

Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Advocate for Service Quality Review and Recommendations

Report Prepared by:
Paula Grant, Interim Advocate for Service Quality

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

PURPOSE of REVIEW 1

BACKGROUND..... 1

SCOPE..... 2

METHODOLOGY: 2

GENERAL FINDINGS:..... 3

ACCESS: 4

COMMUNICATION: 5

ACCOUNTABILITY: 6

PRACTICE, TRAINING and REVIEWS: 7

INTEGRATION:..... 8

SUMMARY 9

RECOMMENDATIONS 9

 Recommendation # 1:..... 9

 Recommendation # 2:..... 9

 Recommendation # 3:..... 10

 Recommendation # 4:..... 10

 Recommendation # 5:..... 10

 Recommendation # 6:..... 11

 Recommendation # 7:..... 11

APPENDICES 12

APPENDIX 1: Vision, Mission, Strategic Priorities 13

APPENDIX 2: Email to Stakeholders 14

APPENDIX 3: TERMS of REFERENCE (June 2015) 16

APPENDIX 4: Presentations 17

APPENDIX 5: Intake and Uptake Figures 18

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Advocate for Service Quality position was established in 1992 to support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families during the closure of the institutions. Since that time, the role has changed and evolved to reflect the changing priorities of individuals, families and the community living sector.

With the pending retirement of the incumbent Advocate for Service Quality in January 2015, an initial set of interviews was conducted in late 2014 to choose a successor. However, it became clear that this change in leadership after 18 years provided an opportunity to review the role and responsibilities of the position and identify what if any modifications might be made. The recruitment process was deferred and an Interim Advocate appointed to both fill the position and carry out the review.

The informal engagement process included community sessions around the province, meetings with community living sector leaders and one-on-one interviews. The focus was on individuals and families and expanded to include a number of service providers and relevant government staff. This was critical as the position must work with a range of stakeholders in its efforts to support families, influence change and encourage high practice standards.

Responses from the 'consultation' were categorized into *General Findings* and five predominant themes: *Access, Communication; Accountability; Practice and Reviews; and Integration*. The seven Recommendations flow from these themes.

The Office of the Advocate for Service Quality was able to provide detailed information on extent, type of contacts and overall involvement of its office. Comparative statistical information from Community Living BC, the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Representative for Children and Youth was more limited but it was possible to draw inferences if not full analysis from the mixture of data available.

Overall response to the engagement process reflected a high level of interest in the position. Sampling was representative rather than random or prescribed and the consistency of responses and priorities provided confirming validation across populations and geographical areas.

The reviewer wants to fully acknowledge the support, encouragement and assistance provided by family members and community volunteers in organizing local meetings and thank them and all other respondents for the calibre and thoughtfulness of their input into this important discussion.

PURPOSE of REVIEW

A review of the *Advocate for Service Quality* position was initiated to identify the key value and core activities of the role and provide recommendations for future direction.

BACKGROUND

The Office of the Advocate for Service Quality was established in 1992 to ensure that adults with developmental disabilities and their families had an independent voice during the closure of the institutions. With the closure completed and the movement of large numbers of individuals into community, families and government agreed that an ongoing, independent advocate would provide an essential safeguarding role. A place where individuals, families and others could turn for assistance and to seek resolution of issues related to services and supports. With one professional and own administrative full-time staff, the office plays a role in four key areas:

- Supports individuals and their families in working with CLBC, other ministries and service providers and building capacity in each.
- Assists with the resolution of concerns and complaints through 3rd party support
- Provides information, consultation and advice
- Identifies trends and advises Minister on a range of systemic issues that impact the lives of people with developmental disabilities

(For Vision, Mission, Strategic Priorities see *Appendix 1*)

Since its inception, the Advocate position has assumed both a strategic and pragmatic role in reflecting the needs and concerns of individuals and families and the opportunities and constraints of government in meeting them. The Advocate helps ensure an accessible, transparent and accountable approach to adults with developmental disabilities and works to promote positive change and increased understanding among all partners. The recent incumbent who retired in January 2015 held the position for 18 years during which time the role changed and evolved to meet the diverse, post-institutionalization requirements of individuals and their families.

British Columbia is the first and only jurisdiction in Canada with an *Advocate for Service Quality*. This advocacy role is unique even within British Columbia in that it uses voluntary, collaborative practices to arrive at desired outcomes. The emphasis and mandate of the office is internal advocacy, enabling diverse perspectives to become as closely aligned as circumstances will permit within a collaborative context. In 2009, the mandate of the Advocate was expanded to support youth with special needs transitioning into adulthood. Increasing the scope of the Advocate's office has been effective and serves as an internal counter-point to external advocacy, for example, that provided through the *Office of the Representative for Children and Youth*.

The position is appointed through Order-in-Council and reports to the Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation.

