

Hamilton Community Service Plan

For

Developmental Services (Executive Summary)

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Submitted To:

The Hamilton Niagara Regional Office of
*The Ministry of Community and Social Services &
The Ministry of Children and Youth Services*

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Hamilton Community Service Plan

DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Acknowledgment

The development of a community service plan was intended to be an inclusive process involving numerous stakeholders and members of the community at large. This is indeed how the process unfolded and the people who helped steer it to a conclusion are almost too numerous to name. Contact Hamilton, therefore wishes to express its deep appreciation to everyone who participated in this community-wide process.

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Special thanks goes to the individuals and family members who took the time to share their perspectives and experience with the service system. There can be no doubt that the system will be far stronger in the future as a result of their knowledgeable contribution and astute observations.

Members of the Reference Group not only demonstrated an incredible degree of commitment to the process, but also showed great vision. This group developed the recommendations that are being forwarded to the Regional Office. These recommendations outline the future vision, strategic directions, goals and priorities for the developmental services system.

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Hamilton Community Service Plan
DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1
Background and First Steps 1
Community Profile 2
The Developmental Service System 4
Perceptions of the Developmental Service System 6
Vision for the Developmental Service System 8
Strategic Directions 9
Conclusions..... 12

Executive Summary

This Community Service Plan is the result of a community-wide collaboration that has created a shared vision for developmental services in Hamilton. The focus of this plan is on the service system, funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), that provides supports to children and adults with developmental disabilities.

A wide-ranging planning process collected information on the community, the service system, and the experiences of people using the system, as well as those providing the services. It resulted in a series of strategic directions, goals and priorities that will help set the course for the future development of these services.

Background and First Steps

The Community Service Plan was created in response to a request from the Hamilton Niagara Regional Office of the MCSS and the MCYS. The Regional Office and community organizations are committed to a systems approach to finding the best match between resources and needs. With this in mind, a process was initiated for the development of community service plans for the children's and developmental services sectors in each of the four communities that comprise the Hamilton Niagara Region. The responsibility for leading this process was placed in the hands of the four Contact agencies – Contact Hamilton, Contact Brant, Contact Niagara and Contact Haldimand-Norfolk – that serve as a single point of access to developmental and children's mental health services in each community.

The plan is designed to provide advice on future resource allocation decisions with regard to developmental services, delivered by 15 community agencies in Hamilton and directly funded by the two ministries. It is also anticipated that the plan will assist community agencies, boards of directors and future community planning processes.

The process for creating this community service plan was devised as a result of a comprehensive consultation involving input and participation from providers and users of services, as well as other key stakeholders. It was agreed that the process should involve the following five steps:

- Collecting information on patterns to provide an overview of the general population; the current service system; usage rates; and the broader context.
- Collecting information on experience to capture the perceptions and opinions of people requesting service; people receiving service; community groups and organizations; providers of ministry-funded children's and developmental services; and providers of related services.
- Collating and analyzing information in order to shed light upon perceived strengths or opportunities within the service system; perceived gaps or duplications; issues and/or barriers related to the availability or delivery of services; views regarding priorities for service; and potential trends in a variety of areas relevant to planning. A Technical Advisory Group comprised of a small

Hamilton Community Service Plan DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

number of external experts in information collection and analysis would be established to assist in accomplishing this step.

- Developing a shared vision and set of priorities for the children's and developmental services system for the next three years. This would be accomplished through a community consultation process guided by a reference group comprised of key stakeholders.
- Completing a community service plan containing the findings of all previous steps, as well as the agreed-upon vision, priorities and goals.

