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**Proceedings of the Standing Committee on
Social Services**

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Department of Child, Youth and Family Services

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Department of Child, Youth and Family Services

Chair: Glenn Littlejohn, MHA

Vice-Chair: Tony Cornect, MHA

Members:

Lisa Dempster, MHA

Gerry Rogers, MHA

Glen Little, MHA

Dale Kirby, MHA

Kevin Pollard, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Kimberley Hammond

Appearing:

Department of Child, Youth and Family Services

Hon. Paul Davis, MHA, Minister

Genevieve Dooling, Deputy Minister

Steve French, Manager of Budgeting

Paul Grandy, Departmental Controller

Rick Healey, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy & Strategic Planning

John Hicks, Director, Strategic Human Resources

Michelle Hunt, Director of Communications

Michelle Shallow, Director, Child Protection and In-Care

Also Present

Andrew Parsons, MHA

Dana English, Researcher, Official Opposition Office

Susan Williams, Researcher, NDP Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Andrew Parsons, MHA for Burgeo – La Poile substitutes for Dale Kirby, MHA for St. John’s North.

The Committee met at 9:00 a.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

CLERK (Ms Hammond): Excuse me; we are ready to start now.

We are going to start with the election of the Chair.

Are there any nominations from the floor?

MR. CORNECT: I nominate the Member for Port de Grave.

CLERK: Are there any further nominations from the floor?

The Member for Port de Grave is acclaimed Chair.

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Thank you, Minister.

At this time I call for nominations for Vice-Chair.

Do we have any nominations for Vice-Chair?

MR. POLLARD: I nominate the Member for Cartwright – L’Anse au Clair.

CHAIR: Are there any further nominations for Vice-Chair?

Hearing no further nominations, the Member for Cartwright – L’Anse au Clair is the Vice-Chair of the Committee. Thank you, and congratulations.

Good morning everyone. Good morning, Minister. Welcome to the Estimates Committee this morning, members from the Child, Youth and Family Services, and Minister Davis. I would like to also welcome the members from the Committee.

At this time, prior to asking the minister to introduce his team, I would like the members of our Committee to introduce themselves.

Andrew, would you like to start?

MR. A. PARSONS: Good morning. Andrew Parsons, MHA, Burgeo – La Poile.

MS ENGLISH: Good morning. Dana English, Researcher with the Official Opposition.

MS ROGERS: Gerry Rogers, MHA for St. John’s Centre.

MS WILLIAMS: Susan Williams, Researcher, NDP Office.

MR. LITTLE: Glen Little, MHA for the District of Bonavista South.

MR. CORNECT: Tony Cornect, MHA for the great cultural District of Port au Port.

MR. POLLARD: Kevin Pollard, MHA for Baie Verte – Springdale District.

MS DEMPSTER: Lisa Dempster, MHA, Cartwright – L’Anse au Clair.

CHAIR: Good morning, everybody.

Just some housekeeping; Minister, once we get started you will have fifteen minutes for opening remarks. Andrew, I am assuming you will be speaking first as the member of the Opposition and the critic, so you will also get fifteen minutes. Then we will rotate at ten minutes apiece as we go through until we are completed the Estimates.

We have, technically, until 12:00 noon. After that, we have to finish and clue up. Hopefully, we will get there before that. Everything else, I think, Minister, is in order.

The first thing we need to do is ask the Clerk to call the first subhead.

CLERK: Subhead 1.1.01.

CHAIR: The Clerk calls 1.1.01.

Shall 1.1.01 carry?

The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning.

Good morning, colleagues. Before I begin with my opening comments this morning I would like to take an opportunity for the officials from the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services who have joined me here this morning to introduce themselves, and also to make sure their communication is working correctly.

I will start on my left to the Deputy Minister, Genevieve Dooling. She will introduce herself and provide you with her position in the department. Then we will go through the officials who are here.

CHAIR: Great.

MS DOOLING: Good morning. My name is Genevieve Dooling. I am the Deputy Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

MR. GRANDY: Paul Grandy, Departmental Controller.

MR. HEALEY: Rick Healey, Assistant Deputy Minister of Policy and Programs.

MR. FRENCH: Steve French, Manager of Budgeting.

MS SHALLOW: Michelle Shallow, Director of Child Protection and In-Care.

MR. HICKS: John Hicks, Director of Human Resources.

MS HUNT: Michelle Hunt, Director of Communications.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

During 2013-2014, the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services has continued to transform service delivery for children, youth and their families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Significant progress continues to be made with specific focus on ensuring the safety and well-being of the Province's most vulnerable children and youth.

As most of you are aware, the department is still relatively new, having been formed in 2009. Prior to that, the provision of services for

children, youth, and families which now comes under the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, was previously mandated under respective health authorities throughout the Province. During the last year the department has continued to implement the Continuum of Care Strategy, which is driving very positive change within the child protection system for children and youth in need of out-of-home placements. So those who need placements or a home to live in, or a place to live in other than their family home.

In January, 2013, Level 1 Kinship Homes and Level 2 Foster Homes of our new four-level system under the Continuum of Care Strategy were fully implemented. On March 24 of this year, 2014, the implementation of Level 4 Staff Residential Placements commenced, and training for our Level 3 Specialized Foster Homes is scheduled to begin in the coming weeks.

In addition, the Foster a Future multi-media recruitment campaign has been very effective to date, as it has not only created an awareness of the critical shortage of foster homes in our Province, the important work and role they play, and the important work that foster parents play in our Continuum of Care Strategy, this has also generated 137 new placements for children and youth in eighty-eight new foster homes throughout the Province.

The department in the last year continues to implement our 10-year Child Care Strategy, Caring for Our Future: Provincial Strategy for Quality, Sufficient and Affordable Child Care in Newfoundland and Labrador. The department officially released Caring For Our Future in February, 2013, and continues to be focused on strengthening regulated child care services throughout the Province with the introduction of our new initiatives and improvements to existing programs and services.

To date, progress has been made under the strategy which includes continuing to create additional regulated child care spaces under the Child Care Capacity Initiative and the Family Child Care Initiative; as well, implementing a revised Early Learning and Child Care Supplement Program; awarding the request for proposals to develop an operating grants

program for commercial and non-profit child care centres and to review the Child Care Services Subsidy Program; and, also, reviewing the current Child Care Services Act and Regulations, and the Inclusion Supports Program.