Although there is wide acceptance of the value of the Advocate's role and, in particular, the impact of the last incumbent, the actual operations and priorities of the position have not been fully reviewed or assessed over time. Given that and the many changes in the community living sector over the last 20 years, the Honourable Michelle Stilwell, Minister responsible for the Advocate's office, identified an opportunity to review the role and functions of the office. In April 2015, an Interim Advocate for Service Quality assumed responsibility for the operations of the office and initiated a six-month, informal consultation across BC with individuals and families, service providers, advocacy groups and leaders in the community living sector to identify potential changes or re-visioning of the position.

The following report outlines the methodology and scope of the review; information collection phase; general findings; themes; and recommendations for consideration. The process was designed to elicit ideas and provide a reflection of opinion; it was framed as *representative* sampling rather than *random* or, *prescribed*.

SCOPE

It is important to note that the scope of the review was limited to assessing current and potential roles, responsibilities and core value of the Advocate for Service Quality position within its existing context. A number of participants made recommendations to expand the position throughout the province, establish it as an Officer of the Legislature, enlarge its inter-ministry mandate or increase its independence from government. Although these were not priority issues for the majority of recipients and were outside of scope, they may be worth considering at a later time. They have been used within the report to reflect the strengths of the position's current orientation, e.g., internal advocacy, collaboration and mediation and the need to 'refresh' and re-position the office.

METHODOLOGY:

The methodology was straightforward and used an adaptable engagement model:

- An e-mail was sent to a range of stakeholders advising them of the review process and encouraging them to connect with the Advocate to organize meetings, community sessions or interviews and to post information on websites where appropriate (*Appendix 2*);
- Terms of Reference were developed and circulated (*Appendix 3*)
- Sessions were structured to provide an overview of current role and responsibilities and themes of feedback to date as well as an opportunity to brain-storm. Questions were adapted to specific interests and audiences to frame the discussion.

- The Advocate reached out to community advocacy, individuals and family support groups to organize sessions throughout the province and arrange one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders in the community living sector;
- The Advocate met/conferenced with staff from Community Living BC (CLBC), Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and key representatives of the Ministry of Health and health authorities;
- In total, the Advocate conducted 23 community sessions and 27 focused interviews (*Appendix 4*);
- Flipcharts were used to document discussion;
- Four written submissions were received;
- Results were consolidated and themed
- A review of statistical data and randomly chosen files was conducted to identify extent and type of usage

GENERAL FINDINGS:

The response to the invitation to consult was extremely positive with the process itself owing much of its momentum to the network of families and agencies who secured meeting venues, shared information locally and provincially and encouraged people to attend. (Interestingly, this network consisted primarily of individuals who had long-standing relationships and direct experience with Office of the Advocate.) Individuals made themselves available for interviews, staffing groups invited the reviewer to meetings, Community Councils offered time on their agendas and self-advocates requested that the Advocate speak at board or local meetings.

An initial assumption was that the majority of participants in the review would be familiar with the mandate of the Advocate for Service Quality or, at least, the work of the most recent incumbent. This was not always the case and reflects the patchwork approach to communication about and profiling of the role; this will be discussed in more detail later in the report. (To put this in perspective, many of the participants were also unaware of the mandate of the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY).) It also explained to some extent the perceived under-utilization of the Advocate's office. It should be noted here that although the numbers of active cases may be fewer than anticipated, the complexity of the cases has increased as has the involvement of other external parties such as the RCY and health authorities.

Notwithstanding the above, all participants confirmed the inherent value of the role as described or experienced with two of the strongest messages being that it remain 'an independent voice for individuals and families' and continue to have 'unfiltered access' to the Minister.

Discussions were productive and constructive and many of the suggestions for going forward reflected creative responses to new challenges: engaging younger families; reaching out to communities through social media; connecting with remote communities; enriching the influence of the Advocate through re-instatement of an advisory group, etc.

Additionally, participants understood and supported the function of ‘internal advocacy’ as differentiated from organizational quality assurance processes and varied forms of external advocacy, e.g., Inclusion BC or government oversight authorities such as the RCY or the Office of the Ombudsperson.

The capacity to ensure that all voices are heard, to act proactively, to provide a ‘safe place’ to talk, to mediate, to ‘trouble-shoot’, to ‘get to yes’ and ‘to gather up the sanity in complex situations’ as one individual framed it were raised repeatedly as essential attributes of the role. Experience has left some individuals and families distrustful of government; the Advocate can offer a ‘reasonable outside voice’ and help build bridges. Personal suitability and well-defined skill sets were viewed as essential to any future recruitment criteria given the diverse set of community needs and expectations.

Another broad finding relates to innovation and the potential of the Advocate’s office to introduce, lead and model new approaches to reaching and supporting families, influencing policy decisions that impact people with developmental disabilities and enhancing awareness within government and external groups.

The specific results of the sessions and interviews have been organized under the following themes. These are not intended to be exhaustive but capture the ideas and concerns that were raised consistently and independently throughout the province.

