

Ministry of Children and Family Development
Progress Report to November 2022

Office of the Auditor General Report: Oversight of Contracted Residential Services for Children and Youth in Care, 2019

This document provides a ministry progress report on the recommendations included in [the Office of the Auditor General Report: Oversight of Contracted Residential Services for Children and Youth in Care, 2019](#)

Ministry Approach	
	<p>The OAG report, released in June 2019, outlines recommendations to make substantive changes to the management, oversight, and use of contracted resources in B.C. Since that time, the province has undergone unprecedented changes: opioid public health emergency, COVID 19 pandemic, climate disaster (flooding, wildfire), and the continued discovery of unmarked graves of children in residential schools. Within this changing context, action in response to the OAG recommendations by the ministry and our partners, has been holistic and driven by the following premise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous communities have the inherent right to provide their own child and family services, and to keep Indigenous children safely connected to their cultures and communities. The ministry’s overinvolvement in the lives of these children results in continued intergenerational trauma. • Children who can no longer live safely at home with their parents thrive most in home-based environments which allow for consistent caregivers, where they can form attachment, experience predictability and stability, and meet their potential. Ideally, these home-based environments are within community, where culture, language, and relationships and a sense of self and belonging can be maintained. • Children and youth who can no longer live safely at home experience trauma, and the journey to healing has many steps forward and steps back. The continuum of care requires purposeful resources to meet these therapeutic needs. • Government has a responsibility to provide strong oversight of care at the individual, service, and provincial level. This oversight stretches far beyond monetary accountability and is best focused on meaningful outcomes related to children and youth – their safety, wellness, and inclusion. <p>Within this shifting approach, we are now seeing the lowest number of children and youth in care in 30 years and the lowest number of Indigenous children and youth in care in over 20 years.</p> <p>This premise and the OAG recommendations form the basis of the ministry approach outlined in this report.</p>
Report: Recommendation One	
	<p><i>We recommend that the ministry, in partnership with Indigenous Child and Family Services agencies and Indigenous communities, create, implement, and communicate a strategy for contracted residential services, based on:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) an analysis to determine the most appropriate model for delivery of required residential services;</i> <i>b) a clear definition of what contracted residential services are and when children and</i>

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	<p><i>youth should be placed in contracted residential services;</i> <i>c) a review of existing residential services, current and future needs for the services, and identification of system gaps (e.g., transitions out of care);</i> <i>d) a determination of an appropriate level of vacancy tolerance in the system;</i> <i>e) an alignment with the rights of children and youth in care (section 70 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act);</i> <i>f) the provision of culturally appropriate residential services for Indigenous children and youth, recognizing the differences between cultures and nations;</i> <i>g) identification of expected outcomes and metrics to measure the ministry's implementation of its strategy.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation One: Ministry Progress</p>	
<p>Actions taken to November 30, 2022</p>	<p>Building on research, data analysis and lessons learned from the modelling of the system in 2019/20 as well as significant engagement with Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners (see rec #2), the Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS) Service Model was developed.</p> <p><u>Specialized Homes and Supports Services:</u></p> <p>Specialized Homes and Support Services includes a network of four service types: Emergency care, Respite, Low-Barrier Short Term Stabilization, and Long-Term Specialized care. Design and development work has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SHSS Service Model with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ clear definitions of the service types ○ individualized, child-centred approach to care planning ○ defined outcomes, indicators and performance standards ○ a technology enabled Service Plan ○ standardized roles, responsibilities, qualifications, and staffing models • Business process mapping • Operational policy development • Standardized contracts, which reflect the SHSS Service Model (e.g., outcomes indicators) • A consistent process to access supplemental funds to allow for individualized supports that meet the needs of children and youth. (The ministry will be able to track which supplementary services are being provided to individual children and, with the IM/IT enhancements, monitor if these services are benefiting the child or youth). • A provincial procurement process developed to pre-qualify service providers with demonstrated ability to provide quality care to add 'ready capacity' across the province. • An IM/IT system which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Service Portal, with functionality in the Integrated Case Management System (ICM) that supports real-time vacancy tracking (building on lessons learned via the placement mapper) and reporting on individual children's care via the SHSS Service Plan. (The foundation of the contract accountability and oversight).

