



Addressing the Ombudsman's Report

A Message from Minister Dr. Helena Jaczek



As you know, Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé released his report on August 24 on the ministry's response to situations of crisis involving adults with developmental disabilities.

I thank the Ombudsman and his office for their report and have accepted all of the recommendations. I will report back to the Ombudsman's Office every six months as he requested. I am fully committed to working with my cabinet colleagues and our partners in the sector to find longer-term solutions to crisis situations involving adults with developmental disabilities.

My ministry has worked hard to address the types of situations identified in the report. In my time as Minister, I have met many individuals with developmental disabilities and their families – I know we need to keep working to improve our system for them. While we know there is much work to be done going forward, there has been real progress since the Ombudsman's investigation began nearly four years ago.

The developmental services budget has doubled over the past 12 years to provide supports and services, reaching \$2 billion annually in 2016-17. In 2014, we made an unprecedented \$810 million investment over three years to expand support for adults with developmental disabilities. This investment is giving more individuals and their families' choice and flexibility to purchase the supports that best fit their needs.

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For more on the Ombudsman report, see

- The Ombudsman's Report
www.ombudsman.on.ca/Resources/Reports/Nowhere-to-Turn.aspx
- Minister Jaczek's statement
www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/news/releases/2016/20160824.aspx

As the Ombudsman noted in his report, this investment is providing new direct funding to more than 7,200 adults and their families to date. Part of this investment will provide new residential supports for approximately 1,400 of the highest needs adults with developmental disabilities by next year. In fact, in the first two years, more than 800 adults have already transitioned to new residential supports.

My ministry also introduced a consistent province-wide urgent response process in 2014 to help individuals and families that require immediate need. This is helping us to address crisis situations such as those mentioned in the report. To date, our urgent response process has helped more than 1,100 people find urgently needed supports, including the majority of those mentioned in the Ombudsman's report.

Over the past decade, there has been great progress in moving towards Ontario's vision of full community inclusion for adults with developmental disabilities. All institutions have been closed and the ministry is funding community-based residential supports for 18,000 adults with developmental disabilities.

Our shared vision with partners and families is person-centred, giving a voice to each individual to determine their needs and to select the services that best reflect their goals and aspirations.

Our partner service agencies have fully embraced this challenge. Many have already come forward with helpful, creative and innovative ideas and local partnerships to make our communities more inclusive. These include supporting creative, community-based housing solutions brought forward through our Developmental Services Housing Task Force to provide more flexible residential options to meet individual needs.

Through our continued collaboration, strong partnerships and shared solutions, we will continue to work to put into action the changes necessary to address the challenges outlined in the Ombudsman's report and continue the ministry's ongoing efforts to improve the delivery of the developmental services system in Ontario.



On the Path to a Better Developmental Services System



In a relatively short period of time, we have made real progress in moving towards real community inclusion for adults with developmental disabilities.

It's important to take stock of where we are, and look back at how far we've progressed.

The era of institutionalizing people with developmental disabilities in Ontario ended less than a decade ago, in 2009. That was a major step forward and a complete shift in how we deliver supports and services for adults with developmental disabilities.

Since that time, developmental services have slowly evolved into a network of supports and services delivered and administered by 360 local community agencies with financial support from the Ontario government.

Ontario has now begun another major shift by starting the move away from sheltered workshops and to more inclusive options such as employment or meaningful community participation.

A Shared Vision of Inclusion

Our transformation of developmental services is the embodiment of a collective, shared vision – a vision that directly reflects both the needs and aspirations of people with developmental disabilities.

We share this goal with our sector partners and our clients – that we design services and supports with the person at the centre. It's not about a one-size-fits-all approach to services.

Supports need to be responsive to our clients' goals and aspirations and support their needs. It also means that people are able to make their own choices.

We must all work together so that people with developmental disabilities can secure a safe place to live, participate in community-based programs, go to school and receive an education, gain meaningful, competitive employment, and fully participate in their communities.

Service Pathway and Improving the Service Experience

We have committed to creating a pathway to services that is clearer to navigate and ensures the experience puts the person at the centre.

