



## Community Living Co-Management Committee

### UPDATE ON SERVICE STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY LIVING 2003/2004

On November 13, 2002, under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Interim Authority for Community Living British Columbia and the Minister of Children and Family Development, the community was given a voice in the management of all community living services. This voice is provided through a Co-Management Committee, which is made up of three appointments from each of the Ministry and the Interim Authority.

Following the same model that was successful with the Transition Steering Committee (TSC), the Co-Management Committee is co-chaired by a Ministry representative [Elaine Murray, ADM – Regional Operations] and by Doug Woollard [ED – DCLS]. Others appointed are Melinda Heidsma [ED – Direct Care of AiMHi] and Rick Mowles [ED of NSAMH] by the Interim Authority. The Ministry has appointed Les Foster [ADM – Management Services and Executive Financial Officer] and Robin Syme [ED Community Living Services]. The work of the Committee is described as a “Co-Management” model wherein Community Living Services are co-managed by the Ministry and the community.

One of the primary tasks assigned to the Co-Management Committee is the beginnings of reforms to service delivery to lower the costs of providing supports to individuals and families. This is a task, on which the community wants to show leadership and which will extend the working partnership, which had evolved with service providers to the very practical task of service innovation, creativity and increasing choices for people.

At the core of this work is implementation of the plan developed by the Joint Budget Working Group.

#### ***Background***

In October, as part of the working agreement between the Ministry and the Transition Steering Committee, a Joint Budget Working Group was established which was comprised of five members appointed by the TSC and five from the Ministry. Their task was to craft a plan that would meet the needs of individuals, families and service providers and satisfy the recommendations of the TSC to maintain the current level of resources available at the community level. This had to be done while adhering to the Ministry’s financial objectives set by Treasury Board. After five days of hard work and sometimes tense negotiations, agreement was reached at the working group level which members of the TSC and the Ministry unanimously endorsed. This agreement was subsequently approved by the Minister and by Treasury Board. The statement released jointly by the Ministry and the TSC at the time of the agreement is attached as Appendix 1 for your reference.

#### ***Implementation Principles and Guidelines***

The successful implementation of this plan is critical in several respects:

1. it begins the work of introducing changes that provide individuals and families with more choices in how they are supported;
2. it begins the reforming of services, introducing flexibility that will reduce the average cost of supporting individuals;

3. it extends the unique partnership that has developed between families and service providers to work together to influence the way communities respond to people with disabilities;
4. it has the potential to release funds that would be made available to provide support to people waitlisted for services;
5. it reaffirms community leadership of the move to community governance.

The Interim Authority has taken the position that it has to take the lead on planning for these changes and therefore, has appointed to the Co-Management Committee [Doug Woollard, Rick Mowles and Melinda Heidsma], that will be responsible for implementation. Successful implementation of the specific plans outlined below will only come with unparalleled cooperation between the Co-Management committee and service providers with overall success dependent upon unrelenting respect for families and individuals in the process of change.

We thought it might be useful to provide you with an excerpt taken from the letter from David Driscoll, in his capacity as Community Chair of the TSC, to the Honourable Gordon Hogg, Minister of Children and Family Development. The context of the letter was the formal delivery of the Final Report of the TSC.

*“The Steering Committee has completed its work with unanimous support for five general directions. These are:*

***Community Governance***

*That there be created a Provincial Community Living Authority (the “new Authority”) to take responsibility for community living services in British Columbia, and that in fulfilling its mandate the new Authority view the community as central to service provision and support to adults with developmental disabilities, children with special needs, and their families.*

***Choice, Independent Planning and Support***

*That the new Authority will reflect the principle that people must be ensured they have the support they need to become contributing citizens in their communities.*

*That the new Authority will view services as a means of ensuring that individuals have the opportunity to fully participate in their communities as contributing citizens.*

*That the new Authority be granted the requisite mandate and power to offer individualized funding and independent planning and support to all people with a developmental disability, children with special needs and their families who wish it.*

***Adults and Children Together***

*That the new Authority’s mandate include supports for adults with a developmental disability, children with special needs, and their families.*

***Safety and Well-being of People***

*That during the process of transition to community-based governance, the government, the Interim Community Living Authority and, once established, the permanent new Authority, ensure that the safety and well-being of individuals with developmental disabilities, children with special needs, and their families be of paramount concern.*

***Resources in Transition***

*That the government will transfer to the new Authority all of the authorities, responsibilities, funding, assets and undertakings that constitute community living services, on the terms specified in the attached Report.*

*That the 2002/2003 resourcing levels for service and support for individuals and families be maintained for 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 to enable a successful transition of those services from government to the new Authority.”<sup>1</sup>*

In many respects, this work of reforming the current system to provide more choice, to reduce the costs inherent in those choices and to provide for people too long waitlisted for services, begins the process of converting the recommendations of the Transition Steering Committee into action. To respect the terms under which the Transition Steering Committee delivered its recommendations to the Minister, we have established principles to guide us all during the implementation phase.