The department will continue to implement the Child Care Strategy 2014-2015, which will include implementing a new voluntary operating grants program, and introducing new child care legislation and regulations.

We have continued growth towards our staffed organizational model and the department has reached a ratio of a 1 to 22 caseload on a provincial basis. As of December 2013, a total of fifty-two new social workers were recruited and trained. The department will continue its recruiting efforts during 2014 as we move towards our goal of reaching a ratio of 1 to 20.

Mr. Chair, those are my opening remarks this morning.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Andrew.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the minister and staff for being here this morning to answer our questions. I am going to get right to it going to the details in 1.1.01, Minister's Office. Under Salaries, it shows that last year there was about \$100,000 extra spent than was budgeted. What would the rationale be?

MR. DAVIS: There was \$98,000 more than was originally budgeted and that is primarily resulting in a retirement of a long-term employee in the Minister's Office.

CHAIR: Just for members who want to follow along, Child, Youth and Family Services in the government Estimates book is beginning on page 14.3.

Andrew.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

So that would be the severance, et cetera that –

MR. DAVIS: That is correct, yes, severance, and benefits owing. There were some small amounts related to staff changes when I went in there as the new minister and my executive assistant and constituency assistant were on different scales than the previous EA and CA; but primarily, almost all of it was the retirement for a long-term employee, about thirty years working for government.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, thank you.

Are there currently any vacancies in the department?

MR. DAVIS: In the department itself?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, there are.

MR. A. PARSONS: Do you have a list of how many?

MR. DAVIS: I do. If it okay with you, because it comes under a different heading, not under the Minister's Office, so if you want – are you referring just to the Minister's Office?

MR. A. PARSONS: No, I am talking about the whole – I am sorry, I apologize. I have moved off the Minister's Office and just some general questions.

MR. DAVIS: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: I apologize. I have nothing else on the Minister's Office, that is fine, just some general questions I have on this separate page here.

I am just wondering about vacancies in the entire department and if there is a list.

MR. DAVIS: Just give me a second now. Just let me find it, Mr. Parsons.

MR. A. PARSONS: I will put it out, if there is a list, in order to save time here, if we could just get an undertaking to get it later if that is better.

MR. DAVIS: I can tell you on our front-line positions right now there are a total of sixty front-line vacancies that we currently have without an incumbent. The total provincial staff complement right now is 537, so they are front-line service delivery staff of which we have sixty vacancies currently.

MR. A. PARSONS: We will be able to get a list of the positions and where they are located maybe after this –

MR. DAVIS: I can tell you from regions; in Central there are eighteen, which is Central East, so the Central Region actually runs from Conception Bay South out to Springdale. Then, in the metropolitan St. John's area, there are twelve vacancies; in Labrador there are twenty; and in Western there are ten.

MR. A. PARSONS: In the Budget –

MR. DAVIS: I am sorry, Mr. Parsons, if I may. Just to expound on that a little bit, there is ongoing work on recruitment and filling positions because with a high number of staff, over 500 front-line staff, there is a fair bit of change that occurs regularly through the department. It is an item that we have had many discussions on. It is the result of a couple of things: one is people leaving the department and in the process of filling that position sometimes what we get is a person moves out, someone else wants to move in, so you are a little while actually filling that vacant position because you have a number of steps that go through internally.

MR. A. PARSONS: You have created a new vacancy by filling that.

MR. DAVIS: Right.

MR. A. PARSONS: In the Budget it said that there was \$1.5 million for twenty new positions which included social workers and supervisors. Is there a list we are able to get of the twenty actual new positions?

MR. DAVIS: They will be filled in the coming months. So what we do is look at our organizational model. We look at where those largest gaps are because our goal is to reach the ratio of 1 to 20. We look for where those gaps

are and that is where we fill those, where the largest requirement for additional staff is. That is where we place those staff.

That is somewhat fluid. It could change today. If we have three or four vacancies or positions that change, or resignations or retirements today that could very quickly change those numbers; so in the coming months when we go through the process of filling those positions, we will carefully look at where our biggest demands are and deal with those first.

MR. A. PARSONS: I guess what you are saying is there are twenty positions, those twenty could be here, could be there, but overall there are twenty added.

MR. DAVIS: Yes. There are a number of positions – there are actually twenty permanent positions and there will be four temporary positions. The four temporary positions relate to the Innu Zone in Labrador, which the Innu Zone takes in Natuashish and Sheshatshiu. They are community support workers and also for a two-person mentoring team.

Again, one of the things that will happen is when we will recruit for that mentoring team – if I can explain that to you just briefly. In Labrador in those harder to fill positions, sometimes the people recruited are less experienced. The new CONSEP, as we call it – Community of Natuashish Service Enhancement Program – fly-in, fly-out that we are doing has created well-experienced social workers and social work supervisors to be part of CONSEP. So instead of having younger, less experienced social workers going into those communities we now have the benefit of having a much greater amount of experience in Natuashish – probably better than we have ever had in that community.

In Sheshatshiu we have been very good in recruiting staff for Sheshatshiu. We want to make sure that have a good experience in there. So the mentoring team will be senior experienced social workers who go in and work with those less-experienced social workers to assist them and support them, oversee the work that they are doing, provide some assistance, direction, advice, and to work along with them to help them develop their skills. So once we fill those mentoring team positions, then that, as we

just talked about, will create then other vacancies that we have to fill.

We are putting a team in Sheshatshiu, which will be four social workers, a social work supervisor, and a social work assistant, so that would be six of those. We are filling a couple of positions for disclosure, and primarily the rest of them will be social workers that will be applied based on the necessities of the model.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

MS DOOLING: What we do is each quarter we do a case-load analysis of how many cases are out in each office. So once we get the data in now for March, what would happen is April we would look at it and say where are the largest gaps where people have the highest caseloads, and then can we recruit there, and basically that is how we would allocate the front-line social work positions.

MR. A. PARSONS: You say you are aiming at a 1 to 20 ratio; what is the ratio currently at?