The process of gathering information and conducting community consultations began in the summer of 2003. A Technical Advisory Group was formed and consultants were hired to assist in gathering the quantitative and qualitative information to address the following questions:

1. **What is the nature and magnitude of the demand for ministry-funded developmental services and supports within a jurisdiction?**
2. **What resources are available to respond to that demand and how are they currently being used?**
3. **What are the identified strengths, weaknesses and pressures of the current service system?**
4. **What should be the priorities for enhancing the current service system over the next three years?**
5. **Where are the opportunities to address population well-being and achieve positive change within the current system?**
6. **What are the characteristics of the local community that need to be taken into account when planning?**
7. **What areas require further exploration?**

The answers to these questions are provided in the following sections: a profile of the Hamilton community; a description of the service system; a summary of perceptions about the service system; and a statement of the vision, strategic directions, goals and priorities that were established through the Reference Group and community consultation process.

Community Profile

The first step in creating this Community Service Plan involved collecting information on the community and the general population, in order to describe the social, political and economic context in which planning will take place.

The City of Hamilton is a community in transition that is just coming to terms with one of the biggest upheavals in its history. On January 1, 2001, local government structures and services were transformed

Hamilton Community Service Plan DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

when the towns of Ancaster, Dundas, and Flamborough, the township of Glanbrook and the cities of Hamilton and Stoney Creek were amalgamated to become the new City of Hamilton. What were once seen as six distinct and different communities are now part of one large sprawling municipality that occupies an area of 1,117 square kilometres at the south-western end of Lake Ontario, approximately 70 kilometres west of Toronto.

Hamilton is a diverse community that is experiencing major changes. It has a new political structure that brings urban, suburban and rural areas under one city government. Its economic base is changing from a reliance on heavy industry to a more diversified mix in which the health sector is assuming increasing importance.

With a population of approximately 490,000, Hamilton is Ontario's fourth largest city and Canada's ninth largest city. Statistics Canada data shows that the Hamilton population increased by 4.8 percent between the 1996 census and the 2001 census. This growth rate was slower than that of the province as a whole.

However, some suburban areas – notably Ancaster and Waterdown – underwent rapid growth during this period. These are factors that may well affect the future demand for services, while raising questions about where and how services can best be delivered to meet the needs of a changing population.

The population of children under the age of 18 is 114,620, with an anticipated decrease in the children's population in coming years. Between 1996-2001, the City experienced a 4.8 percent decline in the number of children under 5. A decrease of close to 5 percent in the number of children under 15 years of age is expected between 2001-2006.

Hamilton is also an aging community. It already has a slightly higher proportion of seniors than Ontario as a whole and the city's greatest future population growth is projected to be among 45-64 year olds and people over 75 years.

Almost one quarter of Hamilton's population are immigrants. There has been a significant increase in immigration to Hamilton over the last decade, making the population that will be accessing children's and developmental services more ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse. Six percent of Hamilton's total population is now comprised of people who immigrated between 1991-2001. Consideration also has to be given to the fact that Hamilton is designated as a community for French language services.

The level of educational attainment of Hamilton residents is generally lower than in Ontario as a whole. This is an important consideration for planning, since educational attainment has been identified by Health Canada as a key determinant of health.

Family incomes of Hamilton residents tend to be lower than elsewhere in the province and there are proportionately more families living in straightened circumstances. There is a particularly high incidence of low income among single parent families, notably female-led families with children under 12 years old. The economic circumstances of these families is clearly a key element to be considered in

Hamilton Community Service Plan DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

planning services, as studies have shown people with low incomes have increased risk of illness and mortality, as well as increased utilization of health services. Low average income is an indicator of a socio-economically disadvantaged population and is associated with lower quality of life. Income can also impact on people's ability to access the service system.

There are significant differences among neighbourhoods and communities within the city of Hamilton, in terms of population growth, immigration, family income, and early learning indicators.

All these characteristics of the community -- its geography, economy, demographics and culture as well as the social circumstances of families and individuals -- must be considered in planning for children's services.

The Developmental Service System

This planning process collected and analysed data available from existing sources and agency surveys, in order to provide a description of the Ministry-funded programs and how the programs are classified and funded. It identified the services provided, who receives them, what their needs are and what types of services are required. It also indicated the extent to which people have to wait to receive service and service gaps.

The focus of this community service plan is on the voluntary system of Ministry-funded services that provides support to children, youth and adults, with developmental concerns and disabilities, as well as services for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders. Typically these programs are legislated under the Developmental Services Act or the Child and Family Services Act.

