clients are able to meet their basic needs
Clients are attached to the labour market	Clients are included in the community
Clients are safe from abuse and violence	Supports and services are accessible
Supports and services are affordable and sustainable	

For 2016-2017, the Department focused on performance measures and indicators that demonstrate progress towards meeting client outcomes. As noted, in 2016-2017, the Department continued to implement the framework, including new or revised indicators where appropriate. For 2016-2017, the Department indicated it would maintain all targets at 2015-2016 forecasts, and that targets would be revised as the Department progresses with its transformation. The following measures are being used to track progress towards the Departments ultimate outcomes for clients:

Outcome: Clients have control over their own lives

When people have control over their own lives, they have freedom to make decisions and are more independent. For DCS clients and participants, this means living as independently as possible, having the choice and ability to make decisions regarding their supports and services, and knowing where to go to access information. The following measures are used to indicate progress toward this outcome:

Measure: Percentage of IA cases that are closed with exits for employment (ESIA)

Clients demonstrate greater control over their own lives when they leave ESIA through obtaining employment. This measure represents the percentage of cases whereby people leave income assistance because they have secured employment.¹

In 2016-2017, on average, 21.3 percent of closed cases were because people left IA due to employment. In 2015-2016, on average it was 22.8 percent, representing a slight decrease from 2015-2016. Overall, the Department's goal is to increase the number of Nova Scotians living independently of income assistance.

¹ This measure only includes cases whereby the reason for exit is recorded as employment. In some instances, the reason for leaving Income Assistance is not recorded.

Measure: Percentage of new clients who access ESIA for 1-3 months (ESIA)

One of the intended results of the ESIA program is for clients to access the program for shorter periods of time. This measure represents the percentage of new ESIA clients who accessed the program for only 1-3 months, and did not re-apply for income assistance within 12 months of starting income assistance.

In 2016-2017, the average of new clients who accessed ESIA for 1-3 months was 6.4 percent, as compared to 6.9 percent in 2015-2016, representing a slight decrease between 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. The Department's overall target is to increase the percentage of new clients who access ESIA for only 1-3 months.

Measure: Average length of IA case stay – years (ESIA)

As with the previous measure, it is important to understand how long clients are accessing income assistance. Shorter lengths of stay mean that clients have been able to move toward greater independence. The Department defines length of stay as the length of time between an income assistance case becoming active (open) and closing.

In 2016-2017, the average length of stay was 4.62 years, as compared to 4.18 years in 2015-2016. The long-term target for this measure is to reduce the average length of stay on income assistance.

Measure: Percentage of DSP participants living independently

One of the intended results of the DSP program is to have more participants living as independently as possible. Living independently means participants are living alone in their own home or apartment.

In 2016-2017, 16.9 percent of DSP participants were living independently, which is consistent with 16.8 percent in 2015-2016. The longer-term goal is to have more DSP participants living independently in their own home or apartment, where possible.

Measure: Percentage of participants in Flex – In Home Program

The Flex - In Home program provides funding, within approved funding parameters, to a participant who lives with their family to purchase supports specific to their disability-related needs and goals. This promotes increased independence, self-reliance, and social inclusion.

In 2016-2017, 30.1 percent of participants were participating in the Flex-In Home Program, as compared to 28.9 percent in 2015-2016. The target for this measure is to continuously increase participation in the program, as it allows participants and their families to self-direct funding based on their needs.

Measure: Percentage of CYFS cases by level of intrusiveness (high, medium, low)

The Department is committed to ensuring that families, children and youth-at-risk are supported in ways that are least intrusive to their lives, while at the same time minimizing risk. The Department measures this by identifying cases that represent low, medium, and high levels of intrusion.²

The table below shows a comparison between 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 for the three levels.³ The Department’s goal is to increase the percentage of cases with low levels of intrusion, and reduce those with high levels intrusion.

	2016-2017	2015-2016
High	17.6	15.6
Medium	22.2	24.1
Low	60.2	60.3

Measure: Percentage of children eligible for adoption who are placed for adoption

The Department is responsible for Nova Scotian children when they cannot be safely and securely cared for by their own families. The Department strives to ensure children and youth have stable placements and nurturing homes. When a child is in the Department’s permanent care and legally free for adoption, it is in the child’s best interest to be placed for adoption. This measure reports on the percentage of children and youth in the Department’s permanent care who are placed for adoption. The number includes adoptions not yet finalized.

In 2016-2017, 13.0 percent of eligible children and youth in care were placed for adoption, as compared to 12.6 percent in 2015-2016.

Outcome: Clients are able to meet their basic needs

People need to be able to meet their basic needs if they are to take care of themselves and their families, and plan for the future. This may mean financial help, support because of an emergency, or support finding the right place to live. It also means ensuring healthy family relationships are maintained, and that children, youth, and families receive the specialized supports they need. The following measures are being used by the Department to track whether clients and participants are able to meet their basic needs:

² High Intrusion means a child has been removed from the home; medium intrusion means a child remains in the home or with a relative, with the Department monitoring the family; and low intrusion means the family is voluntarily receiving supports from the Department.

³ In 2016-2017, the Department changed the way supervision order cases are counted, making a distinction between supervision order cases in which children are under parental care or those under care of a relative. Data for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 represents an average for all supervision order cases (including parental and relative care)

Measure: Percentage of children and youth in open cases that remain with their family

We know that children and youth are better off when they are with their families. This is why the Department continues to expand prevention and early intervention programming to provide early support to vulnerable or at risk children, youth and families. This support contributes to their healthy development and well-being. This measure reports on the percentage of children and youth in open child protection cases who remain with family or relatives.