MR. DAVIS: It is 1 to 22.

MR. A. PARSONS: This is sort of to try to get my own head wrapped around it. I know you are going to hire a number of social workers, but I think they have different levels: I, II, III. Just so we can put it on the record, what is the difference in the levels?

MS DOOLING: Social Workers II's are generally reserved for the Labrador area because it is harder to fill and, obviously, it is at a higher salary; whereas Social Worker Is are more entry level in metro and the remainder of the Province.

So III's are not in our model currently but we do have some that we transferred in from the regional health authorities. They have been held in place for the current time. Even though they are not in the model, they are generally specialized with respect to counselling. There are very few of those, as you are probably aware, on the ground right now. They are not in the model but we have left them as they are.

MR. A. PARSONS: How many supervisors are in the Province who supervises the teams of social workers?

MR. DAVIS: There is a very formalized team structure within the department. We have our regions, as already outlined, as being Central, Eastern, Western, Labrador, and metro. Each of those has a regional director.

Then we have thirteen zones. The Province is divided into thirteen zones, and each zone has its own manager. Within each zone there are social work teams. A social work team is generally a social work supervisor, six social workers, a social work assistant, and an administrative or clerical support person being on the team. The team works under a social worker. The social work team has a supervisor, the supervisor reports to one of the thirteen zone managers. There used to be five at one time, zone equivalents, and now we have thirteen zone managers reporting to the four regional directors.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

I may come back to some general questions after, but what I am going to do is move forward to 1.2.01, Executive Support.

CHAIR: Subhead 1.2.01.

MR. A. PARSONS: Under line 01 Salaries, we see there has been almost a \$200,000 decrease since 2013. I am just looking for the reasoning.

MR. DAVIS: There was a reduction of \$191,000. That was two positions that were eliminated in 2012-2013 for efficiency measures. There was a transition project co-ordinator and also a second inquiries co-ordinator that we had initially. They were positions that were there as part of the transition from the health authorities to the development of the department and assisted with the process of that transition. We are at the point now where those positions are no longer required.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

I am going to move forward again to 1.2.02, Corporate Services. Just looking at line 01 Salaries, the revised amount was a fair bit lower than the budgeted amount. I am looking for the rationale.

MR. DAVIS: There were a number of positions that were delayed last year in filling. Some of them were positions such as policy analysts, there was a quality audit position, which has recently been filled, and there were administrative assistants in three different areas. There was delayed recruitment of those in the past year, and that accounted for the adjustment in the budget line.

There were some others as well, by the way. There was a training unit position that has been filled as well, and there may be one or two others. Paul, is that pretty much it for the –?

MR. GRANDY: (Inaudible).

MR. A. PARSONS: The same line but under Purchased Services, \$260,000 almost budgeted but only \$106,000 spent. What was purchased last year? What was not purchased that you were anticipating purchasing?

MR. DAVIS: Paul, can you tell us what was purchased in that line?

MR. GRANDY: Purchased Services is a variety of things. It includes general purchased services. It could be rentals, office space rentals. There is nothing specifically that was not purchased. We just spent less money on some of those areas than we had anticipated in the year.

MR. A. PARSONS: I am just looking at the Transportation as well. It is about \$81,000 less spent than was budgeted. I guess if you tie that in and you look at Supplies and you look at Purchased Services, would it be fair to say that these were part of finding efficiencies last year, the core mandate cut?

MR. DAVIS: Yes. Well, even subsequent to that, during the operations of the department last year we were always conscious of finding a more efficient and more effective means. If we were spending anything, doing any work, the question was: Well, do we need to do that? Is there another way to do that?

There are times we applied use of technology. We would have a conference call instead of in-person meetings. It does not always work as well, but where we could we tried to apply those

types of rationale. You will see that through a number of items throughout the budget that resulted in, if I can say, conscious efforts to try and curb costs.

MR. A. PARSONS: If you look at the department as a whole, globally in terms of trying to find those savings, what were the savings achieved last year? Is there a number on that?

MR. GRANDY: It is a specific number, I guess, it is probably in the hundreds of thousands in some of those areas, like Purchased Services and Transportation, where we did make efforts to decrease expenditure compared to the budget.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Gerry.

MS ROGERS: Thank you very much.

Thank you very much everyone for being here this morning. I also want to thank you for the incredible work you do on behalf of some of our most vulnerable kids in the Province. I know that ground shifts a lot, and I know there are increasing challenges in terms of taking care of some of our youth in care. I want to thank you again for work that I know is not the easiest work to do in the Province but it is so important and so vital and affects the future of so many. So thank you very much, and oftentimes again under such difficult circumstances.

If we can back to 1.1.01, the Minister's Office; Purchased Services there under 01, very little was spent. What had you anticipated spending and not spending? I see you have re-budgeted for the same amount.

MR. DAVIS: Paul, maybe you can explain what comes under Purchased Services.

MR. GRANDY: Purchased Services is a variety of things. It is a mixed bag of anything. Like if you rent a conference room, if you get printing supplies, equipment rentals, any of those areas that do not come under supplies or travel. So it is sort of a catchall for everything else.

In the Minister's Office there was a reduced expenditure. What would have been anticipated, maybe it would have been things like conference room rentals, it could have been printing, and it just was not spent last year.

MS ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

Some of the issues I wanted to raise, Andrew has already raised, so we can skip through.

Professional Services under 1.2.01.01, under Salaries, Professional Services you spent \$10,000. What would have been in that list of Professional Services?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Paul.

MR. GRANDY: Professional Services is usually for things like a consultant or any kind of a professional service. In Executive Support, there would probably have been a number of consulting services that we would have anticipated using last year.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

Also, I guess we could just say that any list I ask for probably Andrew would want, and any list that Andrew has asked for I would like as well.

When Andrew was asking for the list of vacancies, I know, Minister, you offered some of the numbers, but could we still get a list of that, what the vacancies are and where they are?

MR. DAVIS: You want front-line vacancies is what you are –

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: It changes daily.