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Procurement and Contract Management system (PCMS) to ensure consistency across core policy for procurement and contract management, integrated with the ICM. ○ All IM/IT relevant reviews including Threat and Risk Assessments, Privacy Impact Assessments and Financial Risk and Controls reviews. <p><u>Broader Network of Care:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 2019 the ministry increased the rate for Extended Family Program caregivers by 75%, so that they receive the same maintenance rate as foster caregivers and other out-of-care care providers. This action enabled greater opportunities for placements of children with extended family, reducing the need for in care placements and supporting better outcomes for children and youth. ● The Enhanced out of Care Support program will see implementation policy in place in early 2023. This program provides enhanced supplementary support to out-of-care caregivers to meet the needs of children in their care who have support needs. The program is intended to keep children with support needs connected to extended family, community and cultures and avoid placing children with support needs in staffed long-term specialized care. ● For the Specialized Homes and Support Services Service Model to operate as designed and be responsive to the needs of children, the ministry recognized a need to increase the capacity of family care home providers. In 2022 the ministry began a recruitment and retention initiative including a provincial recruitment campaign and redeploying ministry staff to expedite the screening and onboarding of new caregivers. <p>Supporting documents:</p> <p>1.0 Overview of SHSS Model Development Process 2.0 Draft SHSS Service Model Overview 3.0 SHSS Timeline 4.0 Outcomes Architecture and Performance Roadmap 5.0 Enhanced Out of Care Policy</p>
<p>Planned Actions (Dec 2022 onward)</p>	<p>In 2023, working with existing service providers in the Early Implementation Areas (North Fraser Service Delivery Area and Okanagan Service Delivery Area), the ministry will begin to gradually transition to the new service types via the standardized contracts. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ use of the Procurement and Contract Management system, ○ use of the technology enabled Service Plan, ○ Integrated Case Management system changes, ○ training ministry staff and service providers, and ○ beginning to implement the Enhanced Out of Care policy. <p>In 2023, the ministry will begin a procurement process to prequalify service providers via a provincial procurement process – allowing the ministry to use these services on an as-and-when needed basis to fill gaps in the network of care (e.g. respond to a new child or youth in care with significant long term specialized care needs in a community with no capacity in SHSS)</p>

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	<p>Starting in March 2023, the ministry will gradually transition existing providers across the province to new contracts and the SHSS service model. The intention of this gradual implementation is to allow the ministry to refine policy, accountability tools and oversight processes to reflect learnings.</p>
<p>Report: Recommendation Two</p>	
	<p><i>We recommend that the ministry, in partnership with Indigenous Child and Family Services agencies and Indigenous communities, clarify roles and responsibilities related to policy development, information sharing, communication and monitoring for the delivery of contracted residential services.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation Two: Ministry Progress</p>	
<p>Actions taken to November 30, 2022</p>	<p>Since the release of the OAG report, and as part of a shared journey with Indigenous partners towards reconciliation and respecting the inherent rights of Indigenous communities to provide their own child and family services, and to keep Indigenous children safely connected to their cultures and their communities, historic changes have been made in our continued commitment to the transformation of Indigenous child and family services. Changes have been made in legislation (federal and provincial), policy, practice and our approach to engagement. See below for details:</p> <p>Legislation changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2019 – amendments to the <i>Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)</i>. Increased opportunities for the involvement of Indigenous communities in child welfare decisions • November 2019 – the Province passed the <i>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i> and immediately prioritized attention, through the Declaration Act action plan, to ‘end the epidemic of Indigenous children in government care.’ • January 2020 – <i>An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families</i> (federal Act), affirmed the inherent right of Indigenous Peoples to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services. • November 2022 – historic amendments to the <i>Child, Family and Community Service Act</i> and the <i>Adoption Act</i> to remove barriers for Indigenous Peoples exercising jurisdiction over child and family services, becoming the first province in Canada to expressly recognize this inherent right within provincial legislation. (Developed following the engagement approach described below) <p>Supporting Information: News Release:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic changes to B.C. child-welfare laws lay path to upholding Indigenous jurisdiction BC Gov News • B.C. passes historic legislation to uphold Indigenous jurisdiction over child welfare <p>Changing Engagement Approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As shared on the ministry transformation web page, the letter of commitment from Minister Dean to the First Nations Leadership Council sent in the summer