ACCESS:

To set the context for discussion of the Advocate’s position, the Interim Advocate reviewed intake and uptake figures for several fiscal years and read a sample of files. Statistics for the Integrated Services Support Team (ISST), RCY contacts and CLBC complaints were also considered as comparators.

Although the actual contact numbers may not appear high – ranging from 405 in 2012 to 424 in 2014 - what is significant is the number of follow-up activities related to these contacts and complaints. For example, 135 contacts in the first 5 months of 2015/16 generated 325 emails, documented phone calls, notes to file, etc. This reflects both the increasing complexity of individual situations as well as the amount of collateral work required to address them appropriately and thoroughly. (*Appendix 5*)

In comparison, the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth received 174 advocacy calls for young adults between September 30 2013 – July 31 2015, not all of which moved forward as cases. The ISST managed 122 enquiries from July 2012 to September 2015. Of the 122 cases, 45 met the ISST mandate. CLBC received 106 complaints in 2014-2015. It is clear from these stats that the Office of the Advocate with one professional staff member continues to be actively engaged and plays a distinct role in the lives of individuals and families regardless of other available quality assurance options. However, there is also room for increased engagement that might result from enhancing the profile of the office.

One assumption that can be made given the above and the results of the community consultation is that the Advocate’s office continues to be viewed as a ‘neutral’ or ‘safe

place to turn to' that provides a distinct service whether through access to information or considered advice and person/family- centred support.

The office has a proven record of working with youth in transition that complements the efforts of the RCY, CLBC, and MCFD and its work aligns well with the objectives of the Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) program. But it also is uniquely positioned to support individuals and families as they move through later life stages.

COMMUNICATION:

Every session and each interview without exception spoke to the need to improve communication about, with and from the Office of the Advocate for Service Quality. There was a particular sense of urgency related to this topic as the community network that supported the previous incumbent is aging and/or less engaged in some areas; the office will not be able to rely as fully on informal communication methods going forward.

The ideas related to improved communication fell into three categories of '*Why?*', '*What?*' and '*How?*'

Why?

The Advocate is an essential complement to quality assurance mechanisms and best practice in the community living sector. Increasing the office's presence and visibility in communities enables individuals, families and government ministries to discuss issues and concerns in a supportive and non-adversarial environment. The emphasis is on building partnerships, sharing information and looking for joint 'wins' rather than assigning blame. As one participant explained it, the Advocate provides a bridge between families, between families and ministries and, sometimes, between the ministries themselves. One face-to-face meeting can catalyze a community to make better use of its own networks and strategic efforts towards change.

Raising the profile of the Advocate through increased mobility and local engagement can help build capacity more effectively over the long-term, strengthening the resiliency of both families and communities.

Equally important to many was the Advocate's 'unfiltered access' to the Minister. One group stated that the position is 'a muse to the Minister', functioning as an 'ear to the ground', providing insight and opinion on what is being experienced in community. This was often coupled with clear support for this type of internal advocacy; the Advocate works with the Minister and ministry and issues are dealt with in a context of collaboration. Inversely, the Advocate can also signal to community that the Minister has heard and considered the issues it is raising and supports the Advocate's authority to influence priorities.

The Advocate can also provide an invaluable service to the Minister and the ministry through briefings on emerging issues or volatile situations.

What?

Suggestions also extended to *what* the office of the Advocate could do to promote awareness and improve practice in the wider arena of community living. These included acting as a clearing house for new information, links to helpful resources, tips on negotiating complex systems, training opportunities and emergent learning and research. One family suggested that the Advocate could develop a matrix of which bodies provide what form of support and advocacy,

An initial priority for the position must be the development of a comprehensive communications plan.

How?

Discussion of this topic was usually animated and produced a number of excellent ideas:

- Adopt a more mobile, 'on-the-road' model;
- Locate in community offices for periods of time particularly in rural or isolated areas;
- Attend meetings of Community Councils, staff meetings at CLBC, local family support and/or service provider sessions;
- Initiate information sessions in communities using diverse methods of communication such as Twitter, PSAs in local newspapers, radio or TV;
- Reach out to families through Skype and FaceTime;
- Develop a dedicated website
- Work with partners to develop an engagement strategy aimed specifically at younger families

A further suggestion was that the position be 're-launched' with a 'road-show' to introduce the Advocate and reconfirm commitment.

Finally, the office of the Advocate should initiate or increase its involvement with communities who often have less of a voice and limited access to information: distinct ethnic or cultural groups, rural and remote populations. Innovation and skill development in this area are critical.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

The discussions of accountability were diverse and distinct. As stated earlier, some interview respondents felt that the position should become more 'political', answerable to the Legislature, a truly independent and larger authority with direct access to media. This was balanced by arguments that the role was effective precisely because it *wasn't* external, that it was able to work within and between systems and its accountability was primarily to individuals and families on one side and the Minister on the other. nevertheless, without close working relationships with external advocacy groups and other government 'watch dogs', the Advocate could end up working in a closed system undermining the position's impact and relevance over time. Also, many respondents felt

the Advocate could assume more of a voice in ‘bearing witness’ to both individual and systemic issues beyond those associated with CLBC services.