MS ROGERS: Yes, right. Well, maybe if we could –

MR. DAVIS: It is in constant change. So it all depends on when you ask, but I can tell you very quickly, our zones managers, we have thirteen, and all of those are filled. In our clinical program supervisors, there are a total of fifty-eight; we have one vacancy. Social Worker I's

and II's, there are thirty-four vacancies right now, twelve in Central, two in St. John's, twelve in Labrador, and eight in Western. Social work assistants, we have –

MS ROGERS: Excuse me, Minister; it is a little bit hard to write that down really fast.

MR. DAVIS: I am sorry. Am I going too fast for you?

MS ROGERS: Yes, if you just want to give us the list that would be fine. I know it changes daily but –

MR. DAVIS: Okay. So we will make up –

MS ROGERS: Yes, because we are scrambling here to write it all down; maybe just for the sake of time.

MR. DAVIS: Sure, okay.

MS ROGERS: That would be great, thank you very much.

If we go to Program Development and Planning, 1.2.03 –

CHAIR: Subhead 1.2.03, Gerry?

MS ROGERS: Yes, 1.2.03. We see a reduction of \$289,000 less for Salaries. Where will those cuts be?

MR. DAVIS: There were a number of vacancies in the first six months of the fiscal year. There were a number of positions that were anticipated to have been filled by the year-end. For next year, Salaries will be \$289,000 lower which is the ending of three positions which are associated with the Continuum of Care Strategy project work.

MS ROGERS: For the Continuum of Care Strategy, is there any money here that will be allocated for an assessment or review or evaluation of how it is rolling out?

MR. DAVIS: Not under this program area, but part of the – I am sorry go ahead, Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: Normally, what we would do is all of the programs and the new initiatives that

we implemented would be reviewed by both our policy division as well as our quality unit. So we would already have positions in our structure that would do those evaluations and those reviews.

MS ROGERS: Okay, great. Thank you very much.

Transportation and Communications, I see about half of that was spent.

CHAIR: That would be 1.2.03.01, Transportation and Communications, Gerry?

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: (Inaudible) about half of it was spent. It was just less travel than had been anticipated throughout the year. Again, as my comment earlier, there is always an effort in reducing spending and using technology where they could throughout the year, but there was just less travel than had been anticipated.

MS ROGERS: Okay, thank you very much.

General Administration, we see there is a reduction of about \$543,000. What would those reductions be?

MR. DAVIS: I am sorry, where are you now?

CHAIR: Subhead 1.2.04, General Administration, Minister.

MS ROGERS: Subhead 1.2.04.

MR. DAVIS: Oh, I am sorry.

MS ROGERS: Okay, that is an overall reduction in Executive and Support Services.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, but 1.2.04 is a Capital account. That deals with the purchase and investment in capital assets.

The \$213,000, that difference was budgeted for, in particular, housing for Hopedale. Purchase has not been concluded and carried out yet. There is work still underway on it, but that is the big difference in that particular piece.

MS ROGERS: It is housing in Hopedale for –?

MR. DAVIS: For staff.

MS ROGERS: For staff, yes.

MR. DAVIS: It is the purchase of a mini home, actually, for staff. There has been some work underway, and trying to sort out the land issues for the installation of a mini home, but we are still working through that piece of work and hoping to get that completed this year.

MS ROGERS: It is a tough issue.

MR. DAVIS: It is, yes.

MS ROGERS: It is a tough issue, housing; such a tough issue.

We see the rollout in other departments as well where housing becomes a problem for staffing.

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely, yes.

MS ROGERS: Regional Services, 2.1.01.

MR. DAVIS: Yes.

MS ROGERS: We see there is almost a \$3 million increase in Salaries?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, that is right, \$2.7 million. That is the twenty new permanent positions that we talked about as part of the organizational model.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

In terms of their caseloads, is it possible to get a list of the ratios for caseloads in different areas? I know that the goal is to reach one in twenty, but can we have a breakdown of –

MR. DAVIS: What it is in each region kind of thing?

MS ROGERS: What it is in each area, yes.

MR. DAVIS: Okay, yes. We have the different regions so we can give you a regional breakdown.

MS ROGERS: That would be great. Thank you very much.

Just bear with me here, I do not want to repeat anything.

MR. DAVIS: No problem.

MS ROGERS: In Transportation and Communications in Regional Services, again, we see there is \$115,000 unspent. What were you planning to do that you – what was the revision there?

MR. DAVIS: Other than there was a reduction in transportation. I do not know if there was anything specific that was planned that did not get done.

Maybe Genevieve could comment on it further.

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: Ninety-five per cent of the Transportation and Communications budget was spent for the regions. This is primarily social workers doing visits to homes for children. Obviously, you have more than 500 staff travelling and to come in on an estimate of 95 per cent is pretty close to the full budget when you look at it. It might have just been less travel because we are trying to get the social workers to be closer to the clients because we are dividing the caseloads by region now. So that would probably account for some of the reduction in travel.

MS ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR: Okay, Gerry, we will come back to you because your time has expired.

MS ROGERS: Thank you.

CHAIR: Andrew.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a few questions on this as well, but I am going to go back for one question on a previous section if that is okay?

CHAIR: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: I will do it after. We will finish this section and then I will go back.

We are on Regional Services, 2.1.01. How many social workers are working in child protection?

MR. DAVIS: Just social workers?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: I am sorry. Mr. Parsons, just social workers?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, front-line workers, I guess, we would say.

MR. DAVIS: We have 340, I think, is the right number.

MS DOOLING: That was as of March.

MR. DAVIS: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

Currently, how many open child protection files are there?

MR. DAVIS: Maybe the best way for me to do that is to give you the number of children on protection intervention caseloads because an open file could be a family file or an individual file.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

MR. DAVIS: As of December 31, there are 5,043 children on protective innovation caseloads, and that involves 3,250 families.

MS ROGERS: (Inaudible).

MR. DAVIS: Five-thousand and forty-three children; 3,250 families.

So now when we say a child on a protective intervention program, that is very broad ranging, from –

MR. A. PARSONS: So that could mean there is a referral to one of your offices, a file is opened, and it is either actively being investigated, or the file stays open – that is what is you are referring to?

MR. DAVIS: Or a social worker is providing supports to a family.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

How many children in care?