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	<p>of 2021 outlined the ministry’s commitment to actively engage and co-develop policy, practice and legislation changes with the First Nations Leadership Council and Indigenous governments throughout the development process. The ministry has shifted to this approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In February 2022, Minister Dean sent a letter to Indigenous Peoples, leadership partners and service providers including the First Nations Leadership Council, Métis Nation British Columbia and Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies outlining the ministry approach to ensure accessible, predictable and transparent engagement opportunities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A regular Indigenous Child and Family Services newsletter describing priority initiatives and opportunities for engagement. ○ A single website link with updated information and progress www.gov.bc.ca/mcfdtransformation ○ Correspondence directly to Indigenous Peoples to highlight significant initiatives. ○ Web-based interactive opportunities to share priorities, opinions, and ideas when it is convenient, including surveys, consultation drafts, and discussion papers posted on www.engage.gov.bc.ca ○ Engagement sessions with Indigenous Peoples for large-scale systemic changes. ○ Special advisory circles for key systemic initiatives, including legal and technical advisory committees. <p>Specialized Homes and Support Services (Engagement in the development of deliverables as described in Recommendations #1, #3 and #4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the approach described above, the ministry has (and continues to work) with Indigenous partners to ensure that the Specialized Homes and Support Services design and implementation supports their vision for Indigenous child and family services. Engagement has included: First Nations Leadership Council, Indigenous Child and Family Services Secretariat and Indigenous service providers as well as an Indigenous Child and Family Services working group of self-appointed members. Over the summer of 2022, the ministry hired Alderhill Planning Inc., to engage Indigenous rights holders across the province on the proposed design of Specialized Homes and Support Services. • The ministry has also engaged with other partners, service providers, contract holders, families, interest groups and community members and staff to confirm the design of the Specialized Homes and Support Services, placements, services and supports that meet individual children and youth’s needs.
<p>Planned Actions (Dec 2022 onward)</p>	<p>Building on the early lessons learned, the ministry will continue engagement activities with our Indigenous partners to ensure the implementation of Specialized Homes and Support Services across the province supports their vision for Indigenous child and family services.</p>

