

# Social Development

Annual Report  
**2019–2020**



Social Development  
Annual Report 2019-2020

Province of New Brunswick  
PO 6000, Fredericton NB E3B 5H1 CANADA

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## **Transmittal letters**

### **From the Minister to the Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Brenda L. Murphy  
Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick

May it please your Honour:

It is my privilege to submit the annual report of the Department of Social Development, Province of New Brunswick, for the fiscal year April 1, 2019, to March 31, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,



Honourable Bruce Fitch  
Minister

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### **From the Deputy Minister to the Minister**

Honourable Bruce Fitch  
Minister of Social Development

Sir:

I am pleased to be able to present the annual report describing operations of the Department of Social Development for the fiscal year April 1, 2019, to March 31, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric Beaulieu  
Deputy Minister

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# Minister's message

I am proud to present the 2019-2020 Annual Report for the Department of Social Development.

It is important to note that this report reflects departmental work until March 2020; just as COVID-19 arrived in New Brunswick.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for us as a province, but it is heartening to know that during the uncertain days, we could be certain that the dedicated staff at the Department of Social Development would keep working hard for those that need help.

I am extremely proud to have been appointed Minister of Social Development. The mandate of this department is not one that I take lightly. We have an incredibly important responsibility to the citizens of this province to improve the lives of families, children and seniors in New Brunswick. I am thankful to the former Minister of Social Development, Dorothy Shephard; her hard work and dedication is evident in the pages of this report. I am also incredibly grateful to the hard-working and dedicated staff of Social Development, who are wholeheartedly committed to helping others, for making our accomplishments possible.

The department has achieved a lot this year. Through increased public and stakeholder engagement, Social Development is working to enhance the delivery of child welfare and youth services in New Brunswick. The department received approximately 1,600 online surveys and other submissions that were compiled for use in developing the legislation. Changes to the system, which will require both short-term and long-term planning, are underway and will continue.

In May 2019, the department launched the first three-year action plan in a 10-year provincial-federal housing agreement that will see a \$300M investment over the next decade. In the first three-year plan, we will invest more than \$63M in the repair, renovation and creation of affordable rental units.

As well, a new state of the art nursing home, Losier Hall, opened in Miramichi in October 2019. This replaced the former Mount Saint Joseph Nursing Home and added 24 additional beds in the system. We continue our valued relationship with all nursing homes and long-term care facilities around the province to optimize the delivery of services to those who need care.

The achievements mentioned above are only a few of the many impactful initiatives that took place over the past year. The Department of Social Development endeavours every day to ensure that vulnerable New Brunswickers receive the services they need, when they need them.

I am looking forward to leading the Social Development team and seeing the successes the future holds.



Honourable Bruce Fitch  
Minister of Social Development

# Deputy Minister's message

On behalf of the Department of Social Development, I am pleased to present the 2019-2020 annual report which highlights our challenges, trials and successes for the fiscal period ending March 31, 2020. This report highlights the hard work and dedication of staff who are committed to making a difference in the lives of children, families, persons with disabilities and seniors in New Brunswick.

We have several accomplishments to highlight for 2019-2020 which are outlined below.

As part of our commitment to improving client experiences and outcomes, the position of Chief Experience Officer was created. The Chief Experience Officer works across the department to simplify, integrate and deliver quality experiences and effective services for clients.

As well, the department's First Nations Relations Team continued to provide support and guidance in all programs, services, partnerships and policies that impact Aboriginal people in New Brunswick.

To improve service delivery for seniors, the department undertook a review of the Provincial Roundtable on Healthy Aging. We implemented a revised format for engaging stakeholders around seniors' issues and healthy aging. The new format will allow for greater participation of stakeholders and will be more focused.

The department partnered with the New Brunswick Institute of Research, Data and Training to securely transfer anonymized Long-Term Care Program data to enable research and evaluation.

I am immensely proud of the department and all we have accomplished during the 2019-2020 year. I want to thank all Social Development employees for their hard work and commitment to delivering an excellent client experience to those we serve. Moving forward, we will continue to demonstrate our passion and dedication to New Brunswickers in need.



Eric Beaulieu  
Deputy Minister

# Top Government Priorities

## **Strategy and Operations Management**

The Government of New Brunswick (GNB) uses a Formal Management system built on leading business practices to develop, communicate and review strategy. This process provides the Public Service with a proven methodology to execute strategy, increase accountability and continuously drive improvement.

The development of the strategy, using the Formal Management system, starts with our governments roadmap for the future of New Brunswick that focuses on key priorities and the importance of public accountability.

Our Top Priorities:

## **Affordable and Responsive Government**

Getting our financial house in order will make it possible for government to be responsive and provide sustainable high-quality public services for all New Brunswickers.

## **Dependable Public Health Care**

New Brunswickers deserve a sustainable, high-quality health-care system where they are able to access the services they need when they need them.

## **World-class Education**

New Brunswick's young people need access to a world-class education, so they can make the most of their lives and compete in future job markets.

## **Energized Private Sector**

All New Brunswickers benefit from a thriving private sector. Increasing private sector investment, growing our labour force and being home to successful businesses of all sizes is good for our province.

## **Vibrant and Sustainable Communities**

Vibrant communities are places people want to call home. More vibrant and sustainable communities make for a more resilient province.

## **High-performing Organization**

All New Brunswickers benefit when engaged and empowered civil servants use their talents and skills to make our province a better place.

# Highlights

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, Social Development focused on the following strategic priorities:

- In May 2019, government invested in a \$16M wage increase for home support workers. These wage increases applied to direct care workers employed in Home Support, Special Care Homes, Family Support and Attendant Care; all of whom provide the care needed to help clients. The wage increases are intended to help improve recruitment and retention of workers.
- The provincial government appointed a trustee to oversee operations of the Campbellton Nursing Home in order to help seniors waiting for a placement in the region get access to a bed at this facility. The trustee is overseeing operations of the 100-bed facility for up to 12 months.
- As part of Social Development's commitment to improving the experience of clients and employees, the department made significant changes to the structure of the department. New members of the Senior Leadership Team were recruited, while focusing on improved communication from all directions, and receiving input from direct service delivery employees.
- Social Development received a comprehensive report on the child protection system in January 2019 which outlined several areas for improvement. The department has acted on several items, including:
  - Amendments were introduced to the *Family Services Act* to allow the development of a new Children's Services and Resources Regulation. This regulation will strengthen approaches that enable children to safely remain within their extended family network and support new services and resources, such as kinship care and the transfer of guardianships.
  - Intake services for child protection were moved to the province's eight regions, rather than having them centralized. This is intended to help social workers respond to concerns with greater understanding of the local context.
  - Social workers now have access to cell phones, which help them better support and remain in contact with their clients, supervisors and other social workers.
  - Consultations were launched regarding the development of new child welfare legislation to better protect children and promote healthy families.
- In February 2020, Social Development announced funding for a partnership with the Saint John Police Force and Addiction and Mental Health Services providing on-site acute addiction and mental health needs assessments, as well as specialized crisis intervention. In addition, the department has assigned two child protection social workers who will work directly out of offices located at the Saint John Police Force headquarters.
- In March 2020, in preparation and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Social Development updated business continuity plans, established Social Development's Emergency Operations Centre, dedicated staff to the procurement and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment, and assigned employees to work in the Emergency Operations Centre at the Department of Health.
- During the early stages of the pandemic, Social Development continued to collaborate with agencies, community partners and individuals to maintain wellness checks, assessments and access to appropriate services to meet the needs of clients. Home support services offered by the department were deemed essential and, to the extent possible, continued to provide supports to clients. Many clients saw limited impacts to their home care, as their services continued uninterrupted. The department also provided funding to the United Ways' Compassion Fund and Food Dépot Alimentaire to help coordinate efforts in local communities and provide additional support throughout the province.



# Performance measures

Objectives	Measures
<b>Affordable and responsive government</b>	
Eliminate deficits and reduce debt	Ratio of actual to budgeted expenses
<b>Dependable public health care</b>	
Enhance aging care	Median age of seniors entering nursing homes
Enhance aging care	Percentage of seniors (in long-term care program) receiving community-based care
Enhance aging care	Median time from contact to service received for long term care clients

## Affordable and responsive government

### Objective of the measure

Eliminate deficits and reduce debt

### Measure

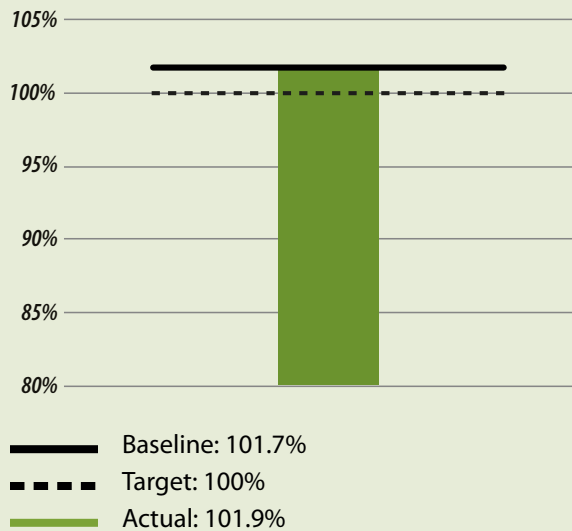
Ratio of actual to budgeted expenses

### Description of measure

The ratio of actual to budgeted expenses measures whether the department is over-budget or under-budget. The ratio will exceed 100 per cent when spending is over-budget and be less than 100 per cent when spending is under-budget.

### Overall performance

Historically, the expenditures have been trending up due to an aging population, higher caseloads in some programs, and more complex cases. The department did not reach target during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.



### Why do we measure this?

This indicator measures the ability of the department to manage its overall expenses as compared to budget. GNB must ensure expenses are managed in accordance with the budget and be prepared to take corrective action if expenses are projected to be over-budget during the year.

### What initiatives or projects were undertaken in the reporting year to achieve the outcome?

Program areas focused on various initiatives and projects to contain expenses. Income Security benefits, Seniors and Long-Term Care and other benefits were under budget, while Child Welfare and Disability Support Services, Income-Security Service Delivery costs, Housing and Corporate and Other Services ran over budget. More detailed information on budgeting can be found on [page 17](#), which includes the Department's Financial Information.

## Dependable public health care

### Objective of the measure

Enhance aging care

### Measure

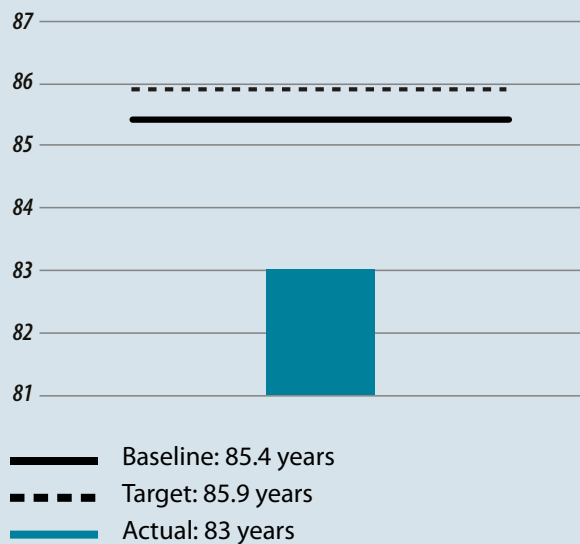
Median age of seniors entering nursing homes

### Description of measure

The median age of seniors on entry to a nursing home.

### Overall performance

During the fiscal year the department saw a significant decrease in the median age of entry, related to initiatives that took place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



### Why do we measure this?

To enhance aging care, the department has focused on appropriate interventions at the appropriate time. Through the support of other efforts in enhancing aging care, seniors will be independent longer, therefore requiring nursing home care later in the continuum of care.

### What initiatives or projects were undertaken in the reporting year to achieve the outcome?

During March 2020, 219 residents were transferred from hospital to nursing homes to create capacity in the hospital system. These transfers reduced the median age of entry to nursing homes.

## Dependable public health care

### Objective of the measure

Enhance aging care

### Measure

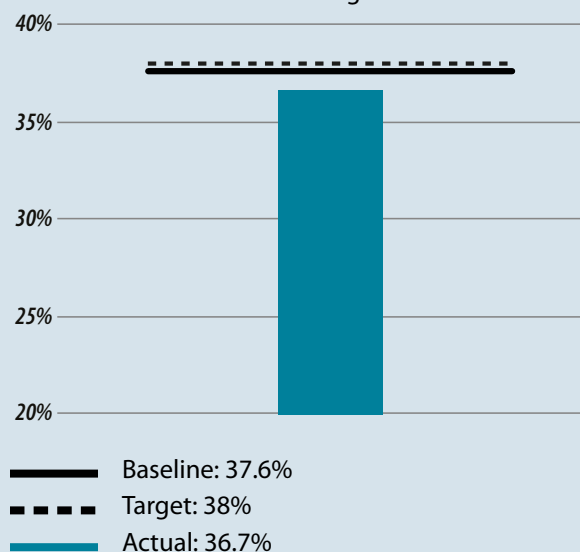
Percentage of seniors (in long-term care program) receiving community-based care

### Description of measure

The number of seniors (aged 65 and over) receiving in-home services through the department divided by the number of seniors (aged 65 and over) receiving in-home services and in a facility (adult residential facility or nursing home).