MR. DAVIS: Children in care as of December 31, in care and in custody, depending on the term of circumstances, 786 children – and to be clear on that, there are ninety-one youth.

MR. A. PARSONS: So the ninety-one is part of the 786?

MR. DAVIS: No, in addition.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, thank you.

I am just wondering, in the report sixteen that came out, recommendation thirteen recommended hiring of a youth services co-ordinator position, is this in the budget?

MR. DAVIS: No. That is the youth services co-ordinator to deal with youth on the provincial level. We have had good discussions with the advocate on that particular position because her recommendation does not fit our operation model. So what we have done is that we have life skill co-ordinators that we have hired in the last year throughout the Province. Metro is being handled a little bit differently because we have contracted with Choices for Youth to provide that same service as life skill co-ordinators, but we have individual life skill co-ordinators that we are recruiting in the other regions to work in those particular regions for youth in transition.

So we have essentially done five different – four people and Choices – through the Province to do essentially what we think the advocate’s intention was for that single co-ordinator.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

I guess the advocate at some point goes through her recommendations and says were they done or not done. You are confident that through your discussions with her that this recommendation will be met – maybe not specifically, but you have covered it off through the action you have taken?

MR. DAVIS: That is what we feel. We are communicating with the advocate to explain where we have been on this, and that communication is ongoing. I can tell you, I know that her intention is to report publicly on where we are on this report and some others in the near future, but that is one of the recommendations that we are still having discussions about.

It is just that what she had recommended in sixteen, as I mentioned earlier, is not consistent with the model that we have been following. So we are having those discussions. Ms Dooling and the advocate speak, I would think, multiple times in any given week about –

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, thank you.

Staying on the same heading, 2.1.01, I am just wondering now when you look at Purchased Services, it was underspent by \$400,000 last year, which I guess fits into the general theme of trying to be efficient or find efficiencies, but this year there is an increase of \$800,000. I am wondering what is covered off there.

MR. DAVIS: That increase there of about \$500,000 is an anticipated increase in lease costs and additional staffing. Of course, we have limited ability in what our lease costs are going to be, but as they go up that particular line increases.

MR. A. PARSONS: When you say lease costs, it is for existing –

MR. DAVIS: I think we have thirty-nine –

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: There are fifty-six offices throughout the Province and Labrador, of course, and some of these leases expire at different points in time. We do an analysis on what leases are due to expire in each fiscal year. In the coming fiscal year, there are a number of those leases that would expire. We will have to go out through a tender or else we will renew and that is the associated market adjustment that would be applicable to those leases that are going to expire.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, and all the same fifty-six will be staying there? I am not talking about the same place, but the fifty-six offices will be continuing on.

MS DOOLING: The intention is to have fifty-six offices, yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

Going back, you talked about this earlier, about the mentoring team and hiring the new workers for the Innu Zone. There was \$308,000 in the budget. Is this on an ongoing basis or will it be for this year?

MR. DAVIS: Those twenty positions are permanent. The mentoring team is temporary and the community support workers were temporary.

MR. A. PARSONS: So the \$308,000 specifically for that, that is a one year –

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: The mentoring team is a one-year pilot, so we will assess our progress on that throughout the year. The community support workers, as well, are temporary and, again, we will assess the need based on the caseload going into the next fiscal year.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Thanks.

Mr. Parsons, on the transportation, the increases there, part of that is with the work we are doing in Natuashish. So when Natuashish was first rolled out in December, it was done as a six-month pilot project. I visited the community earlier this year, and we have done an assessment ourselves on the impacts it is having on the community, how it is being received by people in the community. There has been a very positive result on that. So we are extending that throughout this fiscal year, but we will continue to evaluate that as it goes on.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, thank you.

If it is all right, I would like to go back to 1.2.03, Program Development. I just have one question I never got to ask on that.

MR. DAVIS: Subhead 1.2.03?

CHAIR: Subhead 1.2.03, Program Development.

MR. A. PARSONS: It is under the Purchased Services line. There was \$113,800 budgeted, but \$278,000 spent. What was the extra purchased service?

MR. DAVIS: That was primarily the Foster a Future campaign.

MR. A. PARSONS: So that would be the marketing?

MR. DAVIS: That would be the marketing, yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Going off on the side here now, because this is information I could not get from the Office of Public Engagement, what did the department spend in marketing last year?

MR. DAVIS: On marketing or on Foster a Future?

MR. A. PARSONS: I apologize, that just hit me when said Foster a Future.

MR. DAVIS: I have the Foster a Future one here. Paul, do you have that?

MR. GRANDY: The total we spent on advertising last year was \$168,000.

MR. A. PARSONS: For that campaign, or for the department?

MR. GRANDY: That was for the department, and the majority of it was that campaign.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That was the significant campaign.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: It has realized some really good results and you can almost set the ringer on the phone to when the campaign has started, and it ran for a number of weeks, and then it stops; and then when you start to run the campaign again, the phone starts to ring again.

MR. A. PARSONS: I only have a second left, but just speaking to that, I have asked a number of questions in the media about marketing and advertising, and sometimes the point gets lost. I think the money you are spending on that campaign is perfect. I am happy, I think it is successful, and you can see the results. So I am glad you are doing it. Sometimes you get questioned on why – are we questioning why you are doing that? That is not the case. I think the campaign is good.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. DAVIS: So you do not consider that to be propaganda, is that what you are saying?

MR. A. PARSONS: Not that one –

MR. DAVIS: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: – but there is some other stuff you guys are doing, that yes, it is propaganda, sorry.

CHAIR: Okay, let's stay on topic.

Gerry, please.

MS ROGERS: Who could possibly say no to Alan Hawco, really? He did such a great job.

Back to the new foster program, can you tell me – I know there have been new positions, new foster homes created, and the numbers of children who have been put in foster homes. Do you have stats in terms of how long children have stayed in some of these foster homes? What is the turnover rate? What are the ages of the children?

MR. DAVIS: We would know that on an individual basis, but I do not know if we have a breakdown of exactly what you are asking. I am not sure exactly what it is you are looking for, but we know case by case what their circumstances are.

MS ROGERS: What I am looking for, what are the challenges really with the foster home program? I think the campaign was successful, but how is it working? How is it rolling out in terms of the actual operation of it?