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Report: Recommendation Three	
	<p><i>We recommend that the ministry, in partnership with Indigenous Child and Family Services agencies and Indigenous communities, establish a quality assurance framework for contracted residential services that includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) specific standards based on meeting the rights of children and youth in care and improving outcomes;</i> <i>b) ongoing monitoring of standards for contracted residential service providers;</i> <i>c) ongoing monitoring of ministry staff providing oversight of contracted residential services;</i> <i>d) an audit program that examines service delivery, operations and finance; e) regular assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of third-party oversight activities (i.e., licensing and accreditation);</i> <i>f) formal processes for follow-up on protocol investigation action plans;</i> <i>g) regularly gathering information on the experience and opinions of children and youth who spend time in contracted residential resources.</i>
Recommendation Three: Ministry Progress	
<p>Actions taken to November 30, 2022</p>	<p>Ministry Quality Assurance Approach: To provide better quality assurance across child and family services, the ministry, in collaboration with Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies, Métis serving agencies, Indigenous Peoples and ministry partners, is developing an outcomes-based service evaluation model. This model incorporates the voices and lived experiences of those involved in child and family services. The development and implementation of this model continues to advance in a collaborative way with ministry partners.</p> <p>Supporting Information: Quality Assurance Service Framework</p> <p>Comprehensive Risk Assessments and Audits: The ministry has continued to enhance the ministry oversight model to ensure financial prudence, business acumen and transparency by conducting annual comprehensive risk assessments of all contracted agencies. The ministry now completes approx. 9-12 audits per year (up from approx. 4 per year in 2017), and in 2020 established a team dedicated to this work. The audits support learning for both the ministry and service providers. The audit team’s robust risk annual assessment process informs audit planning activities.</p> <p>Specialized Homes and Support Services: In line with the ministry Quality Assurance Framework, and to ensure strong oversight of care at the individual, service, and provincial level, the SHSS Service Model, focusing on meaningful outcomes related to children and youth, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individualized, child-centred approach to care planning that ensures the child/youth’s voice and those who care most about them, including service providers, are central to their care.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined outcomes and indicators as well as performance standards and measures that allow for the tracking of performance at the child/youth, agency, and service level. • A technology enabled Service Plan, designed to guide service delivery and ensure the child/youth has one SHSS Service plan. • Standardized roles, responsibilities, and qualifications for staff across all service types, including role description and qualifications as well as a standardized staffing model with additional supports specific to child/youth needs. • Standardized contracts, which reflect the SHSS Service Model (e.g., outcomes indicators etc.). • A consistent process to access supplemental funds to allow for individualized supports that meet the needs of children and youth. (The ministry can track which supplementary services are being provided to individual children and, with the IM/IT enhancements, monitor if these services are benefiting the child or youth.) • An IM/IT system, which supports the SHSS Service Plan and contracts, will be used to monitor the performance of service providers. <p>Supporting documents: 2.0 Draft SHSS Service Model Overview 3.0 SHSS Timeline 4.0 Outcomes Architecture and Performance Roadmap</p>
<p>Planned Actions (Dec 2022 onward)</p>	<p><u>Specialized Homes and Support Services:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early implementation of the SHSS Service Model as described above starts in 2023, with service providers in the North Fraser Service Delivery Area and Okanagan Service Delivery Area gradually transitioning services to the SHSS Service Model. • Information collected via the technology enabled SHSS Service Plan will gradually allow for improved monitoring and oversight at the individual, service and provincial level (See the Outcomes Architecture and Performance Roadmap for frequency and timing). <p><u>Ministry Quality Assurance Approach:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the Ministry Quality Assurance Approach, a provincial practice evaluation (quantitative and qualitative outcomes-based audit) of resource services (including SHSS) is planned to start in 2023 and to be completed in 2024.

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Report: Recommendation Four	
	<p><i>We recommend that the ministry improve its management and oversight of contracts for contracted residential services by ensuring that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) roles and responsibilities for procurement and contract management are appropriately assigned;</i> <i>b) staff responsible for procurement and contract management receive appropriate training and support to be effective in their roles;</i> <i>c) contracts include clear and measurable deliverables that focus on the needs and rights of children and youth residing in contracted residential services;</i> <i>d) regular and effective monitoring of contract deliverables and contractor performance takes place.</i>
Recommendation Four: Ministry Progress	
Actions taken to November 30, 2022	<p><u>Ministry Procurement and Contract Management Framework</u></p> <p>Given the identification in 2020/21 of a number of procurement and contract management challenges, which are similar across ministry services, the ministry proceeded with work to fully transform the ministry procurement and contract management process. This work includes building a new procurement model and IM/IT system, standardized processes, effective contract monitoring and oversight, improved contract data, clear roles and effective training.</p> <p><u>Specialized Homes and Support Services</u></p> <p>Many of the new procurement and contract management functions are being first implemented within Specialized Homes and Support Services. To support this implementation, the ministry has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held multiple vendor community engagement sessions over the last three years. • Developed standardized contract templates based on the defined outcomes, indicators and performance standards (See rec #1 & #3). • Designed a new IM/IT system to allow for direct monitoring of individual child outcomes. <p>Supporting documents: 2.0 Draft SHSS Service Model Overview 4.0 Outcomes Architecture and Performance Roadmap</p>
Planned Actions (Dec 2022 onward)	<p>In 2023, working with existing service providers in the Early Implementation Areas, the ministry will begin to gradually transition to the new service types via standardized contracts. This includes implementation of the Procurement and Contract Management System, clarified contract management and oversight roles for social workers and contract and procurement specialists, and training for ministry staff in the Early Implementation Areas</p> <p>In 2023, the ministry will begin a procurement process to prequalify service providers via a provincial procurement process – allowing the ministry to use services on an as-and-when needed basis to fill gaps in the network of care (e.g. respond to a new Children and Youth in care with significant long term specialized care needs in a community with no capacity in SHSS)</p>