### Overall performance

This measure was below its target for 2019-2020.



### Why do we measure this?

Seniors want to stay in their own homes for as long as possible, and they need the proper support to do so. Seniors and stakeholders have also said there is need for improved access to home and community-based supports, better integration of health and social care services, and an enhanced focus on prevention and well-being. Observing an increase in the percentage of seniors accessing services at home demonstrates a shift in the right direction.

### What initiatives or projects were undertaken in the reporting year to achieve the outcome?

Projects under the Healthy Seniors Pilot Project were identified to support seniors to have information and services to remain in their homes. Nursing Home Without Walls was announced in May 2019. This project is exploring the extension of support services offered in nursing homes to seniors still living at home. A senior's navigator website <https://socialsupportsnb.ca/en/> was developed during the fiscal year, with plans to be released in the summer of 2020. This site will provide seniors and their supporters with information on services and programs that are available in clear language they can understand.

Initiatives like the Alzheimer Society's First Link program and the Seniors Health, Well-Being and Home Safety Review serve to inform seniors and caregivers on available programs and services relevant to their needs. Providing seniors and caregivers information sooner enables them to proactively address their needs and avoid crisis which can lead to accessing more costly forms of services such as nursing homes.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted end of year results, as the province experienced an increase in nursing home admissions in March 2020.

# Dependable public health care

## Objective of the measure

Enhance aging care

## Measure

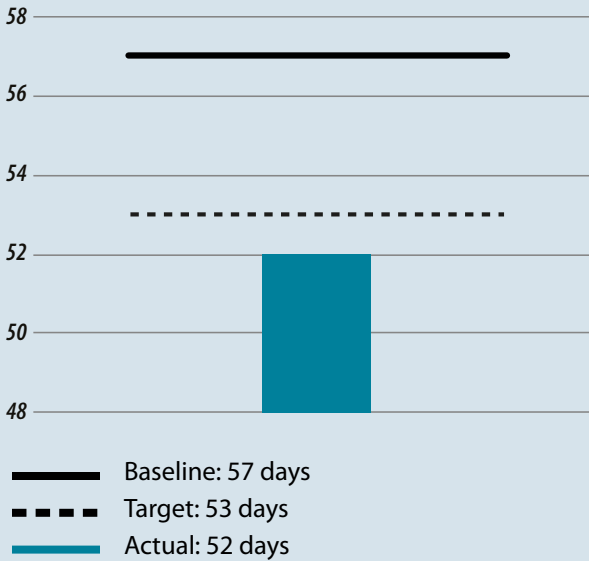
Median time from contact to service received for long-term care clients

## Description of measure

The time from initial contact with the department to first service received.

## Overall performance

The department exceeded it's 2019-2020 target.



## Why do we measure this?

Decreasing the cycle time for a long-term care assessment will provide a timely service to seniors, may reduce the time seniors remain in hospital, and will help prevent or delay admission to nursing homes or adult residential facilities.

## What initiatives or projects were undertaken in the reporting year to achieve the outcome?

In 2019-2020, the long-term care assessment process continued to monitor how the changes implemented under the 2015 Long-Term Care Improvement Process project impacted the assessment time. The changes implemented were: an initial call from the social worker after five days of the referral to schedule an assessment time; interim supports for seniors completing the assessment process were introduced to support an earlier discharge from the hospital or prevent a crisis; and, the client will maintain the same social worker while they are involved in the program. The department has identified initiatives for continual improvement of the long term care process which are focused on aligning with the strategic direction of providing timely services to seniors. The department will also incorporate evidence-based learnings from the Healthy Seniors Pilot Projects that are underway.

# Overview of departmental operations

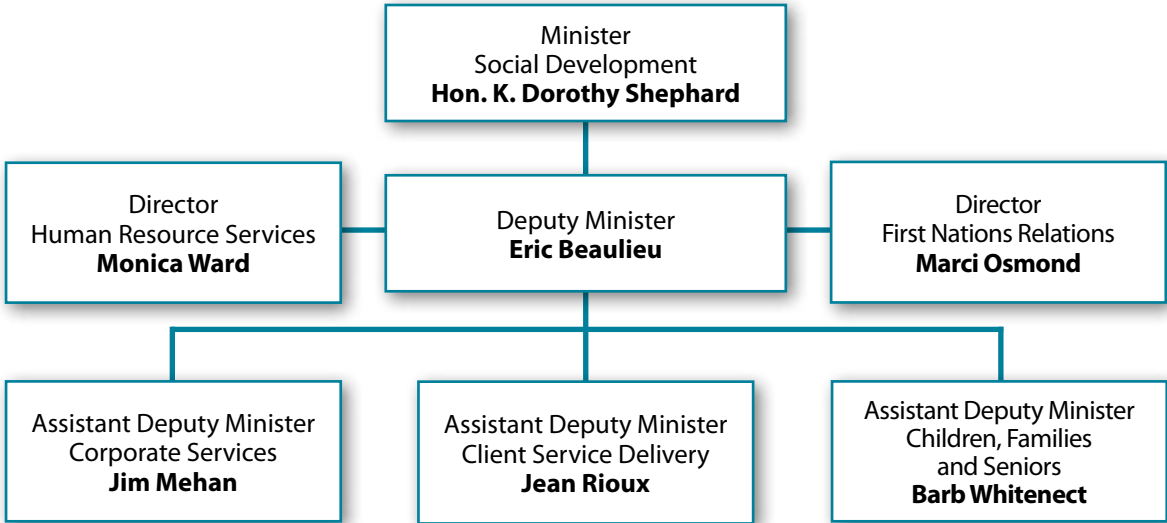
## Mission

The Department of Social Development offers programs and services designed to provide protection and care for individuals and families, while also fostering independence and self-sufficiency. The department works with service providers and community partners who also play an important role in contributing to a safe, secure and healthy New Brunswick.

The department is structured in three divisions as seen on the following organizational chart that integrates in a team-based approach to support our citizens.