### **Overarching Principles**

1. The health and safety of individuals will be paramount.
2. All change will be based in choice for individuals and families.

### **Implementation Principles**

3. The budget plan must support a successful transition to community governance. Recommended changes should be within the community capacity to respond and as such, should not compromise, or overtax, the current service delivery system as it moves out of government to a new provincial governance authority.
4. The implementation will be consistent with the original Terms of Reference of the Transition Steering Committee.
5. Changes will be financially sustainable in the longer term.

### **Implementation Assumptions**

1. There will be no reduction in the number of people currently being served.
2. There will be no across the board reduction in funding or contracts.
3. Respite for aging parents and families looking after children and adults with developmental disabilities will be maintained or increased.
4. Efficiencies in delivery of day programs for adults and non-residential services for children with special needs will be used to address waitlists in these areas.
5. Savings found through restructuring should have concurrent savings in management and administration.
6. There will be no funding change for individuals currently in family care homes funded under the Ministry fixed rate payment system.

## **Implementation Plan**

The current “system” for providing support to individuals with developmental disabilities has often forced people to accept supports which do not reflect what they and their families might have chosen if other options had been available. This has been a longstanding complaint and many service providers have already moved in creative ways to better respond to the wishes of individuals and families.

Through the implementation of this plan over the next several months, we want to begin the reforms that will allow all of us to be offering individuals and families alternatives which

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<sup>1</sup> *A New Vision for Community Living . . . A Vision of Change and Choice*, Community Living Transition Steering Committee, Queen’s Printer, Victoria, BC, 2002, p v

respect their choice in meeting their disability related support needs and which they feel will enhance their personal independence and connection to community.

This plan is based on the experience of many service providers who have extended effort to respond to what individuals and families want. It is formulated on the belief that many of the choices that individuals and families will make in meeting their personal objectives, will reflect the recent experience and will reduce the total cost of service or support. Fundamental to choice, is information. The first step is presenting people with full information about the alternatives in a way that they can assess the benefits for themselves. We have to be ready and willing to support people during this process – while it is certainly true that many individuals and families have long standing requests for change, there are many more that are not even aware of alternatives to their current mode of support. We have to accept that when the advantages of various options become clear to individuals and families, many will want a change.

It is our objective to reduce the total cost of existing services – this can only be achieved by reducing the average cost of supporting an individual or family. We know that many of the options people make of their own choosing, or on behalf of a family member, are less expensive than the traditional group home approach to support. We also know that by injecting flexibility into the system, individuals and families will choose gradients of support that are often far less costly than the more rigid system generally prevalent across the Province. How successful each agency is in reducing the cost of their services will depend on many factors including the size of the agency, choices that individuals and families make, the creativity of key staff within the agency, etc. We want to reduce the cost of services as much as we can because in so doing the financial position of the agency and of the Authority will both be strengthened. If we are able to exceed our goals, more funds will be freed up to meet waitlist demands.

We recognize there are increasing cost pressures on agencies, many of which are driven by changes to employee benefit costs, usage or premiums. Under agreement with the Ministry, the Interim Authority has secured payment of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002 compensation payments that were withheld from some agencies and has struck a task force to establish a compensation formula that will reflect actual costs of benefits. This same task force, which has now produced draft recommendations, was also responsible for designing a fair and equitable way of recovering historic overpayments under previous compensation formulae.

There will be costs associated with making changes that can be sustained into the future. We also recognize that to do this right and to fully respect the choices of individuals and families, service providers will need time to explore options and develop types of support that they may not currently be familiar with. To provide this time for creation and innovation, there is one-time funding to support restructuring costs.

Reducing the costs of service is a real challenge to community. We all know that the Ministry has, in recent years, made similar attempts. What we are doing though is different and this difference is a critical part of understanding your role as a service provider. We are not talking about an across-the-board cut in contract dollars and we're not talking about a targeted reduction to administration, management or support costs – we are talking about an opportunity to be creative and innovative, to work with individuals and families in turning their wishes into practical solutions and we are talking about supporting those efforts with time and money.