In 2016-2017, 62.8 percent of children in open cases remained with their family or relative, compared to 63.4 percent in 2015-2016, showing a consistent number of children are remaining with their families.⁴ The overall goal is for more children and youth to remain with their family.

Measure: Percentage of ESIA clients reapplying in 1 year

Clients demonstrate progress towards meeting their basic needs when they can leave income assistance and do not need to return for more support. This measure represents the number of new eligible reapplications that are reapplications that are from clients previously on income assistance (in the past 24 months).

In 2016-2017, 32.6 percent of new clients were reapplying within 1 year, as compared to 36.6 percent in 2015-2016, a 4-percentage point decrease. This shows that fewer clients were reapplying for income assistance within 1 year. The Department's target is to have fewer clients reapplying for income assistance in 1 year.

Outcome: Clients are attached to the labour market

For those who are able to work, opportunities for employment can mean independence, self-sufficiency, and economic and social security. The following measures have been used to indicate the extent to which this outcome is being reached:

Measure: Percentage of ESIA clients with new earned income

Clients demonstrate attachment to the labour market when they earn income from employment. This measure reports on the percentage of income assistance clients with new earnings from employment in the year.

In 2016-2017, the percentage of cases with new earned income was 14.1 percent, compared to 12.5 percent in 2015-2016. This indicates an increase in the percentage of cases with new earned income, showing more people finding employment.

⁴ In 2016-2017, the Department changed the way that supervision order cases are counted, making a distinction between supervision order cases in which children are under parental care or cases in which children are under care of a relative. Data for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 represents an average for all supervision cases (including parental and relative care).

Measure: Percentage of IA cases with earnings from employment

The Department's goal is to increase the percentage of income assistance cases with earnings from employment. Involvement in employment activities reduces the reliance on income assistance and enables individuals and families to achieve more self-sufficiency.

This measure represents any active income assistance cases with reported employment income, and includes those who are still receiving income assistance at a reduced amount because their earned wages are not sufficient to completely exit the program.

In 2016-2017, 11.6 percent of clients reported employment income. For 2015-2016 it was 12.1 percent, showing a small but positive change in the percentage of clients reporting employment income, improving their capacity to live more independent lives.

The Department continues work to strengthen employment supports and services, in order for clients to capitalize on skills/education development and employment.

Measure: Average earnings from employment

The Department aims to increase the number of Nova Scotians living independently of income assistance. This measure reports on the average employment income of active income assistance cases with reported employment income for the target month.

The average employment income in 2016-2017 was \$472/month as compared to \$481/month in 2015-2016, showing a slight decrease in average monthly earnings.

Measure: Percentage of youth formally in care with a signed Post Custody Care Agreements

As youth in care transition to adulthood, the Department is committed to ensuring they have the supports they need. Post Custody Care Agreements (PCCAs) allow eligible youth exiting care access to certain educational supports.

This measure tracks the percentage of eligible youth formally in permanent care with a PCCA, and including youth between 19-24. In 2016-2017, on average, 5.5 percent of eligible youth, formally in permanent care has a signed PCCA compared to, on average, 5.4 percent in 2015-2016, a slight increase in the number of PCCA's completed for youth formally in permanent care.

Outcome: Clients are included in the community

People are included in their community when they have opportunities to participate in either paid or supported employment, to volunteer, and to engage in local, cultural, recreational, and social events.

Measure: Percentage of Disability Support Program participants in community-based living

Community-based options enable persons with disabilities to remain in their own homes with family, or in alternate home-like settings, and in their communities. The vision for the future of DSP is based on the idea that people with disabilities have the right to live, work, play, and pursue

their life aspirations in their community. This measure calculates the percentage of DSP participants being supported in community-based options.

In 2016-2017, 77.7 percent of DSP participants were in community based living, as compared to 76.7 percent in 2015-2016. The Department continues to shift its focus towards community-based residential services and community-based programming. There are currently 47 DSP participants being transitioned from larger facilities to community settings, improving their social inclusion and quality of life.

Outcome: Clients are safe from abuse and violence

We know that living in fear of abuse and violence, or having experienced abuse or violence impacts a person's ability to grow, develop, and achieve their full potential. That is why the Department seeks to ensure that all clients and participants at risk of abuse and/or violence know where to go to get the help they need, and that all clients in abusive and/or violent situations received immediate supports and services.

Measure: Percentage of referrals to child protection services that result in an open case

The Department investigates all reports of possible abuse and/or violence to children. These investigations may result in an open case (that is, findings of abuse and/or violence have occurred). The Department's goal is to reduce the number of referrals that result in an open case.

In 2016-2017, the percentage of referrals to child protection services that resulted in an open case was 11.8 percent, as compared to 12.7 percent in 2015-2016, showing a positive trend in the number of referrals that resulted in open cases.

Measure: Percentage of Protection for Persons in Care referrals and Percentage of Founded Referrals

It is critical that Nova Scotians living in residential care are protected from abuse and violence. The Department is responsible for inquiring into and investigating allegations of abuse, and for issuing directives to homes for special care in instances where abuse has been found.

In 2016-2017, the Department received 144 referrals (reports of abuse), 49 of which were investigated. Of those investigations, 23 were founded cases of abuse, 11 are ongoing, and 15 were not founded. In 2015-2016, the Department received 135 referrals, 45 of which were investigated. Of those that were investigated, 14 were founded, 15 are ongoing and 16 were not founded.

Appendix A: Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labour Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Community Services.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2016-2017
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	n/a
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	n/a