The Hamilton developmental services system receives approximately \$31.5 million in annual funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. This represents 31 percent of the Ministry funding available for services of this type in the Hamilton /Niagara Region.

Supports for adults account for \$24,071,311 in annualized funding, representing 76.5 percent of the system's total allocation. \$6,934,939 (22 percent) is allocated to supports for children. The remaining system resources \$474,484 (1.5 percent) are allocated to the access mechanism.

The system is comprised of fifteen transfer payment agencies that receive Ministry funding to support children and/or adults. Resources are concentrated amongst a few agencies with the Rygiel Supports for Community Living, Chedoke Child and Family Centre and Community Living Hamilton receiving 71 percent of the funding. The remaining 29 percent is allocated amongst the remaining twelve agencies.

The Ministry allocates its funding for developmental services in Hamilton through 16 different categories of programs, each of which is identified with a unique project code. The majority of funding is allocated between three project codes, including Adult Group Living Supports (48 percent), Adult Community Access Supports (14 percent) and Autism Behaviour Intervention (11 percent). The remaining 27 percent of resources is allocated amongst 13 different project codes.

Hamilton Community Service Plan DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Different agencies may receive funding for the same project code. Nine agencies provide group living supports, seven agencies provide individual living supports and five agencies offer out of home respite services.

A service framework was developed to examine how services are differentiated from one another and organized within the community. It describes services in the following four categories.

- Highly Specialized services include services and supports that address the most complex needs of people with developmental disabilities. These include medical support and consultation, behavioural/emotional support and consultation, psychiatric support and consultation, crisis response/treatment, and specialized assessment and clinical services.
- Residential services are provided in group home settings, associate family homes or in the individuals own home.
- Core Services refers to a range of services provided in the community such as respite, case management, supports for community living, social and recreational programs, day support or employment related activities, and assessment and clinical services
- Access Services include the functions of coordinated information, intake, referral, resource planning, Resolution Mechanism and the Residential Placement Advisory Committee (RPAC).

Using this framework, highly specialized services receive 14.4 percent of the funding, residential services receive 53.5 percent, core services receive 30.6 percent and access services receive 1.5 percent. The continuum of services is generally available within the Hamilton community. One gap however is in the area of specialized residential services.

Resources to support individuals through various types of accommodation supports account for 53.5 percent of the system's resources. This includes group living (47.9 percent), associate living supports (1.4 percent) and individual living supports (4.2 percent).

Almost half of the system's resources (those allocated to group living) go to supporting 5 percent of the total individuals served within the developmental services system.

It was projected that the system collectively has the capacity to support 5,025 individuals (children and adults) in 2003/04. The adult services were projected to support 1,748 individuals with the children's developmental services supporting 2,193 individuals and the access mechanism supporting 1,084 individuals.

The system has the capacity to support 459 individuals in various accommodation supports. The breakdown by type includes group living (245 individuals), supported independent living (182 individuals) and associate living (32 individuals).

620 adults are supported through community access supports (day supports, recreation, life skills). Specialized community supports for children serve 1350 children.

One way to understand the pressures in the system is through a review of access and waitlist statistics. Significant wait lists exist for most services.

Hamilton Community Service Plan DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

As of October 31, 2003 Contact Hamilton, had 905 open developmental services files. This reflects the number of individuals who have had an intake and are waiting and/or registered for a developmental service. An analysis by age group reveals that the largest group was in the 6 to 17 -age range (32 percent), followed by the 18 to 21-age range (17 percent) and the 22 to 29 -age range (15 percent).

Four hundred twenty four (424) individuals are waiting for various developmental services.