I would like to see ages of children who are going into foster care. Is it harder to place the older children? Are they able also to go into foster care? Is it stable, or do we find that maybe it is not working for some, that the stay is short, they need to be moved? So, just numbers to give us an idea of how it is working.

MR. DAVIS: It is a good question, Ms Rogers, and it is an important question, because trying to find and establish stability for children is a significant goal and role in the process we follow. Sometimes it is the department's rules and requirements that are criticized.

There is training required for foster parents. There are a number of steps that new foster parents have to go through before they are approved and accepted as foster parents, but there are a number of things on our mind when we make people jump through those hoops. One is to ensure they are committed to it, so that we can have the best stability for children that we can. Secondly, to make sure they are the right people to be fostering children and providing care for children and youth. The success of that really varies, so does the ages by the way.

Children come into foster care at all ages. The success of how long they are able to stay in a stable environment varies as well. It depends on the child, it depends on the home. Sometimes it depends on the child's circumstances.

In our new Level 4 which we rolled out, part of that provides for emergency placement homes. Tonight, if a child comes into care and we need somewhere today to place that child, then it is quite often an emergency placement home that is used to provide shelter and care for that particular child, but then the focus very quickly shifts to what is available for foster care.

Primarily, the number one best option is kinship care. Someone who is known to the child, known to the family, a close relative or a significant member of the family, either through friendship or through a relationship. When that

is not available, then Level 2 foster care, which is a regular foster home, is the next goal. There are not always foster homes readily available in the area where we would like it to be or where the need is.

So, there is a fair bit of work then about what is available to us, where can we recruit, what are the options available to us, but all that work happens as quickly as possible in the best interest of the child. As far as success, how long they stay in those homes, it varies from one child's circumstances to the next.

MS ROGERS: Is there a budget for training for foster parents? I imagine there is.

MR. DAVIS: There is, yes.

MS ROGERS: What would that be?

MR. DAVIS: Do you know real quickly where I can find that, Paul?

MR. GRANDY: The budget for training, the training component, the staff who are involved in that would be in the Program Development and Planning section, and also in Regional Operations, because there are some provincial office staff who would be involved with training and there would be some regional staff as well.

MS ROGERS: Is there a specific budget allocated for training for foster families, not only just developing foster families but also ongoing training, continuing education for foster families?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: In Level 2 there is. Again, it really varies.

For Level 3 specialized foster care, which is a new piece of work that is underway by the department, there has been a piece of work ongoing now for several months with a contractor to develop a new training model for specialized foster care. Level 3 specialized foster care is a foster home where foster parents need to have a higher level of training and expertise to meet the needs of particular children who do not fit into the Level 2 foster care. So

that particular training will roll out in the coming weeks.

I can refer to Paul to find right where we are on the budget. I think it under 1.2.03.

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: It is under Professional Services in 1.2.03. That is the Level 3 training.

With respect to Level 2 and kinship training, we have what is called the PRIDE Program for those foster parents or significant others. The PRIDE Program is actually put off by our own regional staff, so the salary dollars for that would be in Regional Services for salaries because our own staff put that off.

MS ROGERS: Right. So that would be social workers?

MS DOOLING: That is correct.

MS ROGERS: Okay, great.

You have a new training program that you are going to roll out for Level 3 that is coming onboard soon; great.

Is there any money set aside for assessment of the fly-in, fly-out program? I know it started a few months ago. How will you be evaluating that?

MR. DAVIS: There are a number of evaluations underway. I suppose that happens on a regular basis, especially with CONSEP.

One is that we knew we needed more resources on the ground in Natuashish and we were not being successful in recruiting staff to live in and work in Natuashish. With CONSEP there are things occurring, relationships developing and roles developing in the community that I never anticipated, that I never saw. Now I am sure if I talked to some of the people here behind me they would have probably fully expected such things to happen, but the evaluation of it occurs in a number of areas.

We have a process in our quality unit where through our supervisor's review files of social workers that gets filed with our zone managers

and our regional directors and reviewed by the quality unit, that is an ongoing piece of work in all areas of the Province to ensure the quality of the work on their particular files and caseloads is up to par. It helps us identify where there are areas that we need to make improvements on. So that is ongoing. That happens with Natuashish in the CONSEP fly-in, fly-out as well.

The other piece, of course, is our discussions with community leaders. Of course, they speak and have constant contact with the residents of their community, members of their community. With CONSEP, one of the interesting things is for those staff when they go in there, they are not working from 8:00-4:00 o'clock, they work twelve-hour shifts, seven days a week for the whole two weeks they are in there. So we now have services extended to weekends and evenings, and that seems to be having an impact as well. It gives better access to families and children, after-school hours and in the evenings, on the weekends.

When I was up there in the spring and toured the community, one of our supervisors pointed out the local church and told us how they are now engaged Sunday mornings in Sunday school. So beyond just knocking on a door, I am here to talk to you about something, they are becoming part of the fabric of the community.

MS ROGERS: Great.

They will be Level 2 social workers, I would think?

MR. DAVIS: Social Worker II's.

MS ROGERS: They will be the same ones going in?

MR. DAVIS: So the fly-in, fly-out – the program is when we invited interested staff for expressions of interest on it we have two social work supervisors, and each one has two social workers, and the same ones rotate in and out on a continuous basis, so there is continuity on files.

MS ROGERS: Great.

CHAIR: Hold that thought, Gerry, if you could.

MS ROGERS: Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay, thank you.

MS ROGERS: No, that is good, I can ask –

CHAIR: Okay.

Andrew.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am going to move forward to 3.1.01, Direct Client Services.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, Sir.

MR. A. PARSONS: When you look at the amounts here, \$69 million and then \$72 million, it is a fairly large amount. Is there a little more detailed breakdown available somehow?

MR. DAVIS: On what those expenditures are?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, just the different areas that makes up the \$72 million.

MR. DAVIS: There is a whole host of programs that come in there. It includes Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 foster care; it includes such things as counselling and respite care; it includes payments for residential services under Level 4, which we just announced. So it is encompassing all of those areas.

MR. A. PARSONS: Is there a list maybe available after just so we have a better understanding of where the \$72 million – because it is a large number.

