

Executive Summary of the Cornwall Public Inquiry Phase II Submissions
of The Children’s Aid Society of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry

A. Introduction

It is important to consider where healing needs to take place when viewing the Phase II mandate. The needs of victims and alleged victims must be considered, as well as the institutions that serve them.

B. The Path to Community Healing and Reconciliation

The path to healing and reconciliation must begin with the first step. For the CAS, that step is to apologize to all those who have suffered harm as a result of being mistreated while in the care of the CAS.

The first people to consider in this journey are those individuals who are former wards of the CAS and who testified at the Cornwall Public Inquiry.

In addition, the CAS asks the Commission to consider those institutions whose public image has been damaged as a result of the events reviewed at the Inquiry, as these institutions will continue to serve this community long after the Inquiry has been completed.

The image of the CAS has been damaged as a result of some of the allegations which were reviewed in Phase I evidence and the attention to same through various forms of media. The lack of time to review success stories of the institutions involved with the Inquiry further magnified this problem.

It will be important for the public to appreciate that many of the shortcomings of the CAS that were reviewed at the Inquiry have already been addressed.

C. Implementation of Changes

The CAS has used the Inquiry process to proactively address some of the lessons learned as a result of testimony heard at the Inquiry.

Some changes already made include:

- a. Unscheduled visits to foster homes, kin-in-care homes, adoption homes and outside paid resources to ensure random spot checks on all location where CAS wards are placed.
- b. Filing of documentation concerning outcomes of investigations against foster parent and alternate caregivers to ensure that information regarding allegations in a foster home are placed in the file of all children in that home.
- c. Recommendations regarding Criminal Injuries Compensation Board applications for verified abuse of children in care will now be standard procedure.
- d. Recommendations for treatment and, if necessary, assessment for children in care following verification of abuse will now be standard procedure.
- e. The CAS will continue to work with management and local and provincial committees to discuss and, hopefully, resolve the policies and procedures on advising employers about individuals who pose risks to children. As there are many complex social and legal issues around this matter, provincial direction may be required.

- f. Tracking of staff training will be standardized through the use of a new information system.
- g. Community training initiatives and program development will be similarly tracked through the use of a Community Training Record.
- h. Police record checks processes are now mandatory and uniform for all board members, staff, foster parent applicants, alternate care givers, kin-in-care applications, adoption applicants and volunteers.
- i. The human resources policy of the CAS is under review in order to ensure that investigations of allegations made against staff or board members are thoroughly recorded, stored and able to be reviewed, while giving protection to the privacy of the individual against whom the allegation is made.
- j. Changes regarding record-keeping and file updating mean that when a youth is discharged from care, depending on the circumstances of the individual, it may be possible to provide a printed copy of that individual's social history. Funding is required for this goal to be met, as additional staff is needed to deliver and maintain the information.
- k. The current Child Abuse Protocol is under review with local police. Discussion will be expended to include other stakeholders, most of whom were also parties with standing at the Inquiry.

D. The Healing of Victims

- a. In order to learn from past experiences, the CAS is prepared to have its Executive Director or her delegate meet with any former CAS ward in order to share and discuss their experiences while in the care of the CAS, be it positive or negative experiences.

E. Support for Other Submissions

Though all of the effort that went in to all of the Phase II submissions is acknowledged, the CAS has comments on three proposals:

- a. The Child Advocacy Centre is a project that the agency has been involved with and completely supports this proposal.
- b. The CAS would be receptive to any recommendations regarding the expansion of services for youths aged 16 and 17.
- c. Child abuse prevention and education has the support of the CAS, provided that any training program must address all forms of abuse, not just sexual abuse.

F. Community Renewal

The CAS supports any partnerships, programs and activities directed at community renewal.

G. Agency Requirements

- a. Funding for records disclosure staff is required in order to meet the disclosure demands the CAS faces. Presently there is no dedicated funding for records disclosure.

- b. The CAS does not presently have a training coordinator and requires this position in order to ensure that staff receive the most effective training for their role.

- c. The public image of the CAS has suffered due to the negative publicity generated by the Inquiry. As a result, foster parent recruitment has become difficult. The CAS requires funding in order to launch a recruitment campaign for foster parents.