- Day supports (193) and respite (109) account for the largest number of individuals waiting.
- Accommodation supports account for 44 individuals waiting. A breakdown includes group living (14), supported independent living (7), associate family (10), residential support (10) and residential treatment (3).
- 136 individuals are identified as requiring the service urgently. This is significant in light of the limited capacity of the current system, the absent-to-low rate of “vacancies” and the absence of ‘crisis” capacity within the system

Day supports represent the highest need (177 individuals) for adults. This need is followed by respite support, with 36 individuals waiting. Within children’s developmental services, respite (73 children) and assessment (22 children) reflect the highest numbers waiting.

Contact Hamilton’s registration list provides insight into future demand for services. Residential supports- unspecified (208 individuals), day supports (167 individuals), group living (36 individuals) and supported independent living (40 individuals) account for the greatest number of future registrations for service.

Further insight into the demand on the service system can be gleaned from the Resolution process which responds to urgent and complex situations that cannot be resolved through normal processes. Statistics from this process suggest that there are growing system gaps in residential treatment and residential placement for children, youth and adults with complex needs. These gaps are resulting in significant financial pressures for the developmental services system.

Perceptions of the Developmental Service System

The next step involved finding out about people’s experience with the service system. This entailed gathering information about people’s perceptions, observations and opinions. Several methods were used to capture the experience of users, providers and other stakeholders in the system. Telephone surveys as well as printed questionnaires were supplemented by focus groups and telephone interviews in order to ensure not only that a broad and representative range of views were elicited, but also that the responses were interpreted correctly in an unbiased manner.

The experiences and perceptions of families, service providers and key informants pointed to the following conclusions with regard to strengths, weaknesses and pressures of the current service system:

Hamilton Community Service Plan DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

The major strengths are: the range and quality of existing services; family satisfaction with the access process; dedication and commitment of service provider personnel; efficient use of resources, and the levels of collaboration between agencies.

Weaknesses are: the strained system capacity due to funding levels; gaps in services and supports; service restrictions associated with age criteria or service levels caps; problems with the timeliness of services due to long wait lists; coordination and continuity of services; staffing issues (qualifications, recruitment and retention); a crisis orientation of the system and lack of crisis capacity; and an inability to respond to individualize needs.

Specific gaps in service include accommodation, respite, day supports and residential supports for children with complex or special need

Obstacles and barriers to accessing services include: financial costs and out-of-pocket expenses; transportation; and hours that services are offered.

The increase in aging caregivers and aging individuals with developmental disabilities was identified as a growing pressure on the system.

It was suggested that the top priorities for enhancements over the next three years should be: accommodation; respite services, and day supports. Other areas identified included: service coordination/case management; psychiatric services; life skills, and behavioural services.

The opportunities identified for achieving positive change within the Hamilton developmental services system include: new services and ways of delivering services; expanding partnerships, linkages and integration of services; amalgamation and specialization as means of reducing duplication; new directions in government policy; new supports for individuals with high/complex needs; and the development of uniformity and continuity of services across agencies and age groups.

Six major themes appeared consistently in the open-ended comments from stakeholders in the developmental services sectors. These themes also emerged in the community service planning process for the children's system, as well as the planning process in the other three jurisdictions studied - Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk, Hamilton and Niagara.

Resource Pressures: There was a consistent feeling among stakeholders that both systems were under-funded and were experiencing considerable pressure on resources.

Service gaps: Stakeholders also believed there were major gaps in services in both the children's and developmental services systems.

Quality of service: Families, individuals, service providers and other agencies all agreed that the quality of the children's and developmental services that were provided was very high and had a positive impact on clients.

Hamilton Community Service Plan DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Collaboration: Collaboration between agencies was identified as major system strength by many stakeholders, but also surfaced as a suggested weakness, usually in the context of a lack of collaboration interfering with service coordination and continuity. The collaboration theme also appeared frequently as a suggested opportunity, with the most significant opportunity being increased partnerships and linkages between agencies, ministries, and service sectors. This was further reinforced in many of the suggestions for system improvement offered by stakeholders

Staffing: The dedication and responsiveness of staff in both the children's and developmental services systems was frequently mentioned by stakeholders as a major system strength. On the other hand, staffing was also listed as an area of weakness because resource limitations were seen as restricting the ability to hire staff on a full time basis and also placing restrictions on training. Low salary levels and demanding working conditions also presented difficulties in recruitment and retention of qualified staff – and this fact was often cited as a system threat.

