

Chapter 46

Social Services—Supervising Community-Based Organizations Delivering Programs to Intellectually Disabled People

1.0 MAIN POINTS

The Ministry of Social Services provides programs and services for people with intellectual disabilities by working with and helping them access a variety of community-based services. The Ministry uses community-based organizations (CBOs) to deliver residential programs to people with intellectual disabilities. *The Residential Services Act* and *The Rehabilitation Act* give the Ministry the authority to enter into agreements with those CBOs.

This chapter describes our third follow-up of the Ministry's actions on the three remaining recommendations we initially made in our 2012 audit of the Ministry's processes to plan for, contract with, and monitor CBOs providing services to intellectually disabled people and their families.

By August 2019, the Ministry improved its processes to monitor CBOs serving intellectually disabled people and their families, but needs to make further improvements.

The Ministry continued to work on establishing measures and targets to better monitor and evaluate the results of services CBOs deliver. In addition, it continued to review its risk assessment processes to update relevant policies and procedures.

However, the Ministry inconsistently met the expected timeframes for monitoring CBOs' performance as outlined in CBO agreements. Active monitoring of CBO performance would help the Ministry assess whether the services delivered achieve the results the Ministry intended.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Our *2012 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 22, concluded that the Ministry had effective processes to plan for, contract with, and monitor CBOs providing services to intellectually disabled people and their families other than the areas identified in our eight recommendations. By March 2017, the Ministry implemented five of the eight recommendations.¹

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook—Assurance* (CSAE 3001). To evaluate the Ministry's progress toward meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. The Ministry's management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

¹ See our *2014 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 55, and our *2017 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 33.



To perform our follow-up audit, we discussed actions taken with management, reviewed relevant documentation (e.g., policy and procedures manuals, information showing CBO reviews occurred), and tested a sample of CBO agreements.

At August 31, 2019, the Ministry held agreements with 87 CBOs for providing services to intellectually disabled people. In 2018–19, the Ministry paid these CBOs about \$197 million.

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at August 31, 2019, and the Ministry's actions up to that date.

3.1 Work to Include Outcome Performance Measures Continues

We recommended the Ministry of Social Services work with CBOs to establish program objectives, and outcome performance measures and targets to be used to monitor and evaluate the services CBOs deliver to intellectually disabled people and their families. (2012 Report – Volume 1, p. 192, Recommendation 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 17, 2014)

Status—Partially Implemented

At August 31, 2019, the Ministry had not yet established overall outcome-based measures and targets for service delivery at each CBO.

In April 2015, a task team consisting of representatives from the Ministry, the CBO sector and the Saskatchewan Association for Rehabilitation Centres began working on a CBO sustainability project. As part of this project, the task team looked at outcome-based service delivery centred on the assessed needs of clients.

The CBO sustainability project is currently developing test outcome measures to include more accountability requirements in the agreements between the Ministry and CBOs. This pilot project uses a phased approach with the goal of implementing outcome-based agreements in 2020–21.

Including outcome performance measures and targets in the agreements with CBOs would allow the Ministry to better evaluate CBO performance, and assess whether the delivered services achieve the results the Ministry intended as outlined by its objectives.

3.2 Monitoring Procedures Inconsistently Followed

We recommended the Ministry of Social Services follow their established monitoring procedures as outlined in their agreements with CBOs that provide services to individuals with intellectual disabilities. (2012 Report – Volume 1, p. 196, Recommendation 6; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 17, 2014)

Status—Partially Implemented

Staff inconsistently complete reviews of CBOs within expected timeframes.

The agreements with CBOs require Ministry staff to complete the following review steps at least once every two years: review CBOs' policies and procedures; verify compliance with those policies and procedures; and develop action plans to address non-compliance.

The Ministry tracks when it last reviewed each CBO. Based on its tracking, we determined, as of July 31, 2019, staff had not completed the review steps for 32% of the 87 CBOs within the last two years (at time of previous follow-up: 29%). Management indicated it plans to complete all outstanding reviews by the end of the 2019–20 fiscal year.

Lack of timely monitoring increases the risk that CBOs may not use public resources effectively to achieve the Ministry's mandate to support individuals with intellectual disabilities as they work to build better lives for themselves.

3.3 Policy and Procedures Update Ongoing

We recommended the Ministry of Social Services develop and implement complete policies and procedures for addressing risks identified in CBOs that provide services to individuals with intellectual disabilities. (2012 Report – Volume 1, p. 194, Recommendation 3; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 17, 2014)

Status—Partially Implemented

The Ministry has not yet developed several key policies (e.g. assessing preliminary risk, risk management) relating to CBO risk assessments.

During 2016–17, the Ministry began reviewing its approach to assessing risk management process with CBOs. The expected outcome of the review is a risk management framework for assessing, monitoring, preventing, and mitigating operational risks at CBOs including policies and procedures required to support these processes. The Ministry anticipates the revised risk management framework will be implemented in fall 2020.

Without complete and current policies, it is difficult to communicate expectations to staff and hold CBOs accountable. The lack of formal policies could also lead to staff completing inconsistent CBO risk assessments.