MR. DAVIS: It is, yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: I do not want you to have to go through it now.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, we can get a more detailed breakdown for you.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

Now, this has gone up by \$2.7 million. Is that for the new delivery model that was announced last week?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, it partly is. It also has to do with the number of children in care. So a higher number of children in care, then the costs go up with that, of course. We are up on the number of children and youth in care; we are up over 200 in the last five years. So there is an increase just in the number of children in care, and that increased costs.

MR. A. PARSONS: In the press release it said that the contracts have been negotiated at a total cost of \$36 million. So, that is \$36 million over the three years?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, and some of them are one-year contracts. Ones that pertain to individual living arrangements are one-year contracts. The one for the group homes are three-year contracts.

MR. A. PARSONS: So, I understand there are four contracted agencies that were part of that: Blue sky, Key Assets, Waypoints, and Shalom?

MR. DAVIS: That is correct.

MR. A. PARSONS: Has each of those agencies had a working relationship with the department prior to this?

MR. DAVIS: Yes. All four were providing similar services prior to this.

MR. A. PARSONS: Are you able to tell us – is each of their contracts three years?

MR. DAVIS: No, they are not. Maybe I can run through them. Blue sky, as an example, has a combination of contracts for ILAs, as well as group homes, emergency placement homes. The ILA contract on theirs is one year, and the others are three years. Waypoints have a contract for just ILAs only, so that is a one-year contract. Key Assets is just a one-year contract as well for ILAs. Shalom has a single four-bed operation, and I think theirs is a one-year contract as well.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

You have already answered that you have had a relationship with each of these agencies. Are you able to tell us how long have you been working with Waypoints, how long have you been working with Blue sky?

MR. DAVIS: Blue Sky, my recollection is over a decade – and I will wait for someone to correct me here if I am wrong in anything I am telling you, but I think Blue sky is over a decade. Waypoints were formerly the St. Francis Foundation. They have been around for about thirty-five years providing services. Key Assets has been around, I know, for a number of years as well – I am not sure if I know the number of years.

OFFICIAL: About seven years.

MR. DAVIS: About seven years – and they are associated with an international organization called Core Assets, as well. Shalom has been around since 1975, which is thirty-nine years.

MR. A. PARSONS: So when you say how long they have been around, as in working with –

MR. DAVIS: Yes, providing services.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, okay.

At the announcement you said that the RFP was for 125 placements, but I think it was actually awarded for 101.

MR. DAVIS: One hundred and one, yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Ten placements in Central and East placed in Level 2 foster care – I am just wondering, are these placements still available for children with complex needs?

MR. DAVIS: The ten places in Central have gone to Level 2, which is a regular foster home. Because of the Foster a Future campaign and we have expanded the number of foster homes available then we have reduced the need for the Level 4. We no longer need those positions. There were three in the metropolitan area which we have not awarded anything on, so they are staying where they are under the care that they currently exist under.

In Labrador, we had no submissions. Labrador was eleven, there were ten in Central and then three in St. John's which I think brings us, if my math in my head is right, as I am talking to you is 125 to 101.

MR. A. PARSONS: Just to make sure I have this right, I do not want to shag this up. Eleven in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and you have not –

MR. DAVIS: They are remaining where they are because there were no submissions received. If you remember now the Auditor General had noted in a report, I think it was 2010- 2011, that we need to go through a competitive process. That played a large role in us entering into this, calling for this a year ago.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay because if one were to look at the fact that an RFP was put out, you would think maybe there were issues with the current service provider, but in this case you are putting it out there just to –

MR. DAVIS: The Auditor General's comments were we need to find best value and best services for taxpayers' dollars, words to that effect – which I am sure he would say in many other cases.

MR. A. PARSONS: Did he say which one came first, service or value?

MR. DAVIS: The quality of service was paramount.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

You stated at the press conference there would be a sixty-day transition from current to new service providers. I know it is a probably a work in progress, but where we are today, is there any better idea on how the transition is going to look?

MR. DAVIS: The new provider – in a case for outside of the metropolitan St. John's area, I know that as of yesterday Blue sky was in somewhat varied stages of securing properties in the areas where they are taking over services. In the metropolitan area, I can give you a breakdown; there are seventy-two placements in metro out of the 101. Of those seventy-two, forty-two there is no change. Forty-two are remaining with the service providers at the same location where they have existed. Fifteen are going to stay with the same service provider but will have a change in location.

I should point out as well that the service provider who secures a property to provide the service, they can change those on their own accord as well. A service provider may decide we are going to sell a property and we are going to buy a new property and move these children to a different property. They can still do that; but barring that type of thing happening as a result of these new contracts, forty-two no change, fifteen stay with the current provider but change location. So that is a total of fifty-seven who stay with their current provider.

The three that I referenced are staying where they were, because they were not included in the final process. Four are going to Level 2 foster homes, which is the preferred option over Level 4. There are only six who are actually going to a different provider at a different location. So, that is metro.

Outside of the Metropolitan area, in central east and west, there are twenty-one who will be going to a new service provider. Part of the process is that they remain in the community; make every effort to remain in the communities where they are so there will not be a change in schools and those types of things. Burin-Marystown will remain in Burin-Marystown, as an example.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay. Still under the same heading but under the Revenue – Federal, could I get an explanation on how that works? Where does that pot of money come from? It is federal, but what is it all?

MR. DAVIS: That is a federal grant from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada for the Innu children. They provide funding to us for the delivery of services in the Innu zone. That is how that funding funnels through from the federal government to the department.

MR. A. PARSONS: That makes up the entirety?

MR. DAVIS: It does not make up the entire department. Maybe Gig or Paul can refer to part of it because I know it is not the entirety.

I will let Gig explain it further, or Paul.

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: Thank you.

There is approximately \$13 million. It is made up of three sources, all coming from the federal government of course. There is a portion of \$1.7 million that is associated with youth justice agreements, and that is just a contribution to assist with costs for the youth justice programs and services here in this Province.

There is the children's special allowance, that is about \$3 million, and about \$8.7 million is with respect to the reimbursement for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada with respect to the Innu children, reimbursement on direct client costs with those children.