Increased Complexity of Individuals: Children's and developmental services stakeholders in Hamilton identified concerns about the increasing complexity of children and adults. This trend is challenging both systems from the perspective of staff expertise, increased resources to support these needs and gaps in appropriate services in the community. Children with complex special needs, adults with dual diagnosis/behavioural needs and aging adults were groups frequently identified by the stakeholders.

Vision for the Developmental Service System

The next step in the community planning process was to create a vision, strategic directions and priorities for the next three years. This process was guided by a Reference Group comprised of 32 people representing senior managers and board of members of MCSS/MCYS agencies, school boards and mental health agencies. The Reference Group participated in four workshops, reviewed the information from the community study and developed a vision, strategic directions and goals.

After reviewing the information gathered in the community planning process and considering the issues in a series of workshops, the Reference Group developed a draft vision and strategic directions. Feedback was provided through community consultation sessions and a revised vision, strategic directions, goals and priorities were formulated on the basis of this input.

First principles were established for the developmental service system as follows:

- Focusing on individuals re-examine the Developmental Services system, strengthen those elements that work well and identify and implement innovative changes that will respond to the current and emerging needs.
- An adaptable person-centred range of Developmental Services in response to current and emerging needs

Hamilton Community Service Plan DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

The Reference Group adopted the following vision statement for the developmental services system:

Throughout their lifetime children and adults with developmental disabilities will have greater opportunity to exercise their citizenship with the supports and resources of their community.

A set of four strategic directions was established and a series of goals developed in conjunction with each of these directions. The directions and goals are summarized in the following table which also notes the priority of each goal in terms of the year in which it should be implemented. The first of the four strategic directions has five distinct sub categories.

Strategic Directions

1. All children and adults experience full citizenship
 - Framework for citizenship
 - Policies that support citizenship
 - Supported lifelong planning
 - Supports for individuals to experience citizenship
2. Best practices
3. A redefined mutually supportive relationship between MCSS/MCYS and developmental service agencies
4. Children with complex needs have access to a range of supports including accommodation in the Hamilton community
5. The developmental services sector is well positioned to attract and retain skilled, dedicated staff

Hamilton Community Service Plan
DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Strategic Directions and Goals (Summary)	
STRATEGIC DIRECTION: ALL CHILDREN AND ADULTS EXPERIENCE FULL CITIZENSHIP	
Framework for citizenship	
Goal: Full Citizenship	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement a process that will result in full citizenship for children and adults with developmental disabilities. 	Year 1
Policies that support citizenship	
Goal: MCSS and MCYS Polices & Practices	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In partnership with MCSS and MCYS, Hamilton's Developmental Services develops policies and processes whereby the community allocates new developmental services funding based on the needs of citizens with developmental disabilities living in Hamilton. Funding needs to be based on life planning versus program funding and crisis responses. 	Year 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In order for the community to achieve its Community Service Plan goal, MCSS and MCYS develops policies and practices that are complimentary with local planning priorities. 	Year 1
Goal: Partner with Provincial Ministries	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage and partner with provincial Ministries (Citizenship, MCSS, Education, Health and Long Term Care, Community Safety and Correctional Services) on a Citizenship Agenda, as equal partners with special and valid expertise i.e. Community Capacity Building. 	Year 1
Goal: Autism Spectrum Disorder	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request that MCSS clarify policies re supporting adults with autism spectrum disorder who do not meet the developmental disabilities definition. 	
Goal: Review ODSP	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage MCSS and MCYS to review the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) to ensure funding levels that promote individual well being, safety, growth and development. 	Year 1
Goal: Protection of Vulnerable Adults	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage the Ontario Government to review the effectiveness of current services, supports and legislation that protect vulnerable adults with developmental disabilities. 	Year 1
Supported lifelong planning	
Goal: Lifelong Planning & Case Management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research, review and pilot a framework/technology that supports lifelong planning and case management for people with developmental disabilities. 	Year 1
Goal: Community-Based Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to enhance and further develop community-based services and resources to support lifelong, seamless planning. 	Year 1
Goal: Individualized Planning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individualized planning will use the family/consumer's language and document the person's/family's description of needs. 	Year 1