## High-level organizational chart

As of March 31, 2020



# Division overview and highlights

## Client Service Delivery Division

The **Client Service Delivery Division** is responsible for delivering Social Development's programs and services to clients of the department, managing day-to-day client relations and operations, establishing and managing relationships with community partners, and maintaining performance excellence. The division consists of eight regional offices and the Client Service Delivery Support Branch.

The **Regional Offices** are responsible for the delivery of programs and services in core business areas to individuals and families. The core business areas include: child welfare and youth services, housing and homelessness, income support, disability support services, long term care and nursing home services.

The **Client Service Delivery Support Branch** is responsible for delivering services province-wide through single entry access points and for providing a range of key executive and operational supports. Services provided include: Intake for Child and Adult Protection; Birth Parent Services and Youth Enhancement Services referrals; After Hours Emergency Social Services; Family Group Conference; Immediate Response Conference; Child Protection Mediation Services; Post-Adoption Disclosure Services; Provincial Social Development Record Checks and Exemptions; Provincial Territorial Child Welfare Protocol Coordination. Key executive and operational supports include: Integrated Front End, Ministerial Correspondence, Medical Advisory Board and Emergency Social Services.

### Highlights

#### Client Service Delivery Support Branch

- ◆ The design and implementation of a SD Record Check Evaluation Committee for exemptions was completed in Fall 2019.

- ◆ The branch responded to a second year of significant flooding as a result of the 2019 freshet. In adding a new case management role through the Red Cross as part of the response, the overall time to transition evacuees back home was significantly reduced.

## Children, Families and Seniors Division

The **Children, Families and Seniors Division** is responsible for program design and development, as well as the interpretation, implementation and monitoring of programs related to child welfare and youth services, disability supports, income supports, health services, housing and homelessness, long term care and adult residential facilities. The division designs programs that are supported by regional service delivery and works with partners across the province.

The division consists of five branches: Child Welfare and Youth Services, Income Support, Housing and Homelessness, Adult Client Support Services, Adult Community Resources.

The **Child Welfare and Youth Services Branch** is responsible for planning, designing and monitoring child and youth services. The branch is responsible for the ongoing development and monitoring of the Competency Based Child Welfare Training System, as well as the delivery of training to child welfare social workers and social workers' supervisors; including social workers working in First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies, program delivery managers and provincial consultants. This branch includes: Family Supports for Children with Disabilities, the Adoption Program, Intake and Investigation, Children's Resource Services, Child Protection, Child in Care, Birth Parent Services, Youth Engagement Services, and *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

The **Income Support Branch** is responsible to provide individuals and families in need with financial benefits. The branch is also responsible for planning, designing and monitoring programs and services to support individuals and families, and to help them achieve and maintain self-reliance and, where appropriate, with self-sufficiency.

program services to enhance their potential for employment. This branch includes: The Transitional Assistance Program, Case Management Services for Social Assistance Clients, Career Development Options for Social Assistance Clients, the Extended Benefits program, Special Needs Benefits and Family Support Orders Services.

Health Services is responsible for the day-to-day operations, planning, designing and monitoring of the department's Health Services Program. The Health Services Program offers a number of health and medical benefits, and services to Social Development clients that have an active health card. Health Services programs include: Mobility & Adaptive Equipment Loan Program; Dental Program; Hearing Aid Program; Medical Supplies/Services Program; Orthopedic Program; Ostomy/Incontinence Program; Prosthetic Program; Respiratory Program; Therapeutic Nutrients Program; and the Vision Program. Health Services is also responsible for Healthy Smiles, Clear Vision and the NB Cleft Palate Program. Specific client groups eligible through health services include: Social Assistance recipients and their dependents, Health-Card-Only clients (individuals with extensive health needs who are unable to cover the cost of services), clients served within the Child and Youth Services Program, Long Term Care clients residing in Adult Residential Facilities, Nursing Home clients, and Mental Health clients residing in facilities.

The **Housing and Homelessness Branch** is responsible for the planning, design and monitoring of all departmental housing and homelessness programs and services. These include the following: Public Housing, Rent Supplement and Rural and Native Housing Programs; Non-Profit and Cooperative Housing Programs; Homelessness and Transition Houses; Homeowner and Emergency Repair Programs; Affordable Rental Housing Program; Rental Rehabilitation Assistance Program; Home Completion and Home Ownership Assistance Programs; Property Management and Loans Administration. The branch is also responsible for the development of new housing programs to address systemic gaps and identify opportunities for improvements related to existing policy and program delivery.

The **Adult Client Services Support Branch** is responsible for planning, designing and monitoring programs and services provided to seniors and adults with a disability. The Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat falls within

this branch and functions as the point of contact to facilitate the central alignment, coordination, planning and liaison for matters and issues related to seniors and healthy aging within government. The programs and services under the branch include: Adult Protection Program; Disability Support Program; Long Term Care Program; Home Support Services; Adult Day Centres; Employment & Support Services; Home First initiatives; Healthy Seniors Pilot Project; Age-Friendly Communities Recognition Program; Seniors' Resource Centres; Wellness Clinics for Seniors and the Senior Goodwill Ambassador Program. This branch also delivers training for senior services and programs throughout the province.

The **Adult Community Resources Branch** is responsible for monitoring quality and compliance of licensed adult residential facilities and nursing homes throughout the province who provide care across the continuum. Adult residential facilities include special care, community residences, memory care and generalist care. The department's objectives are to improve residents' quality of life, help safeguard their dignity, and ensure that appropriate, quality residential services are provided as efficiently as possible within available resources. This is accomplished by ensuring compliance with all relevant acts, regulations under the acts, and departmental standards and policies. The purpose of this monitoring is to enhance accountability, effectiveness and efficiency in the planning and delivery of these services to adults and seniors. The branch is also responsible for providing operational support to licensed nursing homes through funding, advisory services, and management of capital repairs, renovation and replacement projects. The direct provision of nursing home services to residents is the responsibility of each nursing home.

## Highlights

### Child Welfare and Youth Services Branch

- ◆ Increased public and stakeholder engagement to enhance the delivery of child welfare and youth services. Examples of this work included: posting proposed Children's Services and Resources Regulation for public review, Enhancing Child Placement session held, and Right to Know Handbook for youth in care developed with Partners for Youth.



## Income Support Branch

- ◆ The Convalescent Equipment Program and Policy Review was completed by engaging with key stakeholders and partners across the province, developing a new program guide including eligibility criteria and policies, and revising all forms related to the program. This project resulted in the launch of the Mobility and Adaptive Equipment Loan Program in February 2020. The Mobility and Adaptive Equipment Loan Program loans specific mobility and adaptive equipment to eligible clients of the department, prescribed by Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists, to meet their permanent and on-going, basic medical and safety needs.