### ***Options to Consider***

In preparing the plan the working group examined a number of successful options, which are currently being used in BC. **This is not meant to be an exclusive list.** Our purpose in

presenting the list is to spread innovation across the Province and find additional new ways of supporting people in community.

### ***Individualized Funding in Family Homes or Apartments***

Funding would be provided for an adult to live in a family home or apartment setting with someone contracted to provide support to them. The person providing the support would be chosen by the individual and his or her family. The living arrangement would be monitored and administered by a service provider in consultation with the family to ensure the plan for the person is followed and their health and safety is ensured. Costs of each individual's support plan will vary based on the disability-related needs of the person.

This model has been used successfully in many areas of the Province and by many agencies, such as Richmond Society for Community Living, Mainstream and Delta Community Living Society.

### ***Cluster Homes***

Many individuals want the freedom of living in their own apartment but require support to do so. This option sees 6 to 7 apartments in a building or complex, being rented by individuals with 1 apartment rented to accommodate the service provider. Individuals may live alone or with a roommate or friend. The service provider apartment is used by staff as their base and as a site that "cluster" residents can go to or contact for support. Residents in these clusters are usually people who have been unsuccessful in living independently, but can live semi independently if support is readily available. Staffing levels depend on the needs of the individual.

This model has been used successfully around the Province and by a number of agencies including AiMHi in Prince George, Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion and the Community Living Society.

### ***Adding One Person to Existing Group Homes***

Adding one person to existing 1 to 3 person group homes will result in lowering the cost per individual as the individual to staff ratio will increase and other operating costs will rise only marginally with the addition of one person. Individuals who live in the home now and the person moving in must both agree with the change.

This choice will be made possible by proposed changes to licensing and will be offered to current residents of 1 to 3 person group homes.

### ***Alternatives for People with Significant Needs***

This option will focus on the people who live in Willow clinic and intensive adult care resources (IACR) in community. The plan would see people move permanently out of Willow clinic. The assessment and short stay service currently provided by Willow clinic will be enhanced with access improved to those from outside the lower mainland.

Many of the IACR living situations in the community were created quickly to address emergent need. With proper and more complete individual planning it is expected that a better environment can be created for many of these individuals at a lower cost. The individual support requirements of each of these people will be reviewed with their families with the objective of developing a better support plan.

Done in conjunction with the planning for people in Willow we hope to develop a Province wide comprehensive approach for people with significant support needs.

### ***Current Residents of Group Homes with 6 or More Beds***

At present approximately 550 people live in group homes with a capacity of 5 or more beds. Quite a few of these group homes have 6 or more beds.

Homes in excess of five beds are not consistent with the vision of community living services. Hence, it is proposed that individuals living in group homes with six or more beds will be given the option to move.

While there are no net savings attributed to this strategy, it is an important part of the vision for community living services and will result in some one time restructuring costs.

### ***Keeping Families Together***

Out of the 4,900 people in residential services provided by the Ministry, approximately 1,000 are aged 19 to 30 years. A few of these families, and parents of children in care, see themselves as having been forced to surrender their children into residential care because of a lack of supports for the family. They have expressed a strong and continuing interest in having their children return to live with them. Individual support plans would be created and funded which meet the disability related needs of the individual in the family home.

This option would only be offered to those who express the desire to have their child or young adult return home. It is anticipated that only a limited number of families will make this choice.

### ***Service Innovation and Other Creative Options***

The options discussed above are by no means intended to be an exhaustive list of changes that will contribute to the reform of the current service delivery system. There are individuals and families who will have ideas that they will share given the opportunity. Within your organizations there will be staff members, managers and front-line staff alike, that have ideas that they too will share given the opportunity.

As you will see from the Best Practices discussion below, we will do everything we can to support you in your efforts to encourage contribution from individuals, families and staff and to test various options that may arise from new and different thinking about ways to support people. Ultimately, we will want you to share your good ideas and your success implementing them with other organizations.

### ***Restructuring Costs - Making Change Possible***

The successful implementation of this vision of change in the service delivery system will require significant one time funding to support restructuring of various types. Some of the kinds of restructuring costs we anticipate are:

- Additional staffing costs related to the anticipated changes;
- Costs of notice period on cancellation of existing service contracts with agencies;
- Costs of training or retraining staff to adjust to a different model of supporting individuals;
- Funds to support collaborative, multi-agency planning;
- Renovations and alterations to some homes to add capacity;
- Development of an individualized funding model with its related communication and re-training costs;
- Establishment of the 'cluster home' model;
- Supports to smaller agencies to work together in community to help in restructuring their services;

- Supports to larger agencies to plan the development of new models for service delivery;
- Modifications to private homes to allow families to bring home their sons and daughters or to keep their children within their family home;
- Facilitation and mentoring for service providers establishing new and innovative approaches.

