

A dvocate for Service Quality

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17



Ministry of
Social Development
and Poverty Reduction

September 2017

Dear Minister Simpson,

It is my pleasure to present the 2016/17 Annual Report of the Office of the Advocate for Service Quality, reporting on the period of April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. This is the 25th annual report of the office but my first as Advocate for Service Quality.

The focus of my first year as Advocate was to contemplate and implement as appropriate the recommendations from the 2015 report, "[Advocate for Service Quality: Review and Recommendations](#)." I emphasized:

- ▶ Increasing the profile and community presence of the Advocate by visiting rural and remote communities;
- ▶ Implementing more rigorous accountability measures by creating a new Program Advisor position and evaluating the Advocate's data management system;
- ▶ Participating in Community Living BC's (CLBC) quality improvement processes by building relationships with CLBC staff and conducting an impartial file review; and
- ▶ Enhancing the inter-ministry role by re-engaging and leading a committee tasked to assess and promote the continuation of the Provincial Medical and Clinical Consultant Services.

Throughout the year I spent time with and heard from many individuals with a developmental disability and their families. Given the nature of my role, it is expected that I will hear most about what is not working for people. I was heartened, though, by the resilience, patience, and also the perseverance of the families that I spoke with. Together, we were able to find a path forward on many issues.

In the coming year I will continue to focus on improving the quality of service for people with a developmental disability, monitoring systemic issues, and building relationships. I will also implement the Advocate's Advisory Committee which will serve as a sounding board and conduit to my office for local issues.

Acknowledging your new role as Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, I wish to extend my congratulations. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Leanne Dospital
Advocate for Service Quality



Ministry of
Social Development
and Poverty Reduction

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Who is the Advocate for Service Quality?



Connector, Advisor, Problem-Solver

▶ **Leanne Dospital** is BC's Advocate for Service Quality. She was appointed by an Order in Council in April 2016 and reports directly to the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

▶ The Advocate helps government to better support people with a developmental disability, which includes Autism Spectrum Disorder and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

▶ The Advocate is:

INDEPENDENT

NEUTRAL

OBJECTIVE

FAIR

▶ **Did You Know?** The Advocate position was established *25 years ago* in 1992 to help individuals with developmental disabilities and their families during the process of downsizing and closure of institutions.

▶ **Over the years** the Advocate's role has expanded to:

- ▶ Identify and raise awareness of systemic issues
- ▶ Increase connections to remote and rural communities
- ▶ Enhance the inter-ministry role
- ▶ Promote a cooperative approach to problem solving

The Office of the Advocate for Service Quality's

VISION¹

- ▶ To be a champion for the rights of people with a developmental disability
- ▶ To amplify their voices
- ▶ To support them to get quality service

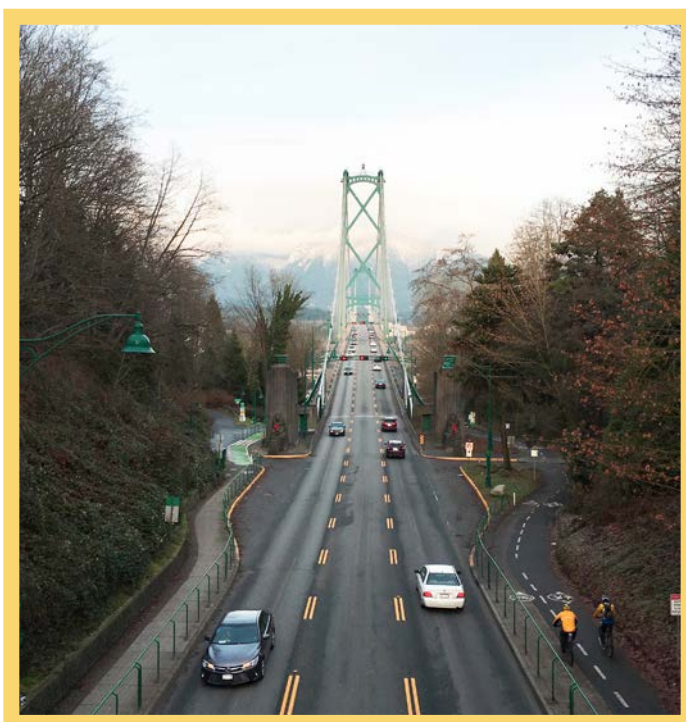
MISSION

- ▶ To keep the interests of people with a developmental disability at the centre of the decision making process
- ▶ To provide autonomous, expert advice to the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction that will help produce positive outcomes for people with a developmental disability and their families

¹ The Advocate for Service Quality's vision, mission, and strategic priorities will be refreshed once the Advocate's Advisory Committee is established (see page 10).

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- ▶ Individual advocacy
- ▶ Systemic change
- ▶ Building advocacy across the systems of support



What Does the Office of the Advocate for Service Quality Do?

The Advocate helps adults and transitioning youth who have a developmental disability (including Autism and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders), their families, and service providers when they need a neutral third party to step in to help solve problems and find solutions to concerns and complaints.

The Advocate works in cooperation with, but independently from:

- ▶ Government
- ▶ Community Living BC (CLBC)
- ▶ Community agencies

The Advocate's goal is to ensure that individuals and their families receive quality service from these organizations.

The Advocate helps you seek quality service by:



When you work with the Advocate, they will:



Relationships



When the Advocate identifies a systemic issue, they will:

- ▶ Research the issue to better understand the impacts and community involvement
- ▶ Help identify possible solutions
- ▶ Make recommendations for improvements or change

Advocate Anecdote

Leanne travelled to a number of B.C.'s rural and remote communities and heard from many individuals, their families and service providers. One individual Leanne spent some time with was a young First Nations mother. She is eligible to receive CLBC funding for services but there was no one to provide these services in her home community. She was asked if she would like to move to the closest town that had the services she needed—a two hour drive from her home, family and community—but she said no; she does not want to be separated from her family and community. Leanne followed up with CLBC to explore options and raised this issue with the Minister.

