

Nova Scotia Department of Community Services

Review of Child Welfare Services Governance and Business Model

Final Report

Excerpt – Executive Summary

June 2004





Executive Summary

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- **Key stakeholders within the child welfare system agree that the current mixed governance model, with 14 independent not-for-profit agencies and six district offices, is a sub-optimal structure for the delivery of child welfare services.**
- **A representative working group was struck to resolve several issues within the child welfare system. This group recommended that the governance model be assessed as one of seven key priorities.**
- **At the request of the Minister, a survey of key stakeholders was conducted. The results of this survey recommended that a more comprehensive review, including an inter-jurisdictional review, be completed.**
- **The Minister of Community Services, through the Department, requested an objective third-party study to be conducted to:**
 - Assess the current governance and business model structure for child welfare services;
 - Gather current practices and trends from other Canadian jurisdictions;
 - Identify potential governance and business models for the Province of Nova Scotia; and
 - Recommend a preferred governance and business model.
- **The Governance and Business Model Review was an inclusive process that consisted of four distinct phases:**
 - Assessment of the current mixed model through interviews and focus groups with over 50 individuals and a detailed documentation and financial review;
 - Key inter-jurisdictional scans of five provincial child welfare organizations, including New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta;
 - Development of evaluation criteria and assessment of optional models; and
 - Documentation and presentation of our findings and recommendation in a final report.
- **Optional governance and business models were selected based on:**
 - Our findings from our current model assessment;
 - The results of the inter-jurisdictional scan; and
 - The ability to support the objectives of the child welfare system.



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- *The current mixed model and three optional models were assessed based on their ability to effectively support six key functions:*

Models Assessed

- Current Mixed Model
- Option 1: Single Private Agency
- Option 2: Single Public Authority
- Option 3: Public Sector Line Department

The Models' Ability to Support High Quality Child Welfare Functions

Key Functions

- Deliver Child Welfare Services
- Plan and Monitor Quality of Service
- Develop, Implement and Evaluate Legislation, Programs, Regulations, Standards and Policies
- Maintain Community Connectedness
- Provide Support Services
- Manage the Child Welfare Services System

- *Evaluation criteria were developed for each function, which defined how the governance and business model would support each function.*
- *All optional models were assessed independently by individual Deloitte team members, and subsequently, the results were consolidated to form our joint recommendation.*

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- ***The recommended governance and business model is Option 3 – Public Sector Line Department with one separate not-for-profit agency – Mi’Kmaq Family and Children’s Services Agency.***
- ***The recommended model does not impact the Mi’Kmaq Family and Children’s Services Agency’s governance and business model, primarily because of the Agency’s focused, provincial mandate and its associated funding model.***
- ***The Public Sector Line Department option, with community-based Advisory Boards, was recommended because the governance model will support the highest quality child welfare services as defined by the evaluation criteria. The strengths of this model include:***
 - Efficient service delivery through a more consolidated service delivery model that integrates with existing departmental delivery structures;
 - Improved organizational effectiveness and efficiencies across several functions by consolidating the organization and management structures, clarifying accountabilities, and simplifying reporting relationships;
 - More direct and consolidated public sector accountability at the Deputy Minister level for a program which is:
 - ◆ 99.5% funded by the provincial government through the Department of Community Services;
 - ◆ Highly regulated and high risk; and
 - ◆ A structured independent quality/compliance role that is segregated from service delivery responsibilities.
 - Maintenance and development of community connectedness, volunteerism and fund raising through:
 - ◆ The location of delivery sites across the Province;
 - ◆ The development of community-based Advisory Boards to support all areas within Nova Scotia; and
 - ◆ The development of a private Provincial Foundation.



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- ***The successful creation of engaged community-based Advisory Boards, the retention of Board members/volunteers, and the development of a Provincial Foundation are critical success factors for the model. These factors clearly differentiate this model from the current Departmental model. Without these new elements, the recommended model would not maintain or improve the level of community connectedness that exists today.***
- ***The implementation of this option represents a significant change within the child welfare system from several perspectives, including:***
 - Improved service quality and effectiveness;
 - Continued engagement and involvement of the community and its volunteers;
 - Consistent and improved human resource programs, including employee benefit and pension plans;
 - Streamlined, consistent, and efficient management and administrative structures without duplication; and
 - Lower annual financial costs that may be reinvested to further augment current child welfare programs.