- ◆ Three projects were announced from round one of the Healthy Seniors Pilot Project to support and aid in the implementation of the New Brunswick Aging Strategy. Nursing Homes Without Walls, the first successful project, was announced in May 2019. This project explores the extension of support services offered in nursing homes to seniors still living at home. The second project announced in June 2019, utilizes virtual reality to promote exercise and rehabilitation among seniors who are living in their home or in a long term care setting. The third project, which aims to engage seniors in proactively monitoring their health status and risk factors with the use of a new digital health platform, and support from health-care professionals was announced in early March 2020.

## Housing and Homelessness Branch

- ◆ Announced in May 2019, the first three-year action plan in a ten-year provincial-federal housing agreement will invest more than \$63M in the repair, renovation and creation of affordable rental units. From 2019-2022, each level of government will make annual investments of \$9.9M, \$10M and \$11.6M respectively.

## Adult Community Resources Branch

- ◆ A new state of the art nursing home, Losier Hall, opened in Miramichi in October 2019. This replaced Mount Saint Joseph Nursing Home and added 24 additional beds in the system.
- ◆ Nursing homes started submitting interRAI long term care facilities data to the Canadian Institute for Health Information via the new real-time Integrated InterRAI Reporting System (IRRS). New Brunswick is the first jurisdiction to start using this system for data submission in real time.

## Adult Client Support Services Branch

- ◆ The department undertook a review of the Provincial Roundtable on Healthy Aging and is moving forward with a revised format for engaging stakeholders around seniors' issues and healthy aging. The new format will allow for greater participation of stakeholders and will be more focused. A joint internal governance structure has been established that will ensure better coordination and alignment with our government partners, particularly the Department of Health, when it comes to prioritizing and addressing existing pressures and opportunities related to seniors.

## Corporate Services Division

The **Corporate Services Division** supports the success and accountability of the department's finance and budget management, contract management, information technology, operations management, policy, analytics, research, evaluation, planning, continuous improvement and client experience strategy. The division consists of Finance and Administration, Policy and Analytics, Strategy Management, Information Technology, and the Chief Experience Office.

The **Finance and Administration Branch** is responsible for working with management to ensure the department's financial resources are spent within GNB's fiscal framework. The branch provides information and advice to ensure consistency in budgeting, contract administra-

tion, financial reporting and administration. It performs internal audits for the department's programs and services. The branch is made up of four units: Budget and Financial Reporting, Internal Audit, Accounting Services and Contract Administration.

The **Policy and Analytics Branch** is responsible for developing departmental policy and legislative proposals and providing ongoing support and advice in the interpretation and application of departmental legislation. The branch is the departmental lead on several interdepartmental tables, and represents GNB on intergovernmental forums related to seniors, housing, and social services. The branch is also the departmental lead on legal and litigation matters and on the department's response to inquiries and investigations by the Ombud, the Integrity Commissioner, the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Child and Youth and Senior's Advocate, and the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. The branch is also responsible for all privacy related issues, Right to Information requests and coordination of legislative activities. The branch also facilitates the appointment process of Agencies, Boards and Commissions.

The Data, Analytics and Research Unit provides advice and guidance to the department by undertaking research and evaluation of programs and services, and by providing statistical analysis for policy and program development. It is responsible for corporate data analytics, monitoring and reporting on the performance of departmental programs and services.

The **Strategy Management Branch** is responsible for leading the strategic planning process and the department's annual planning and reporting cycle. The branch provides supports and services to all areas of the department through planning, internal communications, and process improvement. It leads the initiative management efforts of departmental priorities and is the liaison with the Executive Council Office to ensure priorities align with GNB strategy. The branch is also responsible for developing, facilitating and implementing Performance Excellence, including Continuous Improvement, Innovation and Daily Management.

**Information Technology Services** provides leadership and guidance to support all departmental program areas in achieving their business objectives through facilitating the provisioning, maintenance, risk manage-

ment, support and oversight of appropriate Information Technology (IT) tools and solutions. The branch's services include IT Strategy and Planning, IT Service Coordination, Information Security services and Client Systems Business Support services for the department's line of business applications.

The **Chief Experience Officer** is responsible for improving client experiences within the department to improve outcomes for New Brunswickers. The Experience Office works across the department to simplify, integrate and deliver quality experiences and effective services for clients.

## Highlights

### Policy and Analytics Branch

- ◆ The branch partnered with the New Brunswick Institute of Research, Data and Training to securely transfer anonymized Long Term Care Program data to enable research and evaluation.

### Strategy Management Branch

- ◆ The branch led the development and implementation of a Value for Money framework to support the department's Senior Executive Team in operational, financial and outcome accountability.

### Chief Experience Officer

- ◆ The Chief Experience Officer joined the Social Development team late in 2019. Top experience priorities built on past initiatives and staff and client suggestions include:
  - simplifying processes for and providing timely information to clients;
  - obtaining direct feedback from clients and employees; and
  - embedding client outcomes, experience, and feedback into program change and service delivery.

## Other

The **First Nations Relations Team** was established to provide support and guidance in all programs, services, partnerships and policies that impact Aboriginal people in New Brunswick. The mandate of the team is to provide advice and direction on all Social Development programs involving Aboriginal people. The team is responsible for supporting the experiences of Aboriginal children, families, seniors and service providers delivering and/or accessing Social Development services. Further, the team's focus is to understand and recognize Aboriginal culture and traditions and provide services that are culturally appropriate.

### **Human Resource Services**

The delivery of operational and transactional human resource services for all Part I departments within GNB was transferred to Service New Brunswick in October 2016. However, in an effort to improve responsiveness and alignment, the decision was taken that the ownership of the day to day human resource functions would return to departments. As an interim measure, all human resources operations were temporarily moved to Finance and Treasury Board as part of the Office of the Chief Human Resource Officer on April 1, 2019 until realignment decisions were clarified. On April 1, 2020, the HR services branch was amalgamated within Social Development.

The **Human Resources Branch** is responsible for providing support and consulting services to management and staff to build and sustain a healthy and productive work environment, which is foundational for enhancing employee engagement, increasing organizational effectiveness and developing a high-performance workforce that delivers on citizen and taxpayer outcomes. The branch is comprised of two business units, Clients Services and Employee and Organizational Development. Through partnerships with the other branches, team members work collaboratively to advance the strategic goals and vision of both the department and the Government of New Brunswick.