The Advocate has strong working relationships with:

- ▶ Community advocacy organizations, such as the Family Support Institute and Inclusion BC
- ▶ Community Living BC (CLBC)
- ▶ Service providers
- ▶ The ministries of Health, Children and Family Development, and Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- ▶ The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth
- ▶ The Office of the Ombudsperson
- ▶ The Public Guardian and Trustee

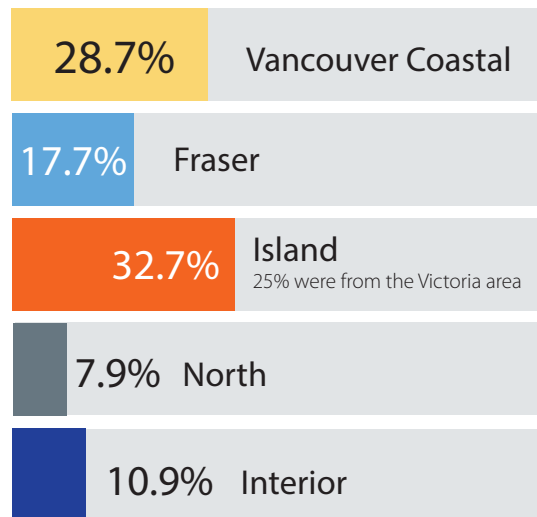
STATS

Note: The Advocate has identified areas of improvement in their data collection and reporting. The data for 2016/17 does not fully capture the work and priorities of the Advocate. A refreshed and more comprehensive data management system has been prioritized for 2017/18.

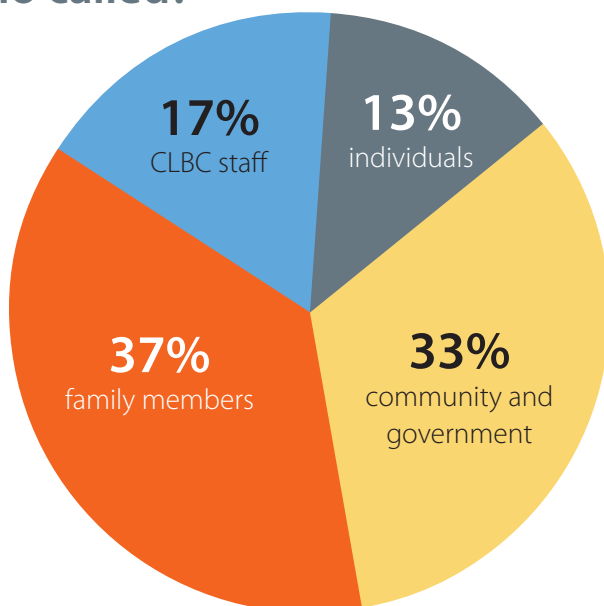
Total Calls: 254



Where did people call from? (% of calls by Health Authority)



Who called?



The Issues

- ▶ More than 50% of calls to the Advocate were complaints about CLBC's services and no funding being received
- ▶ Approximately 25% were about youth transitioning, including eligibility and assessments
- ▶ Approximately 25% were about Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefits and SDPR services

In addition to contacting the Office of the Advocate for Service Quality with concerns specific to their own situation, individuals, their families, and community stakeholders also spoke with the Advocate about systemic challenges facing people with a developmental disability in relation to:

- ▶ Affordable and inclusive housing
- ▶ Access to health and mental health services
- ▶ Ageing parents
- ▶ Access to SDPR services



Advocate Anecdote

A mother called the Advocate very concerned for her adult daughter who is a person with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. The mother is no longer able to provide care for her daughter due to the mother's declining health. Change is difficult for her daughter and she worries about what will happen to her without her support. Leanne helped the mother articulate her concerns with CLBC and assisted them to find a path forward to a solution.

Community Outreach and Engagement

The Advocate visited 17 communities in 2016/17



Made 31 presentations



Coordinated 30 stakeholder meetings



Attended 10 conferences, events and committees



Met with and heard from dozens of individuals and their families in their communities

Accountability

Impartial File Reviews

- ▶ Requested by Minister
- ▶ Provides objective assessment of issues
- ▶ Makes recommendations

Advocate Advisory Committee

- ▶ Serves as sounding board for the Advocate
- ▶ Informs Advocate about local issues

The Advocate

Advisor to the Minister

- ▶ Meets with the Minister at least quarterly
- ▶ Submits annual report



Advocate Anecdote

Leanne talked to many parents about their children transitioning into adulthood without adequate supports. The individuals and their families participated in intense planning but when the children turned 19, there was no funding to support their independence or inclusion in their community. Leanne worked with each family and CLBC to help identify solutions and continues to monitor this issue.

Operations



	Annual Budget	2016/17 Actuals
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$212,600	\$161,069
TOTAL SALARIES & BENEFITS	\$196,600	\$148,646
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS Travel, Info Systems, Office Expenses	\$16,000	\$12,423



STAFFING — The Advocate is a two person office. A new Program Advisor position was created with greater responsibility; the position was filled in January 2016.



SPACE — While the Advocate is an independent office, they save money by sharing office space with SDPR.



SYSTEM — Implementing more rigorous accountability measures is a priority for the Advocate. The Advocate identified areas of improvement and is working to update and enhance data collection and reporting.

Contact



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Visit our website:
gov.bc.ca/AdvocateForServiceQuality



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