There was universal support for the position retaining, at minimum, its current flexibility, independence and autonomy.

Respondents suggested that accountability mechanisms could be augmented and made more visible to the public through:

- Posting statistical updates of intake/involvement of the office on a quarterly basis
- Providing opportunities for direct individual and family feedback on the effectiveness of the Advocate’s intervention in specific situations
- Publicly identifying trends
- Reporting on participation and impact of inter-ministerial committees
- Using the unique lens of the position to provide analysis and research into outstanding issues
- Higher profiling of Annual Report
- Moving responsibility for the Integrated Services Support Team under the aegis of the Advocate’s office ¹

A general theme throughout was that without becoming adversarial, the Advocate needs to be increasingly strategic in ensuring the voices of community are heard and using the ‘...authority of the position to be a real catalyst for change’.

PRACTICE, TRAINING and REVIEWS:

The three topics cited are grouped together as they overlap and reinforce each other.

In sessions and interviews with CLBC staff, it was clear that many would welcome the increased ‘nonpartisan’ involvement of the Advocate to assist them in determining how best to support an individual or family. The involvement is not seen as an alternative to supervisory or quality assurance processes but as an aid to practice, a neutral perspective on possible or different approaches. This was one of the core functions of the Advocate in the past but the connection has weakened over time.

Of particular interest was the encouraging response from MCFD staff who felt that the Advocate could add value to their practice supporting youth transitioning to adulthood and provide a bridge between Children and Youth with Special Needs workers and their CLBC counterparts. Similar support for this ‘brokerage’ function role was expressed by health authority staff familiar with the office. Additionally, access to expert consultation can lead to improved decision-making.

In addition to case involvement, staff both within and external to government who work with individuals with developmental disabilities could benefit from in-depth training and

¹ The Integrated Services Support Team operates under the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. Its mandate is to assist families where issues involving CLBC and at least one other ministry or authority are impacting supports and services.

practice enhancement related to building a foundation of core values, developing trusting relationships with individuals and families and working creatively to engage communities and advocacy groups. This suggestion was not seen as a corrective but as a way of further validating the voice and experience of those requiring support.

Community representatives also spoke to how the Advocate could expedite their requirements for training and guidance. Strengthening multi-cultural access, coaching on how to negotiate through a myriad of government services and processes, organizing workshops in conjunction with partners related to specific topics such as Representation Agreements, Wills, RDSP, etc. were all cited as potentially helpful adjuncts to the office's core functions.

Service reviews are an essential tool of quality assurance and continuous quality improvement. The Advocate has a valuable role to play in this context and can provide objective oversight to assist both CLBC and/or the Minister. CLBC uses both employees and contractors to conduct reviews of incidents and challenging situations; the Advocate can offer an external lens to further validate these processes. Consideration should also be given to re-instating past practice of using the Advocate's office to perform reviews specifically for the Minister in complex circumstances.

INTEGRATION:

There is a further element of the Advocate's role that was raised by community but articulated even more clearly by service providers and government agencies that do not always have as direct involvement with individuals as CLBC, MCFD, the RCY or STADD. This is the ability of the Advocate to bring the perspective of individuals and the voice of families to provincial policy and decision-making tables. Partially through insight and influence, partially by keeping the experiences of individuals and families at the centre of discussions that could impact them.

Although the Advocate faces outward to community, the position has a unique opportunity to bring the community perspective inward, to enrich and inform the dialogue among an extensive range of government ministries and senior leadership. The natural extension to this is to increase capacity at the local level by reaching out to schools, employment programs and other local initiatives to provide information, consultation and practice support.

Assuming the functions of the ISST as cited earlier might increase the potential of the Advocate to influence change and improve practice across government ministries. However, any decision needs to address whether such a change might actually be seen as decreasing the number of channels available to individuals. Additionally, the fact that Advocate has not traditionally become involved in funding or contractual issues has enabled her to work more directly with individuals and families.

SUMMARY

Government currently has a number of advocacy and problem- resolution mechanisms available to individuals with developmental disabilities. Although many of these channels are designed to support individuals and their families to express and resolve complaints, the organizations may have vested interests or legislative requirements at either the agency or political level that constrain their capacity for full partnership or person-centred support. The Office of the Advocate for Service Quality has the ability to deal directly with families and communities without these inherent restrictions and to provide direct and unfettered consultation to the Minister – a unique and mutually beneficial relationship.