Part of the agreement between the Interim Authority and MCFD is to provide funding that recognizes these costs of reforming the current system. We recognize that these costs will be a necessary component of many organizational plans and we want to encourage you and your staff to think creatively. This funding is to support that process.

## ***Waitlists***

We want to exceed the minimum objectives we have set for ourselves. By exceeding the objectives, and with the help of the restructuring funding, we have a real opportunity to address waitlist needs across the Province.

The Interim Authority has an the agreement with MCFD that allows restructuring funds to be used to develop plans to increase day program capacity while maintaining existing contract funding. This increased capacity will be used to provide additional services for people on waitlists. This same agreement applies to all service and support funding for children.

Exceeding our objectives for reducing the costs of service will mean that we will be able to provide additional residential services for people on waitlists.

## ***How We Will Get There***

The move of service delivery out of government to community has been primarily based on a community-focused, community-centered approach. Our ability to make community-based governance work in a way that creates the support for individuals and families that they want is dependent on the strength of individual community service providers.

In facing this government-wide fiscal imperative of meeting budget reduction targets, we have focused on avoiding cross sector or across-the-board cuts. We have argued that by allowing the community to manage the funding objectives by changing the way services are delivered, by reducing the costs of services and by expanding service capacity, we could meet the objectives without the uncertainty, turmoil and anger amongst service providers that has characterized past government attempts to reduce funding and we could do without putting individuals and families in harm's way.

We have been describing this strategic plan as an opportunity to make real change and to make system-wide reforms that respond to messages we have been getting from individuals and families for years. And it is a real opportunity.

- There is expertise and support available to help you formulate your plans but if you want to work on your own that's fine too – no-one is going to tell you how you should respond.
- This is a chance to do what we have all talked about for years – expand our thinking, bring in individuals and families to help us strategically plan for our futures, honour staff commitment and ideas, collaborate with partners – other community living agencies or community groups – and to do it in a supportive, encouraging environment.
- For years we have talked about “best practices” with little to show for it. This is an opportunity to share best practices within a framework and focus that lends itself incredibly well to linking best practices to specific outcomes.

- There is funding to help agencies plan, implement and refine change and the support is enough to make sure that organizations, staff members, individuals and families are protected during transition.

At the same time this is a great opportunity, it is also a real challenge. It is a challenge to the individuals, families, service providers and government staff who came together at the Transition Steering Committee table and said “we can do this”. But more importantly, it is a challenge to the community living service providers – all of us – to actually demonstrate our commitment to supporting individuals and families far into the future. We cannot fail.

### ***Sharing Best Practices***

During the work done to prepare for the budget discussions with the Ministry, we were all amazed at the range of innovative and very creative ideas currently being used to support individuals and families across the Province. We have also been encouraged by the fact that in almost every case, innovation and creativity has gone hand-in-hand with cost effectiveness. Unfortunately, despite interest and even past effort, there is no organized mechanism for sharing these ideas with individuals, families and service providers.

We will establish a means for the sharing of innovation so that everyone is fully aware of all the alternatives. We anticipate doing this in a number of ways:

- a website devoted to creativity, innovation and best practices
- a forum to allow the exchange of ideas and the capacity to ask and respond to questions
- funding to agencies to free up key staff around the Province who have proven ability to engineer change to allow them to serve as mentors for other organizations
- word-of-mouth advice from the Interim Authority representatives and from the Community Living Managers in their role as support to the process
- easy access to the Interim Authority representatives by cell phone and email
- information bulletins that capture good ideas including the necessary strategic plans and implementation considerations

We have also begun work on a Best Practices Conference – a two day session in late March dedicated to sharing innovation and creativity amongst individuals, families and service providers. More news will be available on the conference within the next couple of weeks.

We are open to any further suggestions on how to expand the knowledge and experience base within community living and urge you to document your own agency-level successes so that they can be shared with others.

### ***Agency-Level Planning***

1. All service providers will be asked to develop plans to reduce the cost of their services:
  - by creating options and responding to individual and family choice
  - on their own or in collaboration with other service providers
  - that, at a minimum, meet the overall objectives
  - that identify obstacles to change that must be overcome and costs associated with overcoming these obstacles
2. The Interim Authority representatives on the Co-Management Committee will be dividing up the Province and assuming individual responsibility for various areas. We will arrange to meet with you over the next 60 to 75 days.

