

**Ministry of Community and Social Services**  
**Ombudsman's Report on situations of crisis involving adults with Developmental Disabilities**

**KEY MESSAGES AND  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
FOR REGIONAL OFFICE AND AGENCY STAFF  
TO USE FOR PUBLIC INQUIRIES**

**ALL MEDIA INQUIRIES SHOULD BE REDIRECTED  
TO THE MINISTRY'S MEDIA LINE: (416) 325-5178**

**KEY MESSAGES**

- The Ministry accepts all of the Ombudsman's recommendations and will report back to the Ombudsman's Office on our progress every six months as he has requested.
- While the Ministry knows there is always more work that can be done; much has also changed since the Ombudsman's investigation began nearly four years ago. In that time, the Ministry has made real progress to address the types of situations identified in the report.
- There is absolutely no government policy or direction to return to a system of institutionalization. In fact, over the past decade, Ontario has closed all institutions for adults with developmental disabilities.
- In 2014, the Ministry made an unprecedented investment of \$810 million over three years to expand supports for adults with developmental disabilities. This investment is giving more people and their families choice and flexibility to purchase the supports that best fit their needs by, as the Ombudsman noted, providing new direct funding to more than 7,200 adults with developmental disabilities to date.
- Part of this investment will provide new residential supports to approximately 1,400 adults with developmental disabilities with high priority need by 2017-18. In fact, in the first two years, more than 800 adults have already transitioned to new residential supports.

**1. What is the Ministry planning to do with the Ombudsman's recommendations?**

The Ministry accepts all of the Ombudsman's recommendations and will report back to the Ombudsman's Office on our progress every six months as requested.

**2. Will there be any changes to the developmental services system as a result of the Ombudsman's report?**

The Ministry carefully reviewed the Ombudsman's report and the recommendations to evaluate where changes can be made to improve the developmental services system while at the same time not compromising the services that people with developmental disabilities currently receive. A number of the changes that the Ministry is implementing started prior to the Ombudsman's recommendations and agencies have been

consulted along the way. Any new changes that the Ministry might make will be done in consultation with partners.

### **3. The report says that the system is fragmented and unresponsive – how is the Ministry going to fix this?**

The Ministry acknowledges that there is always more work that can be done. Families have told us there are improvements they feel can be made which could address some of the challenges they face. However, much has changed since the Ombudsman's investigation began nearly four years ago. In that time, the Ministry has made real progress to address the types of situations identified in the report.

The developmental services budget has doubled over the past 12 years and has reached \$2.11 billion annually this year.

The Ministry's 2014 investment of \$810 million over three years has to date provided new direct funding and access to community participation supports and caregiver respite services for approximately 15,200 people through the Passport and Special Services at Home Programs.

Part of this investment will also provide new residential supports for approximately 1,400 of the highest needs adults with developmental disabilities by 2017-18.

In fact, in the first two years, more than 800 adults have already transitioned to new residential supports.

### **4. What is the Ministry doing to prevent abuse before it happens?**

The Ministry is working on a provincial strategy to increase access to case management and coordination services. We will:

- Improve the capacity of Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) offices to make suitable referrals to community resources; and
- Implement increased enhanced case management supports for people with developmental disabilities.

In January 2016, the Ministry also launched ReportON to agencies. ReportON is a direct reporting line (1-800-575-2222) and email address (reportONdisability@ontario.ca), available 24/7, to report alleged, suspected and/or witnessed incidents of abuse and neglect of adults with developmental disabilities. The Ministry plans to create greater public awareness of this service in fall 2016.

### **5. How is the Ministry stopping families from going into crisis?**

In 2014, the Ministry introduced a consistent province-wide urgent response process to help people and families in immediate need. This helps ensure that situations such as those mentioned in the report, can be addressed as soon as a crisis situation becomes known.

The Ministry's adult direct funding program, Passport, has also been a successful way to give people and families choice to purchase supports that best fit their needs.