Hamilton Community Service Plan DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Supports for individuals to experience citizenship	
Goal: Funding Based on Priorities and/or Needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request that MCSS and MCYS increase supports in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day supports • Respite (in-home & out-of-home) • Accommodation support for children & adults; • Specialized Resources to support individuals with dual diagnosis, behavioural challenges, autism spectrum disorder, complex needs. 	Year 1
Goal: Cross-Sectoral Partnerships	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine, identify and formalize cross-sectoral partnerships at a service level that are advantageous for each child and adult with developmental disabilities. 	Year 1
STRATEGIC DIRECTION: BEST PRACTICES	
Goal: Research & Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in applied research, community capacity research and program evaluation with community partners. 	Year 2
Goal: Research Initiatives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximize the use of educational and clinical partners in implementing research initiatives. 	Year 2
Goal: Best Practices	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaboratively examine, incorporate and improve Best Practices in the delivery of services. 	Year 3
STRATEGIC DIRECTION: A REDEFINED MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MCSS/MCYS AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICE AGENCIES	
Goal: Policy Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage all levels of government to harmonize policies and procedures in Federal, Provincial and Municipal initiatives (e.g. "In Unison). 	Year 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enter into discussion with the MCSS/MCYS Hamilton-Niagara Regional Office for the purpose of determining and agreeing to flexible use of funds on an interim basis until the provincial process for determining funding targets is changed. 	Year 1
Goal: Community Planning Terminology	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hamilton's Developmental Services, MCSS and MCYS develop a common terminology for services/supports that supports/informs community planning. 	Year 1
Goal: Performance Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hamilton's Developmental Services, MCSS and MCYS establish mutually agreed upon performance outcomes. 	Year 3
STRATEGIC DIRECTION: CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS HAVE ACCESS TO A RANGE OF SUPPORTS INCLUDING ACCOMMODATION IN THE HAMILTON COMMUNITY	
Goal: Children's Accommodation & Supports	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request that MCYS develop policy and provide resources related to a range of supports including accommodation for children with complex needs. 	Year 1

Hamilton Community Service Plan
DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: THE DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES SECTOR IS WELL POSITIONED TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN SKILLED, DEDICATED STAFF	
Goal: Advocacy re Revitalization Funding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate for continued MCSS and MCYS commitment to revitalization funding that reflects comparable compensation to the health and education sectors. 	Year 1
Goal: Partnerships re Educational Opportunities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a strategy, in partnership with Mohawk College, Redeemer College and McMaster University, to provide educational opportunities and training related to supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. 	Year 2
Goal: Staff Recruitment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a local strategy to encourage individuals to pursue a career in developmental services. 	Year 3

Conclusions

The completion of this community service plan report represents the fifth and final step in an extensive and inclusive process that involved fact finding, community consultations, analysis of information from multiple sources and the far-sighted deliberations of Reference Group members who brought all this together by creating a vision, strategic directions and goals. This report will be submitted to the Regional Office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth services for review and consideration.

It was always envisaged that this plan would be a starting point. The information collected and the conclusions reached will not only serve to guide the service system over the next three years, but also provide a baseline for future planning endeavours. The process as a whole can also serve as a learning experience, as the community looks for ways of improving upon the information gathering, consultation and consensual decision-making approach that went into developing this plan.

The vision and strategic directions that were created through this planning process are comprehensive and inclusive. They involve extending the reach of the service system to respond to a wide range of community needs. They are also designed to build the capacity of the service system with better data, improved practices, enhanced opportunities for collaboration, and stronger links with the broader community and other service sectors.

The task that lies ahead for all involved is to continue working together to make this vision a reality. The completion of this plan is not the end, but only a beginning.