3. Help is available in developing your plans if you wish it.
4. Community Living Managers will participate in the process as support to the Interim Authority to provide information to you and to us with respect to existing service and support arrangements and specific contract information.
5. Plans can be submitted jointly by two or more agencies – this may be particularly helpful for smaller agencies where development of flexible options may be more challenging.
6. Plans should include:
  - implementation activities
  - description of support and service options under consideration
  - time frame from planning to completion
  - anticipated cost reductions from the changes
  - restructuring costs required to fund/support the changes
7. Once you have a plan that you are happy with, you will submit that plan to the Interim Authority representative for review, discussion and approval.
8. We are hoping that we can have some agency plans complete and approved by January 31<sup>st</sup> and our submission deadline for all agency plans is March 14<sup>th</sup>. We have established a very streamlined review and approval process to be able to respond quickly to issues as they arise.
9. Review and approval will include a discussion of strategies you intend to employ, your timeline, the support you require and your anticipated service cost reductions.
10. Once a plan is approved you will receive written confirmation of the approval and commitment that the cost reductions achieved when the plan is fully implemented will be credited to your organization.
11. Implementation activities will be monitored by the Interim Authority representatives as required.
12. Once the plan is achieved, relevant contracts will be modified and you will receive confirmation in writing that the service cost reductions have been credited to your agency.

### ***Concluding Comments***

At the core of this process is honouring and respecting individual and family right to make choices in their lives. We firmly believe that when people are fully informed, when they are given the opportunity to participate fully in decisions that affect their lives, and when they are supported in whatever decision they make, invariably those choices will include cost effective means of support. Often current modes of support, particularly in residential care, focus on care and custody at the expense of friends, neighbours, and personal independence – an individual's fundamental connection to their community. By giving service providers the freedom and responsibility to work with individuals and families to develop alternatives we will find the cost of support will decrease and we will improve the network of paid and voluntary supports available in each community.

We want to do this right. We are moving as slowly as the timeline allows us and as quickly as you want us to. We are trying to anticipate and respond to service provider concerns. Above all we know that whether we succeed or fail rests with the cooperation and support

we get from you. This is a real challenge to all of us in community living – for years we have complained that the Ministry gets in the way of changes that would be good for individuals, families, community and, yes, even good for government. Well the Ministry has given us free rein and support – it is now up to us.

## **APPENDIX 1**

**Memorandum to:** All TSC members  
**From:** Doug Woollard and Deanna Kratzenberg  
**Regarding:** Update on Joint Budget Working Group  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 22nd, 2002

We have completed five days of intense meetings of the Joint Budget Working Group. Given the high level of interest amongst all TSC members and the community in general, we wanted to provide you with an update on our progress.

The following statements have been agreed to by the Ministry representatives of the Working Group and should only be used in any form in their entirety. It is important to keep in mind that this represents recommendations to the Minister and as such are subject to the approval of the Minister and Treasury Board.

[1] We have had a productive, positive process with senior Ministry staff. The recommendations that are going forward meet the Ministry's financial objectives within a framework of a successful, safe transition that we believe will be supported by the community.

[2] We have identified and confirmed ways to retain existing budgeted funds within the system for strategic investments to support restructuring costs for both this year and next year. This will greatly aid the transition [e.g. making changes to current services to accommodate the choices made by individuals and families, establishing Individualized Funding and planning supports].

[3] We have focused on efficiencies and savings in government and administration to reduce the projected deficit next year from \$80 million to between \$25 million and \$30 million. This reduction is before any savings are sought through creative and innovative solutions in service delivery. We will be asking agencies, in agreement with individuals and families, to find between 4.5% and 5.0% in savings next year. Savings will be accomplished by offering choices to families and individuals and by accommodating those choices.

[4] Changes based on individual and family choice will take time – they must be done gradually and they must respect people's right to choose. We have mutually agreed to recommend restructuring funding of between \$45 million and \$50 million using financial resources from this year's budget to provide us this time and to support the cost of changes in forms of residential services.

[5] We plan to bring the planning support function up early to ensure planning support is available and will begin training and orientation as quickly as possible to ensure that individuals, families and agencies get the information and support they require.

[6] As a result of this work by the Ministry and community representatives it is anticipated that any change to any service to an individual or family will be based on the choices made by that individual or family. There will be no across-the-board cuts to services as was originally feared.

[7] The working group spent considerable time developing possible solutions to the situations faced by individuals and families who are currently waitlisted for services. The recommendations include redirecting savings from some service changes to meet waitlist needs. Work will continue through the Interim Authority and details should be available shortly.