

Shaping the future of

NOVA SCOTIA'S DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Choice and Inclusion:
Implementation Plan



Acknowledgements

We thank the many people who offered perspectives and expertise to shape a new future for Nova Scotians with disabilities. Self-advocates, families, service providers, community groups and care givers have generously provided their insights and experiences. They will continue to be a valuable resource during our journey to transform disabilities supports in this province. We will work together towards developing a disabilities support system that is responsive, timely and meets the needs of persons with disabilities. The staff at Community Services have been instrumental in bringing us to this point and their ongoing efforts are appreciated.

Introduction

Today, one in five Nova Scotians is living with a disability.

We have heard from many Nova Scotians about their vision for improved services. Nova Scotians with disabilities have stated their desire to make choices about their own future, to be supported in living as independently as possible, and to be included in communities. They want to build on what is already in their communities and to have the flexibility to have local solutions developed to meet their needs. This is consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which was ratified by Canada in 2010.

Nova Scotians want flexible and sustainable services that are responsive and person-directed. Over the coming decade, we will need to work together to shape the future of the Disability Support Program with a view toward choice, inclusion and sustainability.

A ten year plan will guide the transformation of the Disability Support Program. Together with our community partners, we will increase community based living opportunities; modernize services based on informed choice, flexibility and individual planning; and develop new legislation for services for persons with disabilities.

In consultation with community partners, and first-voice advocates, we will develop a more personalized and responsive disability support program.

This document outlines the direction government will take to meet its commitments.

The situation we find ourselves in today evolved over many decades:

- Larger residential facilities are no longer considered the best residential option for every person with a disability.
- The programs available today have rigid eligibility requirements and do not promote the level of independence and inclusion desired by those directly impacted.
- The opportunity to live in a home or community setting is often unavailable. Too many people continue to be on waitlists to access community-based living options.

A Shared Vision

Nova Scotia is an inclusive and accessible society that respects dignity and choice for all persons with disabilities.

Community Services is committed to a sustainable social services system that promotes independence, self-reliance and inclusion for the people we serve.

A New Approach

Nova Scotians with disabilities have the same rights as everyone.

We all deserve to live our lives as independently as possible. Each of us has a right to be full participants in society. That means full social and economic inclusion, and the opportunity to live with dignity and choice.

A person-directed, accessible and flexible support system for persons with disabilities will focus on key areas of action:

- Increasing community-based living with social and economic inclusion;
- Modernizing services and programs based on choice, flexibility and person-directed planning; and,
- Reducing reliance on long term larger facilities.

Increasing Community-based Living

Nova Scotians have told us that there needs to be increased opportunity to live in and contribute to their community. We need more supports in place to help make that happen. More affordable and accessible housing, caregiver supports, enhanced employability supports, self-directed funding and other models of support are being developed. We are working with individuals, communities and other partners to promote and maintain sustainable community-based supports.

New and better Disability Support Program

Services and supports will be designed to be more flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals. Policies will enable a person-focused assessment to determine the level of support required for each individual. New programs and services will enable choices to be made within a range of options. The opportunity to make choices highlights the desire to embrace the concept – “dignity of risk.”

Existing programs that support independent living to individuals at home or with an alternative family are being expanded. A new Direct Living Support program is being implemented to provide self-directed funding.

Employment and Training

More and more, employers are seeing the value that persons with disabilities bring to their organizations. With the appropriate supports in place for education, training, and ongoing employment support, Nova Scotia can become a leader in attachment and retention of individuals with disabilities in the labour force.

To achieve this, the Province of Nova Scotia will be investing in skills training and employment support.

Individuals with disabilities have told us that they are ready to contribute to their communities; we will strive to have program options in place that value their contributions and maximize their ability to succeed.

Modernizing Services to Increase Choice and Flexibility

Services need to better align with government's commitment to greater social and economic inclusion for persons with disabilities. Choice, flexibility and an individual approach will be central to modernizing policies and programs that have been in place for decades.

A New Care Coordinator Role

Care coordinators are instrumental in helping individuals to identify the most appropriate program that fits each individual's unique circumstances. Coordinators are being trained and their roles are realigning to support a person-directed approach.

Care co-ordinators, case work supervisors, district managers and other staff across the province are being trained to implement transformation through person-directed support, supported decision making, living with risk and increasing choice.

Updated Legislation

New legislation to replace the *Homes for Special Care Act* will ensure a person-directed approach to service delivery and emphasize helping people live in their own homes and communities. The legislation will help establish a range of services, supports and funding, while protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities so they can access government services and programs.

Reduced Reliance on Facilities

Government is committed to taking active measures to reduce reliance on larger long term care facilities. Nova Scotians have told us that too many individuals with disabilities are living in large institutional style facilities and could be living in the community with the right supports.

Innovative Housing

Working with Housing Nova Scotia, plans will be developed to allow people with disabilities to move more easily from facility-based care into the community. We will work towards having access to a range of affordable and accessible housing.

Reimagine Residential Facilities

Under a new delivery system, facilities will no longer be used as long term residences. Instead, they may be adapted and reinvented in keeping with the principles of the transformation. The province will no longer fund the expansion of the old model of support which includes Regional Rehabilitation Centres (RRC) and Adult Residential Centres (ARC).

This will not happen overnight. As we move away from the old model, there will be a focus on community-based residential living options.

Stop Referrals to Residential Facilities

Government commits to stop new referrals for permanent placement in the old model facilities (RRCs and ARCs). This will be effective as of April, 2016. We will also be introducing an accountability framework for service providers who support individuals with disabilities. There will be monitoring to ensure the success of integrating individuals with disabilities into the community.

Conclusion: Choice and Inclusion

Exciting opportunities are opening up to build more flexible, responsive and sustainable supports for persons with disabilities. Our province will be strengthened as we become more inclusive during this decade-long process of transformation.

Choice and Inclusion: Action Plan

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Increase community based living, along with social and economic inclusion				
Enhance the suite of community-oriented services (Independent Living Support, Alternative Family Support and Direct Family Support Program) and develop self-directed funding models and practices	●	●		
Support individuals to transition to community based living and expand supports	●	●	●	●
Develop an employment framework to enhance client employability and supports	●	●		
Identify partnerships to create more innovative options (Family Demonstration Projects, Housing Strategy)		●	●	
Modernize service approach				
Restructure role of Care Coordinators to focus on a person-directed planning, supported decision making and client navigation support	●	●	●	
New legislation to replace the <i>Homes for Special Care Act</i>		●		
Restructure Facility Based Residential Living				
Transition clients living in ARCs/ RRCs into community based living	●	●	●	●
Re-invent larger facility based models to enhance the delivery of community-based supports		●	●	●
Public Education and Social Marketing				
Launch public awareness campaign to signal and promote the value and social inclusion for all citizens to live and be part of the community.		●		
Accountability and Quality Care				
Engage with communities to better understand and support identified needs		●	●	●
Develop new funding models for modernized and responsive programs and services		●	●	

For more information, or provide comments and feedback, visit our website at;

<http://novascotia.ca/coms/SPD/>

