

The DSP Connection

A way to connect on what's happening on the Disability Support Program (DSP) Transformation Project

A message from the Executive Director, Disability Support Program (DSP)



Welcome to the third edition of the DSP Connection. It has been a busy fall and winter for the DSP Program, as highlighted during the Roadshow sessions held with staff, stakeholders, and others in October 2016. These sessions were well attended and a great deal of information was shared.

The sessions provided an opportunity to present ideas on the new service array, which was based on consultations, focus groups and jurisdictional research. We received positive feedback on the proposed changes, and continue to focus our work on reducing the reliance and transition from placements in larger residential settings.

Some Roadshow comments and feedback included:

- People supported the vision for the future of DSP, that states “people with disabilities have the right to live, love, work, play, and pursue their life aspirations in their community.”
- Many parents, families, and attendees had questions around the individualized funding model and what that would mean for their family
- Some families expressed that their loved ones consider their current ARC/RRC to be their home/ community and would not benefit from transitioning
- Special needs funding needs to be made consistent

- There were general questions and concerns about the level of staff training available and/or required to support individuals in achieving their outcomes in residential settings

As we complete the Phase 2 transformation work, DSP staff are in the process of sharing the work to date and requesting approvals to proceed. Specifically, we are seeking approval on the recommended changes to the Adult Service Array, including the use of supports budgets. We are also developing an approach to planning the transition of participants in the ARC/RRC program to community options. With anticipated approvals in hand Phase 3 work will begin in May. Phase 3 work involves further program design and implementation.

A key take away from the October Roadshows was the clear indication that families and program participants have much to offer in how the new service array should and will roll out. With a person-centered and person-directed approach it is essential that the Disability Support Program finds a way to bring families and participants together in a meaningful way to assist in Phase 3 implementation. Once we know what this could look like, we'll share it, before Phase 3 begins.

I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to DSP and service provider staff who do their very best to provide excellent supports and services every day to participants and families. Because of them, we are a better Nova Scotia.

Joe Rudderham, Executive Director, DSP

Progress update highlights

We have made progress on how the \$3 million to help Nova Scotians with disabilities is being invested. Here are some highlights.

Supporting the transition of at least 25 participants from larger facilities to community based options (Project 25)

- 11 participants have moved already – eight from larger residential settings (ARC or RRC) and three from smaller settings to individual living settings
- 20 participants are currently planning moves: 15 from larger residential settings (ARC or RRC) and five from smaller residential settings to smaller, more individualized settings
- There are also about 12–15 participants who have been identified as having the potential to transition and are we are actively working with them to identify options
- In addition to the plans to transition 25 individuals from ARC/RRC settings, 12 individuals in an RCF will also now have the option to live in a group home, small option, or ILS setting. This will create not only the opportunity to live in a smaller setting, but will also result in each individual having their own room (some individuals currently sharing rooms in the RCF). Also, all individuals from RCF will remain living in their current community, close to day activities, and close to their family and friends who support them on a regular basis.
- Collaboration between service providers and the Department has been ongoing in identifying opportunities to support individuals to fulfil their interests and reach their goals. DSP is committed to continuing to work with individuals to support their goals and plans for transitioning to smaller community settings.

\$790,000 to increase the capacity of Adult Service Centers (ASC)

- Scaling up social enterprise
 - All funding has been committed for the year
 - As we move into Phase 3, five key priority areas have been identified: thrift stores / online stores, outdoor wood creations, prepared meals, services for seniors (non-medical), and product packaging
 - Adult Service Centres were given the opportunity to be involved in as many of the five key areas as they wanted; Common Good facilitated initial meetings with interested ASC parties across the province and initiatives are underway
- Enhanced employment supports to help agencies grow capacity in areas that have previously been underserved
 - We received 21 proposals from Adult Service Centers and based upon established criteria, 12 proposals have been selected for funding
 - Payments have been issued for 50% of the funding and we are finalizing the evaluation tools and have circulated to providers for feedback

Flex policy

- The independent component of the Flex Individualized funding program was rolled out in October 2016. The program filled up quickly with seven participants, and there are already others on the waitlist. DCS staff interviewed the participants prior to commencing the program, and will interview them again to evaluate the new program structure. They are all looking forward to participating and have plans in place for how they would self-direct their individualized funding.

"This program should have happened years ago. It has been a life changer for her and our family. We've been looking for something like this for years, since our parents died. I really hope the program can follow her when she moves".