The requirements of individuals and families are shifting and transforming as are the communities that support them. New strategies and innovative approaches will be required to meet the challenges associated with fluctuating demographics and more varied resource requirements. The Advocate position with its autonomy, scope and dedicated expertise has the agility to respond quickly and comprehensively to support future diversity and adaptation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations reflect what was heard in community, a review of past activity and general impressions that were not easily quantifiable, for example, the importance of the personal suitability of a new Advocate.

Recommendation # 1:

Maintain the office of the Advocate for Service Quality and ensure that personal suitability is given equal weight as standard behavioural competencies when recruiting for the position.

The importance of who assumes the advocate's job resonated with all groups and will be a recruitment challenge given the balance of strategic thinking, diplomacy, judgment, inter-personal skills and deep understanding required. In conjunction with the Public Service Agency requirements, community representatives will should continue to be involved in the recruitment process.

Recommendation # 2:

Clearly define the expectation that the Office of the Advocate will initiate or increase its involvement with targeted populations of individuals with developmental disabilities including multicultural groups and younger families.

As with communication initiatives, the office will need to work with key stakeholders within government and in 'new' communities to develop a strategic plan for moving forward. Relationships are key and sensitivities must be identified and accommodated.

Recommendation # 3:

Increase the profile and community presence of the Advocate using a variety of approaches such as:

- *Travelling more frequently to rural and remote communities*
- *Developing a social media presence*
- *Exploring alternative methods for outreach to individuals, families and communities*

The need for the position to enhance current approaches to communication and information-sharing was a consistent theme in all sessions. A new incumbent needs to be 'seen' in community and make new connections. A comprehensive Communications Plan should be one of the first priorities. (Although some respondents recommended that the Advocate establish a dedicated website and/or provide a clearing-house for research and information, this should be considered carefully. Maintaining a website is labour – intensive and information can easily become dated or inaccurate potentially creating more confusion than awareness).

Effective communication can also play a large part in addressing concerns before they become issues by directing them to the Advocate rather than to more formal or prescribed complaints processes.

Access to the Minister is viewed as a considerable strength of the position and of government's response to individuals and families. Families were generally less concerned about the legislative authority for the position than supportive of the direct interest of the Minister in their concerns as communicated to her by the Advocate. This aspect of the role could be used more intentionally as it generates good-will and builds bridges between the sector and government. Increasing communication related to meetings between the Minister and the Advocate would also be well-received.

Recommendation # 4:

Implement more rigorous accountability measures as outlined in the Accountability section of this report.

Interest was expressed in having access to more concrete data and information related to the activities of the Advocate. Evidence-based documentation of primary responsibilities will provide a baseline and provide a good foundation for identifying trends, initiating analysis and participating in research.

Clearer reporting out on activities, trends, committee work and community involvement was also encouraged.

Recommendation # 5:

Formally reinforce the role of the Advocate as an essential element of CLBC's continuous quality improvement processes.

The Advocate and CLBC have a history of working together effectively. Involving the Advocate in review processes as outlined earlier could enhance credibility of the process for families impacted and provide an objective imprimatur. Using the Advocate's office for a limited number of independent reviews as was done in the past provides an additional resource to CLBC, the Ministry and the Minister in complex situations.

The Advocate can enrich practice and decision-making by working 'on-the-inside' with CLBC staff- participating in training, providing consultation, and offering an objective perspective. Using the role in this way provides an opportunity for growth and enhancement of skills and reduces the perceived 'territorialism' that has marginalized this relationship over the last few years.

Recommendation # 6:

Enhance the inter-ministry role of the Advocate for Service Quality

Increasing the Advocate's participation in inter-ministry initiatives and exploring more opportunities for the position to play a coordinating role could extend the impact of the position beyond CLBC services and support the push towards increased integration of services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

A number of respondents suggested transferring responsibility for the ISST from Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) to the Advocate's office. Although the ministry employee currently responsible for the ISST process is a neutral party in resolving issues between CLBC and other ministries/authorities, the Advocate as an Order in Council appointment is seen as less aligned with government processes or vested interests. A major and significant caveat to this proposal is that it involves the Advocate in funding and contractual issues which could alter the focus of the position and perhaps undermine its overall effectiveness and credibility. Energies could end up being directed more to solving bureaucratic impasses than engaging directly with families and staff informally, a process that has been effective to date.

Recommendation # 7:

Reinstate the Provincial Advisory Board and dedicated budget to provide support and consultation to the Advocate.