# Financial information

Expenditures	Budget	Actual	Variance Over (Under)	% Over (Under)	Note
Corporate and Other Services	10,041.9	11,924.3	1,882.4	18.7	1
Income Security – Service Delivery Costs	21,452.4	23,438.1	1,985.7	9.3	2
Income Security – Benefits	208,976.0	207,965.7	(1,010.3)	(0.5)	3
Wellness	5,400.0	4,540.6	(859.4)	(15.9)	4
Child Welfare and Disability Support Services	315,871.5	341,652.2	25,780.7	8.2	5
Seniors and Long-Term Care	567,679.4	555,930.7	(11,748.7)	(2.1)	6
Housing	91,695.5	100,200.4	8,504.9	9.3	7
Other Benefits	43,334.1	43,171.6	(162.5)	(0.4)	
Total	\$1,264,450.8	\$1,288,823.6	\$24,372.8	1.9	

Numbers are expressed in thousands.

Special Purpose Account Expenditure	Budget	Actual	Variance Over (Under)	% Over (Under)	Note
CMHC Funding Account	\$4,000.0	\$5,980.9	\$1,980.9	49.5	8

Numbers are expressed in thousands.

Capital	Budget	Actual	Variance Over (Under)	% Over (Under)	Note
Nursing Home – Capital Program	\$12,000.0	\$11,654.8	\$(345.2)	(2.9)	9

Numbers are expressed in thousands.

Revenues	Budget	Actual	Variance Over (Under)	% Over (Under)	Note
Return on Investment	1,800.0	1,790.3	(9.7)	(0.5)	
Licences and Permits	33.0	29.9	(3.1)	(9.4)	
Sale of Goods and Services	17,890.0	18,418.4	528.4	3.0	9
Miscellaneous	9,375.0	7,596.8	(1,777.3)	(19.0)	10
Conditional Grants – Canada	60,325.0	38,079.0	(22,246.0)	(36.9)	11
Total	\$89,423.0	\$65,914.4	\$23,503.1	(26.3)	

Numbers are expressed in thousands.

Special Purpose Account Revenue	Budget	Actual	Variance Over (Under)	% Over (Under)	Note
Nursing Home – Capital Program	\$1,138.0	\$6,201.3	\$5,063.3	445	12

Numbers are expressed in thousands.

### **Notes on significant variances:**

1. Over budget due to salaries and costs associated to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Over budget due to higher than anticipated overhead costs.
3. Under budget due to average caseload and average cost per case in Transitional Assistance Program being lower than expected.
4. Under budget due to lower than expected salary and overhead costs.
5. Over budget due to increasing costs for Children In Care, Children's Residential Facilities, Child Protection, and Disability Support Services.
6. Under budget due to savings in Adult Residential Facilities as well as delays in construction of Nursing Homes.
7. Over budget due to increasing operation and maintenance costs in public housing.
8. Over budget due to higher than anticipated costs for new Housing System.
9. Over budget mainly due to client turnover and reassessments related to rents in public housing units.
10. Under budget due to reduced Social Assistance overpayment recoveries as well as lower Home Energy Assistance Program recoveries.
11. Under budget due to lower recoveries related to the Healthy Seniors Pilot Project due to a delay in starting many projects, as well as lower than anticipated recoveries in Affordable Housing Agreement Phase VI and Social Infrastructure Fund Agreement.
12. Over budget due to receiving more Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation revenue than anticipated.

# Summary of staffing activity

Pursuant to section 4 of the *Civil Service Act*, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Human Resources delegates staffing to each Deputy Head for his or her respective department(s). Please find below a summary of the staffing activity for 2019-2020 for Social Development.

Number of permanent and temporary employees as of Dec. 31 of each year			
Employee type		2019	2018
Permanent		1,346	1,378
Temporary		230	266
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,576</b>	<b>1,644</b>

The department advertised 70 competitions, including 35 open (public) competitions and 35 closed (internal) competitions.

Pursuant to sections 15 and 16 of the *Civil Service Act*, the department made the following appointments using processes to establish merit other than the competitive process:

Appointment type	Appointment description	Section of the <i>Civil Service Act</i>	Number
Specialized Professional, Scientific or Technical	An appointment may be made without competition when a position requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a high degree of expertise and training</li> <li>– a high degree of technical skill</li> <li>– recognized experts in their field</li> </ul>	15(1)	0
Equal Employment Opportunity Program	Provides Aboriginals, persons with disabilities and members of a visible minority group with equal access to employment, training and advancement opportunities.	16(1)(a)	7
Department Talent Management Program	Permanent employees identified in corporate and departmental talent pools, who meet the four-point criteria for assessing talent, namely performance, readiness, willingness and criticalness.	16(1)(b)	4
Lateral transfer	The GNB transfer process facilitates the transfer of employees from within Part 1, 2 (school boards) and 3 (hospital corporations) of the Public Service.	16(1) or 16(1)(c)	19
Regular appointment of casual/temporary	An individual hired on a casual or temporary basis under section 17 may be appointed without competition to a regular properly classified position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(i)	0
Regular appointment of students/ apprentices	Summer students, university or community college co-op students or apprentices may be appointed without competition to an entry level position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(ii)	0

Pursuant to section 33 of the *Civil Service Act*, no complaints alleging favouritism were made to the Deputy Head of Social Development and no complaints were submitted to the Ombud.