From Participant's Family

"[The program] is going good. My worker comes by all the time. We go for coffee and stuff like that. It gives me someone to talk to. It makes it easier to have someone there you can count on and talk to. It takes away the loneliness. It makes a big difference. It lifts me up. It helps me get back in society".

From Program Participant

- Many participants expressed relief to have support from people other than their family members. Family members also expressed appreciation that there is now someone else in the person's life to provide support.
- Many participants plan on hiring people to enable them to access the community more frequently. They are hoping the program improves their quality of life. A few participants expressed feeling socially isolated and are looking forward to having someone other than their family members available to spend time with them.
- Check back in our next newsletter to follow the progress of our Flex Independent participants!

Complex Case Management Process

- The need to work collaboratively with our partners in the Health system, with the goal of providing better outcomes for our clients, was identified as part of DSP Transformation. The collaborative complex case management process was developed by the Health Alignment Working Group, which consists of representatives from the Disability Support Program, Department of Health and Wellness, IWK Hospital, and the Nova Scotia Health Authority. There are many benefits to developing and implementing the complex case process, including:
 - Clients are safe and able to meet their basic needs;
 - Efficient and documented decision making;
 - Enhanced tracking, monitoring, and reporting;
 - Staff and delivery partners are empowered to make a positive difference in people's lives;
 - Supports and services are delivered efficiently; and,
 - Supports and services are accessible.
- Training for staff took place in January via online webinar, with implementation of the processes and supporting materials following the training.

Good news story in our community

As part of these newsletters, we want to acknowledge the amazing things happening in our community. We would like to share a few stories about how DSP transformation is impacting the lives of our clients and their families:

Project 25 – A story about how Project 25 has impacted the life of one DSP participant

One of the Project 25 participants moved from a Small Options home into their own apartment under the Independent Living Support (ILS) program, where they receive some support from a service provider. Now that the participant is in an apartment, they feel they have more control over their life and the freedom to make their own decisions. Since moving, the participant got a part-time job, successfully earned their beginner's driver's license, and is planning on working toward other employment opportunities. They developed a great relationship with the Service Provider who is helping to support the participant with their personal goals and build more independent living skills, such as managing a budget. Overall, there have been a number of positive changes as a result of this move. The participant is experiencing a lot less anxiety and stress because this is the more appropriate placement and level of support for them.

DSP Participant, December 2016

Enhanced Employment Supports – The following is a letter from The Flower Cart Group discussing how they, and their clients, have been directly impacted by the Employment Supports and Capacity Building funding.

Things have been progressing quickly and positively at The Flower Cart Group since receiving funding for the Employment Support and Capacity Building (ES&CB) project in early December.

Two of The Flower Cart Group's vocational clients have participated in paid employment through our Michelin Contract. One client is a recipient of the Disability Supports Program and the other receives Employment Supports Income Assistance Funding.



The Flower Cart Group has a 19 year partnership with Michelin Tire Canada at its Waterville production facility. This partnership has evolved over the years and is now to the point where The Flower Cart Group is considered a contractor that provides labour in the plant. As part of the FCG Contract Services division, 40 people are currently employed in the plant and supported by two permanent supportive co-workers. Historically, an individual that would require more individualized support could not do the work that we do at the plant because the funding wasn't available to provide the support.

Since receiving the ES&CB project funding, we have been able to provide a level of support that we have not been able to provide previously. This is very exciting as it opens more opportunities for DSP and ESIA clients to experience real paid work in an inclusive work setting with one of the province's largest employers.

The two clients mentioned above have just completed their first week of work. Both completed the safety induction training that all Michelin employees and contractors are required to take. This training was supported by the ES&CB funded job coach. More importantly, both individuals were successful in working ten hours of paid supported employment.

One of the clients was asked what he liked best about this new opportunity, and his response was, "I enjoy talking to new people and I like the work."

The goal is to extend this opportunity to four additional DSP and ESIA clients over the course of the ES&CB project.

The Flower Cart Group, December 16, 2016

We want to hear from you

If you would like to share your thoughts on how this transformation is impacting your life, your community, or the people around you, please send it to us by using the contact information below. We would love to hear from you.

Please feel free to send in any questions or comments about anything in this newsletter. Thank you for reading and stay tuned for our next newsletter when we will share some personal stories about how Transformation is impacting the lives of DSP participants.

Department of Community Services Disability Support Program

Email: DSP@novascotia.ca

Find your local office at
<http://novascotia.ca/coms/departement/contact/index.html>

The DSP Connection is also available online at
<http://novascotia.ca/coms/transformation/program-transformation.asp>

Connect with us: twitter.com/NS-DCS