Although the Advocate for Service Quality is pro-active and engaged in community, the position can run the risk of becoming isolated. An advisory board of individuals, families and targeted representatives can 'keep the position grounded' and provide access to opinion and insights that might otherwise not be available during the day- to- day functioning of the office.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: OASQ Vision, Mission, Strategic Priorities

Appendix 2: Email to Stakeholders

Appendix 3: Terms of Reference

Appendix 4: Presentations

Appendix 5: Intake/Uptake Figures

APPENDIX 1: Vision, Mission, Strategic Priorities

OASQ Vision

- To be a champion for the rights of the developmentally disabled
- To amplify their voices
- To support individual and family participation in their communities

OASQ Mission

- To keep the interests of individuals with developmental disabilities at the centre of the decision-making process
- To provide autonomous, expert advice to the Minister which will assist in producing positive outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families

OASQ Strategic Priorities

To help improve the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities through:

1. Individual advocacy

Providing supports to individuals with developmental disabilities served by British Columbia government ministries and its agencies, to ensure their rights, interests, and viewpoints are considered when decisions are made about them.

2. Systemic change

Advising the Minister on matters relating to the well-being and interests of individuals with developmental disabilities who receive services from the B.C. government and its agents.

3. Building advocacy across the system of supports

Contributing to ensure advocacy exists throughout the range of services provided to individuals with developmental disabilities.

APPENDIX 2: Email to Stakeholders

In the fall of 2014, Jane Holland, British Columbia's Advocate for Service Quality announced that she would be retiring after 17 years of service to the province.

In early 2015, the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation began a recruitment process to find her successor. We met with some strong potential candidates who brought forward impressive ideas and qualifications. As we progressed, however, it became clear that we needed to take a step back and re-assess the roles and responsibilities of the Advocate within the current context of services and supports.

The Advocate's position has not been reviewed since it was established in 1992 and much has changed over that time: in our society, in the community living sector and in the mix of government services. We realized that we could take this opportunity to look at how these broad changes might impact the Advocate's role and whether there was a need for adjustments.

I want to assure everyone that the Advocate for Service Quality position is still active and supported by the Government of British Columbia. Paula Grant, former Executive Director of the Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) Project with the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation has agreed to step into the role on an interim basis.

Paula has been involved with community living services for many years. She has worked in the field, was engaged in the closure of the institutions for individuals with developmental disabilities, served as Community Living BC's Director of Quality Assurance and was involved with the initiation and development of the STADD Project.

As the Interim Advocate for Service Quality, Paula will continue to help adults with developmental disabilities and transitioning youth with special need access supports and services. She will also be meeting with individuals and families, community partners and government staff during the next few months. Paula will gather feedback and work with the sector to identify areas where the Advocate role might be modified or adapted to reflect current best practices.

Paula will assume the Advocate position for a six-month term. Terms of Reference for the review are being developed and we will reach out to all of you again once the details are finalized.

In the interim, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Paula Grant at (604.775.1268) or Paula.Grant@gov.bc.ca

Website: <http://www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/advocate/Index.htm>

Advocate for Service Quality

The Advocate is a person working for *Adults with Developmental Disabilities* and transitioning youth with special needs and their families.

There is no cost to you for the Advocate's services.

- [What does the Advocate do?](#)
- [When should I call the Advocate?](#)
- [How do I contact the Advocate?](#)
- [Advocate for Service Quality brochure](#) PDF

Who is the Advocate for Service Quality?

The interim Advocate for Service Quality is Paula Grant. The Advocate is appointed by, and reports to, the Minister. She does not work directly for the government.

What does the Advocate do?

The Advocate's job is to help **adults with developmental disabilities** and **transitioning youth with special needs** and their families have access to supports and services that are available. The Advocate can help with services from the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, from other ministries, Community Living BC or from service agencies in the community.

When should I call the Advocate?

If you have a problem with services you can contact the Advocate and request assistance to resolve any complaints you may have. The Advocate also encourages and helps adults to advocate for themselves.

For example, the Advocate will try to help:

- if you do not like the services you are getting
- if you think you are not treated fairly or with respect
- if you do not agree with a decision that was made, or
- if you have questions about eligibility and funding of services.

How do I contact the Advocate?

In Vancouver:

- Phone: 604 775-1238

If you live outside Vancouver, call Enquiry BC and ask them to transfer you to Office of the Advocate for Service Quality's office at 604 775-1238.

- Victoria residents call Enquiry BC at 250 387-6121
- Elsewhere in B.C. call Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867

Mailing Address

Office of the Advocate for Service Quality
Suite 820 - 999 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC
V5Z 1K5

APPENDIX 3: TERMS of REFERENCE (June 2015)

PURPOSE:

To review the role and responsibilities of the Advocate for Service Quality (ASQ) position. Specifically to:

- review historical and recent involvement of the Advocate's office with individuals, families, community and government
- identify range of office's partnership and consultation activities including community interface, training, cross-ministry committees and working groups and, representation of individual and family perspectives in areas that impact the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities
- provide an informal structure for individuals, families, government representatives and community partners to discuss potential use or past experience with the Advocate's office and identify future priorities for this internal advocacy function.

BACKGROUND:

The scope of the Advocate for Service Quality's office has not been reviewed since 1992 when the position was established to support individuals and families during the closure of the institutions.