We know that it can be challenging and stressful for those individuals and their families accessing or going through the application process for the first time. Others already in service may wish to transition to different supports, which can also be challenging.

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In the coming months, we will be working with our partner agencies and Developmental Services Ontario to look for ways to improve people's experiences – making it easier to navigate the system and access services.

For example, we know that individuals should have the tools to manage and direct their own service plans rather than relying on agencies to do it for them.

Our long-term goal is to make the system easier for people to use, and to give them better choices from available services that better meet their needs. It's also important that people receive a similar customer service experience regardless of where they live in the province.

For those with complex needs, we are working to improve access to case coordination services for people and their families, so they can receive the right fit of supports and services based on their needs rather than relying solely on available programs.

We want to provide supports in a manner that allows people to live in the home of their choice rather than in government-funded residential services. We are also working to improve direct funding programs, like Passport, so that they better serve people and their families and streamline how they are reimbursed for services.

Funding the System

Of the estimated 70,000 people with developmental disabilities, more than 42,000 currently receive government-funded services.

Our annual investment in developmental services has reached more than \$2B annually this year.



Fact Sheet on
Developmental Services

Institutions Closed:
Over the past decade, Ontario has closed all institutions for adults with developmental disabilities. The current focus is on providing supports in the community and direct funding to people and families.

Services and Supports:
About **70,000** adults with a developmental disability, as a primary or secondary condition, are Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients. ODSP provides up to **\$1,110** a month (for singles), and people may be eligible for other social assistance benefits, such as: prescription drug, dental and vision care coverage. (*Effective September 2016, a single person on ODSP will receive up to **\$1,128** a month)

42,000 More than **42,000** adults in Ontario are currently receiving ministry-funded developmental services and supports. Individuals may receive more than one type of service or support.

18,000 **18,000** people with developmental disabilities are currently receiving residential supports. Residential supports include group homes and other supported living arrangements.

19,000 **19,000** people received Passport funding in 2015-16, which helps them to participate in their communities, or provides their caregivers with respite from caregiving responsibilities.

 Ontario

See the Fact Sheet on Developmental Services:

www.mcss.gov.on.ca/documents/en/mcss/developmental/DS_FactSheet_En.pdf



Early Wins on Transformation

Working together with the developmental services sector, we have made progress on a number of fronts to transform developmental services:

Competitive Employment and Sheltered Workshops

Our Employment and Modernization Fund (EMF) has assisted many service agencies in the process of moving away from sheltered workshops. Several projects currently funded under the EMF, and led by service agencies; involve shifting away from traditional settings such as sheltered workshops toward community-based employment.

As announced in the 2016 Ontario Budget, the Ontario Government will develop a new provincial employment strategy for people with disabilities. The Minister Responsible for Accessibility will lead this strategy and MCSS will assist in its development.

Person-Directed Planning for the Future

The ministry is also investing in person-directed planning initiatives that can help people with a developmental disability plan for their futures and major life transitions, and connect them and their families with broader community supports.



In April 2015, the ministry began to provide funding for independent facilitation and planning. To date, more than 450 people with developmental disabilities are working with independent facilitators to plan their futures.

Helping Improve the Safety of Individuals

In the past year, the ministry has taken steps to further improve the safety of adults with developmental disabilities in government-funded programs.

We've developed a stronger compliance inspection program for agencies that provide services and supports, and established new requirements to enhance the oversight of agencies providing the Host Family program to adults with developmental disabilities.

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ReportON, a new 24/7 telephone hotline and email address to promote safety for people with developmental disabilities is now underway with agencies, and we will be launching this new service to the public this fall.

For more information on these safety measures, see the [July issue of Spotlight](#).

Responding to Urgent Situations

In 2014, the ministry introduced an urgent response process to help individuals and their families who require immediate needs. To date, this process has assisted more than 1,100 people to find urgently needed supports.

As well, the ministry now has temporary supports funding in place for a short term crisis, such as when a primary caregiver has taken ill.




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