# Summary of legislation and legislative activity

Bill #	Name of legislation	Date of Royal Assent	Summary of changes
28	<i>An Act to Amend the Family Services Act</i> <a href="https://www.gnb.ca/legis/bill/pdf/59/2/Bill-28.pdf">https://www.gnb.ca/legis/bill/pdf/59/2/Bill-28.pdf</a>	June 14, 2019	<p>These amendments create a more appropriate legislative framework to support several new or improved services and resources for children and their families. The amended framework also allows the creation of a comprehensive new Children's Services and Resources Regulation under the <i>Family Services Act</i>.</p> <p>The amendments within this legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– incorporate kinship care into legislation as a care option for children;</li> <li>– clarify that the total time a child under age 12 can be under the care of the Minister cannot exceed 24 cumulative months over a five-year period;</li> <li>– provide a new alternative to adoption, known as “transfer of guardianship”, involving an arrangement with kin or a long-standing foster relationship;</li> <li>– incorporate “treatment centres” into legislation as a new resource available to children; and,</li> <li>– add provisions related to the screening process for those working or having frequent contact with children receiving services or resources under the <i>Family Services Act</i>.</li> </ul> <p>These amendments represent the first of several comprehensive legislative changes to impact New Brunswick's Child Welfare System.</p>
17	<i>An Act to Amend the Essential Services in Nursing Homes Act</i> Text of First Reading: <a href="https://www.gnb.ca/legis/bill/pdf/59/3/Bill-17.pdf">https://www.gnb.ca/legis/bill/pdf/59/3/Bill-17.pdf</a> Amendment: <a href="https://www.gnb.ca/legis/bill/pdf/59/3/Bill-17-Section18.pdf">https://www.gnb.ca/legis/bill/pdf/59/3/Bill-17-Section18.pdf</a>	December 20, 2019	<p>This legislation addresses rulings of the Labour and Employment Board and the judiciary with regard to the constitutionality of the <i>Essential Services in Nursing Homes Act</i>.</p> <p>The amendments within this legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– clarify the definition of “essential services”;</li> <li>– expand the scope of what must be negotiated as part of an essential services designation;</li> <li>– include nurses within essential services, including designations;</li> <li>– specify a transition period for all nursing homes to each enter into new negotiations for essential services;</li> <li>– allow binding arbitration, with conditions, if certain conditions are met;</li> <li>– require mandatory, non-binding mediation if the parties cannot agree on the terms of an essential services agreement; and</li> <li>– incorporate a good faith requirement for negotiation of an essential services agreement.</li> </ul> <p>The primary purpose of the amendments is to render the legislation compliant with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In particular, the amendments strive to provide the bargaining unit with meaningful collective bargaining activities by increasing the number of employees able to exercise their right to strike, while not interrupting essential services, thereby endangering the life, personal safety and health of nursing home residents.</p>

The acts for which the department was responsible in 2019-2020 may be found at: <http://laws.gnb.ca/en/deplinks?subjectnumber=21>

# Summary of Official Languages activities

## Introduction

The department has developed an action plan for 2015-2020 that includes strategic activities for each of the four sectors of activity found in GNB's *Plan on Official Languages – Official Bilingualism: A Fundamental Value*.

## Focus 1

Equality of Service. To ensure access to service of equal quality in English and French throughout the province, the following activities were completed:

- The annual review and update of linguistic profiles. Human Resource Services consults with senior management to discuss team linguistic capacity and address any gaps; and ensures a short-term plan for “cover off” and long-term plan for improving the linguistic team capacity (i.e., hiring, second-language training).
- As part of the enhanced onboarding process, new employees are required to complete the mandatory e-learning modules for Language of Service and Language of Work offered through the GNB Knowledge center.

## Focus 2

Use of Official Languages in the workplace. To ensure an environment and climate that encourages the employee's use of the Official Language of choice in the workplace, the following activities were completed:

- As part of the annual Employee Performance Management process, employees must confirm the preferred language of communication at the onset, in addition to reviewing the policy.
- Human Resource Services consults with senior management to discuss team linguistic capacity and address any gaps; and ensures a short-term plan for “cover off” and long-term plan for improving the linguistic team capacity (i.e., hiring, second-language training).
- There is a section on the Intranet including information on second-language training and links to tools and resources to help employees practice their second Official Language.

## Focus 3

Official bilingualism remains a fundamental value conveyed by GNB and its employees. The following activity was completed:

- The department gathered information and compiled status updates through its established accountability and monitoring mechanisms to complete the section in the department's annual report dealing with Official Languages.

## Focus 4

Public Service employees have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the *Official Languages Act*, relevant policies, regulations and GNB's obligations. With respect to Official Languages, the following activities were completed:

- The department regularly distributed information regarding Official Languages policies and guidelines to staff through the quarterly newsletter or other communication tools.
- Employees are often reminded of their obligations under the *Official Languages Act* as well provided them with the links for the e-learning modules Language of Work and Language of Service found on the GNB Knowledge Center.
- Completion rates were tracked for current employees and new hires.



## **Conclusion**

Implementation of the department's *Official Languages Action Plan* has heightened employees' awareness of the responsibilities of the *Official Languages Act* in day-to-day work, and in the quality of programs and services provided to the public. The department continues to promote both the Language of Service and Language of Work policy through its newsletter and onboarding process.

# Summary of recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General

## Section 1

Name and year of audit area	Recommendations
	Total
Group Homes and Specialized Placements – 2019 Vol. II <a href="https://www.agnb-vgnb.ca/content/dam/agnb-vgnb/pdf/Reports-Rapports/2019V2/Chap3e.pdf">https://www.agnb-vgnb.ca/content/dam/agnb-vgnb/pdf/Reports-Rapports/2019V2/Chap3e.pdf</a>	16

Implemented Recommendations	Actions Taken
3.53 We recommend the Department of Social Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– develop and implement Child in Care practice standards to specifically address children taken into temporary care; and</li> <li>– develop and implement standards for specialized placements.</li> </ul>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>Specific service delivery standards for children in temporary care are currently being finalized and planned to be released in Fall 2020.</p> <p>The new Children’s Services and Resources Regulations to support the practice of child specific placements as part of the Kinship Model were approved by Cabinet on March 20, 2020. Corresponding standards for Child-Specific Placements are being finalized.</p>
3.59 We recommend the Department of Social Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– include in their standards, specific key performance indicators for each standard;</li> <li>– set a minimum level of performance in line with the performance indicator(s) specified; and</li> <li>– update monitoring procedures to include guidance in measuring the performance indicator(s) for each standard.</li> </ul>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The Child-Specific Placement standards include specific key performance indicators and these indicators will be embedded into the standardized contact template being developed for Child-Specific Placements. Child-Specific Placements standards are being finalized.</p>
3.66 We recommend the Department of Social Development integrate key procedures, guidelines, policies and standards into their current and future standards.	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The proposed Kinship Care Model Standards move the interim policy on Kinship Services into practice standards. The standards are being finalized.</p>
3.67 We recommend the Department of Social Development revise the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Children’s Residential Services Practice Standards for Child in Care Residential Centres; and</li> <li>– Children’s Residential Centre Service Standards for Operators to increase integration with policies, guidelines, procedures and other mandatory standards.</li> </ul>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The department is planning a review of the Children’s Residential Services Practice Standards for Child Care Residential Centres and Child Care Residential Centre Service Standards for Operators in Fall 2020.</p>
3.95 We recommend the Department of Social Development develop and implement standardized service level agreements across all regions for all specialized placement facilities.	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The department has drafted new standards to support child specific placements as part of the Kinship Model. The department’s contract administration team is working to develop a standardized contract template for this placement type.</p>