The Advocate has remained a strong promoter of the voices of individuals, families and the people who support them. The position has focused on mediation, internal advocacy, problem-solving and mutual gains through shared understanding and respect. The Advocate has been a valuable resource in ensuring that the underlying values of the community living sector are upheld while coaching individuals, families, service providers and government staff on how to balance efforts to achieve maximum independence with optimal safeguards.

OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES of REVIEW:

- transparency
- accessibility
- openness
- values-based

METHODOLOGY:

- Identify primary sources of input
- Arrange individual meetings or group sessions where suitable, e.g., meetings with individuals, families, informal sessions of regional family groups; staff meetings
- Collect and collate information by theme and expressed priority
- Review current processes and practices related to 'advocacy' or support for individuals with developmental disabilities

DELIVERABLES:

- provide summary of findings and options for consideration related to the future role of the Advocate for Service Quality position

APPENDIX 4: Presentations

Individual Presentations:

1. Faith Bodnar, Executive Director (ED), Inclusion BC (IBC)
2. Angela Clancy, ED, Family Support Institute
3. Dan Collins, ED, Langley Association for Community Living, Board of IBC
4. Alana Hendren, ED, Developmental Disabilities Association BRIEF
5. Ellen Tarshis, ED, Community Living Victoria
6. Fred Ford, Senior Executive Director, Representative for Children and Youth
7. Bev Kissinger, Resource parent (FSI), Community Consultant
8. Karen DeLong, parent, Community Advocacy, ICB
9. Catriona Johnson, parent, resource Parent(FSI), Community Council Chair, co-founder Inclusion Works
10. Allison Bond, ADM, MCFD (brief overview and connections)
11. Carol Goozh, former Vice-President, CLBC
12. Wrenn Weston, Director, Thompson Services
13. Dr. Tim Stainton, Director, School of Social Work, UBC
14. Allan Hyggen, ISST
15. Jane Holland, former Advocate for Service Quality
16. David Young, ED, Sources
17. Si Stainton, Resource Parent (FSI), Community Services, Delta Association for Community Living
18. Megan Tardif, Director, Quality Assurance, CLBC
19. Jack Styan, V-P, CLBC
20. Julia Armitage, Resource Parent (FSI), Vernon
21. Cathy Reis, Clinical Consultant (HSCL)
22. Kimberly Azyan, Director, Adult Services, OPGT
23. Doug Hughes, ADM, Ministry of Health
24. Lynn Davies, Vice-President, Operations, CLBC
25. Nichola Manning, Assistant Deputy Minister, Social Development and Social Innovation (SDSI)
26. Sheila Taylor, Deputy Minister, SDSI
27. Sylvie Zebrof, Family Advisor, CLBC
28. Individual staff at CLBC, MCFD and MOH
29. Individual families at sessions who did not want to be identified by name

Group Sessions:

1. CLBC, Senior Management Group
2. Community Council, Victoria
3. Provincial Meeting of CLBC Community Council Chairs (primarily family members)
4. People First, BC Annual General Meeting
5. Kelowna Family Forum (parents and self-advocates)
6. Prince George Family Support Group
7. Bollywood Masa - Family Support Group- Hindi and Punjabi families, Vancouver
8. Chinese Family Support Group – Burnaby, New Westminster
9. 2nd Wave, Family Support Group, Victoria
10. Kamloops Community Support Group
11. CLBC Editorial Board- Self-advocates, family and staff
12. Family Support Institute Training weekend
13. Dawson Creek Family Support Group
14. Kamloops- CLBC staff
15. Prince George – CLBC staff
16. Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) Directors, Ministry of Children and Family Development
17. 17 Simon Fraser Community Council
18. 18 Kamloops, Family Support Group
19. Inclusion BC Advocacy Support group
20. 20. Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee Staff
21. CYSN Leads
22. Joan Easton and Alexandra Stevanovic, MCFD Executive Director and Director

APPENDIX 5: Intake and Uptake Figures

SUMMARY OF STATISTICAL REPORTS		Date Range
OFFICE OF THE ADVOCATE FOR SERVICE QUALITY		Apr 01 2014 to Mar 31 2015
Contact & Response Volume Analysis:		
Total contacts received during the reporting period:		361
Total responses made during the reporting period:		519
	Total:	880
Total Contacts Regarding New Contacts, Situations, etc. (1):		
New Contact		203
New Situation		360
Complaint Initiated at H.Q.		0
Repeat Caller		157
Mandate Summary (2, 6):		
CLBC		282
MCFD		16
Cross Ministry Issues		69
Miscellaneous		2
Contact Pertains To (3):		
Information		56
No Mandate		72
Request for Involvement		272
Regional Breakdown Analysis:		
Region	Call Count	Percentage
Burnaby/Simon Fraser	21	5.8%
Capital	84	23.3%
Central/Upper Island	28	7.8%
Coast/North Shore	13	3.6%
Kootenays	2	0.6%
North	28	7.8%
Okanagan	12	3.3%
Outside of BC	3	0.8%
South Fraser	49	13.6%
Thompson/Cariboo	6	1.7%
Upper Fraser	12	3.3%
Vancouver/Richmond	103	28.5%
TOTAL	361	100.0%

SUMMARY OF STATISTICAL REPORTS		Date Range	
OFFICE OF THE ADVOCATE FOR SERVICE QUALITY		Apr 01 2014 to Mar 31 2015	
CLBC Sub-Mandate Analysis (2):			
Total contacts with a mandate of CLBC			282
Adult Guardianship	2		0.7%
Adults	172		61.0%
Autism	4		1.4%
Complaints - Funding Issues	31		11.0%
Complaints - Services/Procedure	185		65.6%
Eligibility	12		4.3%
Transition - Youth	33		11.7%
MCFD Sub-Mandate Analysis (2):			
Total contacts with a mandate of MCFD			16
Autism	1		6.3%
Child Protection	1		6.3%
Contact Status Analysis (4, 5):			
Contact Status	Count	Percentage	
Completed/Resolved	360	99.7%	
Monitoring Complaint	1	0.3%	
TOTAL	361	100.0%	

SUMMARY OF STATISTICAL REPORTS		Date Range	
OFFICE OF THE ADVOCATE FOR SERVICE QUALITY		Apr 01 2014 to Mar 31 2015	
Caller Type Analysis - Calls (7)			
Caller Type	Call Count	Percentage	
Administrative Calls	15	4.2%	
Advocacy Organization	1	0.3%	
CLBC-Headquarters	8	2.2%	
CLBC-Manager	16	4.4%	
Facilitator/Analyst	16	4.4%	
Family Member	124	34.3%	
Government Contact	14	3.9%	
Home Sharing	9	2.5%	
Individual	53	14.7%	
MCFD-Headquarters	8	2.2%	
MLA	3	0.8%	
OPT	1	0.3%	
Prov. Medical Consultant	8	2.2%	
Rep. for Children & Youth	14	3.9%	
SDSI-Headquarters	14	3.9%	
Service Provider	57	15.8%	
TOTAL	361	100.0%	
Response Caller Type Analysis - Responses			
Response Caller Type	Call Count	Percentage	
Administrative Calls	8	1.5%	
CLBC-Headquarters	47	8.9%	
CLBC-Manager	77	14.6%	
Facilitator/Analyst	45	8.5%	
Family Member	170	32.3%	
Government Contact	6	1.1%	
Home Sharing	5	0.9%	
Individual	3	0.6%	
MCFD-Headquarters	5	0.9%	
MLA	2	0.4%	
Not Specified	2	0.4%	
OPT	1	0.2%	
Prov. Medical Consultant	22	4.2%	
Rep. for Children & Youth	15	2.8%	
SDSI-Headquarters	41	7.8%	
Service Provider	78	14.8%	
TOTAL	527	100.0%	

SUMMARY OF STATISTICAL REPORTS	Date Range
OFFICE OF THE ADVOCATE FOR SERVICE QUALITY	Apr 01 2014 to Mar 31 2015
Notes	
<p>[1] A contact can be classified under more than one contact type. As such the total count of the number of contacts of a particular type can be greater than the total number of contacts made during the reporting period.</p>	
<p>[2] A contact can have more than one mandate associated with it. While the minority this will produce a total number of mandates selected that is often greater than the total number of contacts received during the reporting period. The percentages shown are calculated based on the total mandate selections made during the reporting period and not on the total calls logged.</p>	
<p>[3] A contact can pertain to more than one subject. As such the count of the individual 'Contact Pertains To' selections can be greater than the total number of contacts received during the reporting period.</p>	
<p>[4] Completed / Not Resolved: Means that the office has provided services and directed the caller to resolve the complaint but the issue is not resolved as far as caller is concerned because the complaint(s) may relate to funding, eligibility, waitlists, etc. Therefore the contact is complete but the complaint is not resolved as far as the caller is concerned.</p>	
<p>Completed / Resolved: Means that the office has provided services and direction to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the caller. Therefore the caller contact is complete and complaint resolved.</p>	
<p>Monitoring: Means that the call/complaint is not complete/resolved yet and the office is still working/providing services to resolve the complaint and call.</p>	
<p>[5] The status for the various contacts (Monitoring or Completed) affects contacts entered April 1 2007 and beyond. Previous contacts (created before the contact status feature was implemented) were not affected by the update.</p>	
<p>[6] Cross ministry mandated calls are those that involve MCFD and one or more of the following external ministries or agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AG / Attorney General - MH / Ministry of Health - MHS / Mental Health Services - SDSI / Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation - PGT / Public Guardian and Trustee 	
<p>[7] The Caller Type options do not include "Administrative Calls". These are calls related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standard Office Calls 	