Implemented Recommendations	Actions Taken
<p>3.101 We recommend the Department of Social Development develop and implement a documented strategy to address group home capacity and service delivery challenges facing the Province. This strategy must align with current Provincial child welfare strategies.</p>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The department will explore the feasibility of developing and implementing a provincial strategy to address capacity of child placement resources and service delivery challenges.</p> <p>Work was initiated in consultation with stakeholders and staff in February 2020 on options to enhance child placement resources.</p>
<p>3.108 We recommend the Department of Social Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– forecast regional and provincial demand for placement services; and</li> <li>– standardize resource planning procedures to be used by regions and implemented provincially.</li> </ul>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The department will explore opportunities to align with other processes underway within the department to enhance capacity for efficient forecasting and planning. In addition, the review of the Children's Residential Services Practice Standards for Child Care Residential Centres and Child Care Residential Centre Service Standards for Operators will include consideration of best practices in this area.</p>
<p>3.115 We recommend the Department of Social Development design and implement case planning procedures for regional personnel, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– standardized content requirements supporting achievable outcomes for children taken into care; and</li> <li>– regular case plan review and revision requirements to conform with standards.</li> </ul>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The revised Child in Care Program Practice Standards require that every child who comes into care has an individual case plan specific to their needs. The child's case plan is reviewed, at least, every six months and as significant circumstances arise.</p>
<p>3.121 We recommend the Department of Social Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– comply with standards and jointly develop care plans with group home and specialized placement Operators;</li> <li>– standardize requirements and documented procedures for care plans to include objectives and actions that align with Department case plans; and</li> <li>– set specific requirements for regular review of care plan changes by Department social workers.</li> </ul>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The revised Child in Care Program Standards provides clear directive that a care plan is to be developed within 14 calendar days of the first day of placement through a collaborative approach with the child (as appropriate to their age and development), the child's social worker, the caregivers, and the CRS social worker.</p> <p>The department has planned a review of the mandate of the Permanency Planning Committee. This will explore assessment options to guide social workers and service providers toward well-defined measurable goals and outcomes in case and care planning which would be reviewed.</p>
<p>3.131 We recommend the Department of Social Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ensure required training is completed in regional offices, group homes and specialized placement facilities before caseloads are assigned to personnel; and</li> <li>– provide cultural awareness training across regional offices, group homes and specialized placement facilities.</li> </ul>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Department of Health, through the Network of Excellence, the Department continues to collaborate on coordinating trauma-informed care coaching for Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) Child &amp; Youth teams, regional staff and group home staff to support learning and application of key concepts of the ARC model.</p> <p>The department continues to provide the CORE training system for child welfare staff which includes competencies on cultural understanding as well as specific Indigenous Awareness Training.</p>

Implemented Recommendations	Actions Taken
<p>3.138 We recommend the Department of Social Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– establish independent living and transition to adulthood planning requirements and documented procedures to be completed well in advance of the child’s anticipated transition date; and</li> <li>– require regular reviews of the preparation for independent living plan by Department social workers in conjunction with Operators of group homes and specialized placement facilities.</li> </ul>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The department is enhancing the existing Independent Living and Transition to Adulthood planning process in the current Child in Care Practice Standards by establishing a timeframe for reviews by the Permanency Planning Committee and identifying group homes and specialized placement facilities’ operators as core participants in those reviews.</p> <p>The revised Child in Care Standards require an Independent Living Skills grid be completed for each child. By the age 16, each child’s independent living skills are reviewed.</p> <p>The planned review of the Children’s Residential Services Practice Standards for Child Care Residential Centres and Child Care Residential Centre Service Standards for Operators will include specific direction regarding collaborative transition planning.</p>
<p>3.145 We recommend the Department of Social Development evaluate options to improve or replace the NB Families information system with the aim of increasing efficiency and effectiveness in case management practices.</p>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The department is constantly looking for ways to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the NB Families system.</p>
<p>3.146 We recommend the Department of Social Development collect and maintain high quality residential placement capacity and service capability data from group home and specialized placement Operators for use in Department planning, monitoring and reporting processes.</p>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The department plans to conduct a review to consider the feasibility of enhancing the collection and maintenance of data regarding child care resource services.</p>
<p>3.154 We recommend the Department of Social Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– document responses and actions taken to address feedback and concerns raised when reviewing Operator completed evaluation forms; and</li> <li>– follow-up on Operator feedback and the results of actions taken to address issues identified in the annual review.</li> </ul>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The planned review of the Children’s Residential Services Practice Standards for Child Care Residential Centres and Child Care Residential Centre Service Standards for Operators will include consideration of best practices in this area.</p>
<p>3.160 We recommend the Department of Social Development design and implement documented procedures for monitoring and evaluating the performance of specialized placement facilities.</p>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The department has drafted and submitted for approval new standards to support Child-Specific Placements, including a section on monitoring. Work is underway to develop a standardized contract template that will include consideration of best practices in monitoring and evaluating service delivery.</p>
<p>3.164 We recommend the Department of Social Development publicly provide current statistical information on child welfare programs and publicly report on program performance.</p>	<p>The department accepts this recommendation and implementation is in progress.</p> <p>The department is reviewing options for publicly reporting on specific program performance measures on the GNB website.</p>

## Section 2

Name and year of audit area	Recommendations	
	Total	Implemented
Advisory Services Contract – 2017 Vol. I <a href="https://www.agnb-vgnb.ca/content/dam/agnb-vgnb/pdf/Reports-Rapports/2017V1/Chap2e.pdf">https://www.agnb-vgnb.ca/content/dam/agnb-vgnb/pdf/Reports-Rapports/2017V1/Chap2e.pdf</a>	16	13* *3 recommendations to be implemented by Service New Brunswick.
Nursing Homes – 2016 Vol. I <a href="https://www.agnb-vgnb.ca/content/dam/agnb-vgnb/pdf/Reports-Rapports/2016V1/Chap2e.pdf">https://www.agnb-vgnb.ca/content/dam/agnb-vgnb/pdf/Reports-Rapports/2016V1/Chap2e.pdf</a>	3	3

# Report on the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*

As provided under section 18(1) of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*, the chief executive shall prepare a report of any disclosures of wrongdoing that have been made to a supervisor or designated officer of the portion of the public service for which the chief executive officer is responsible. The Department of Social Development did not receive any disclosures of wrongdoing in the 2019-20120 fiscal year.