MR. A. PARSONS: All right. If you could just indulge me – if that is okay with Gerry?

MS ROGERS: Yes, sure.

MR. A. PARSONS: Just on that. The \$8.7 million under the federal funding for Aboriginal Affairs, is that all being spent in the Innu zone or in –?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, but there are some administrative costs that are borne by the Province. It does not cover 100 per cent of the cost of operations in the Innu zone. There are some administrative costs that fall under the responsibility of the Province. It is not 100 per cent funded by the federal government.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Gerry.

MS ROGERS: Thank you.

Going back to social workers, what is the budget for training for social workers?

MR. DAVIS: Just a second now, I will look around behind me. Who has their –

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: There would be a number of components to the training itself. Obviously, we have a team, a training unit that is set up in the Stephenville location. We have an agreement with the College of the North Atlantic where we can use all of their facilities across the Province.

In the training unit itself, you would see salaries of two training officers. You would see a clinical program supervisor who is a trainer as well, to train the supervisors in the Province, and you would see a manager of organizational design or training. So those four salaries would have a direct implication on training.

As well, our contract with the College of the North Atlantic, I believe that spans about \$50,000 annually. That is for use of their facility. If we have more social workers in the Burin area and we need to go down and do training, we will use the college's facilities in order to do that.

You will see the training dollars scattered under a number of different categories, but primarily in the Salaries category for Regional Operations.

MS ROGERS: Okay. Is there a budget where social workers can apply to go to conferences, best practices, innovative work –

MS DOOLING: What you would see is, similar to other staff in the department that would be under the professional development and Professional Services categories.

MS ROGERS: Okay. Is there a specific budget amount for that for professional development?

MS DOOLING: Paul is telling me there is no specific amount per se. What we would do, largely our training is focused on front line social workers and training through our training unit at this point in time. There has been a number of training initiatives in the past year. Just give me one moment; I can actually give you the numbers of staff who have been trained –

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: While Ms Dooling is looking for that; we have developed a training unit as part of the development of the new department. It is

based out of Stephenville and it co-ordinates training and in-service training for staff around the Province. They do a number of works based on policy development, best practice, as you referred to, and other types of ongoing in-service training.

Do you have it there?

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: For the period last fiscal April 1 to March 31 of this year, we had 615 of our front-line staff trained in our training unit. That was through various sessions throughout the Province. There were forty-four sessions in total and some of those sessions spanned two to three days to up to two weeks, depending on what the session was. It would include such things as a basic orientation, pre-core, how to use our system, documentation, how to present a file, basically, and then some of our front-line supervisory sort of modules as well, and clinical training as well.

MS ROGERS: Clinical training as well. Okay.

Is there enough training provided that social workers can get the accredited hours that they require within the department?

MS DOOLING: I am happy to say that the professional association just recognized the training we are doing and accredited that towards them getting their hours.

MS ROGERS: Great, I am happy to hear that.

Minister, you had indicated there was an increase in the number of children and youth in care. Why would that be? What has caused that increase?

MR. DAVIS: I do not know if I can give you a specific answer. I know it changes from time to time. The number of children on protective intervention caseloads has gone down one year over the next.

Like in 2012, for example, we had 5,806, where this year at the end of December, 2013, we had 5,043. Like many things in this department they are very fluid and they change.

I do not know if any of our staff have anything more specific. Michelle Shallow.

MS SHALLOW: I think there is an increase in the complex issues that our staff is dealing with in the front line, and we certainly see that reflected every day in our media reporting and so on. The issues are such that we are not able to maintain children either in their family home – which, of course, is our preferred option – or with family members, which, of course, is our second preferred option and is required of us under our legislation. They are very complex issues that we are dealing with for sure.

MS ROGERS: Michelle, what is changing? What are the complex issues? What are you dealing with?

MS SHALLOW: Well, I think there is significantly more family violence. Complex drug and alcohol cases are certainly very prevalent, and we are seeing a trend of younger children coming into care.

MS ROGERS: How many youth do we have in the Whitbourne Youth Corrections facility?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: I do not know; it comes under Justice, so –

MS ROGERS: Does it? So for the youth it does not come under Child, Youth and Family Services?

MR. DAVIS: Programs and supports for children and youth come under our department, but as far as the operation of Whitbourne it comes under Justice because they are directly related –

MS ROGERS: Okay. So the youth that would be in Whitbourne, would they not be under your care?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, they could very well be under our care; but Whitbourne being a Justice base, that is not necessarily where our children are.

MS ROGERS: Right, so how many of your children may be in Whitbourne?

MR. DAVIS: Nine or ten maybe –

CHAIR: Michelle.

MS SHALLOW: I do not exactly know the number. The number would be very low at any given time. I would say no more than half a dozen at any given time.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Children if they have protective parents and have parents acting in their – then they are not necessarily on our caseloads –

MS ROGERS: I understand that, yes.

MR. DAVIS: So it is not necessarily that the children in Whitbourne are on protective intervention caseloads.

MS ROGERS: Right, but what I was curious about is how many are under your care are in Whitbourne, and then what are the services that are provided to them from your department?

MR. DAVIS: Michelle.

MS SHALLOW: If a youth is in our care and custody, regardless of where they are residing we would provide the same level and type of support as if they were living in a foster home or any other type placement that we would be able to provide for that youth.

MS ROGERS: Okay, all right.

What have been some of the positive outcomes from the new foster care program? Has there been some specific sort of surprises that you did not expect?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Are you talking about on the rollout of the four levels?

MS ROGERS: No, after the marketing for the new foster care program, for the Level 2 and 3.

MR. DAVIS: It affects all levels, I suppose, somewhat. For me, I wondered where it had rolled out first and when you roll it out the second time, do you get the same impact as the

first time you roll it out. As I commented earlier, what officials tell me is that as soon as we start to run our Foster a Future campaign the phone begins to ring again. I always wonder about is a program becoming stale or is it having the impact or effect that it had earlier. What staff are telling me is that it still has that same impact; it still has that same result in the phone ringing.

Of course then there is a lot of work that rolls out after that. I think there was about 500 inquires that we have received because of Foster a Future campaign where people have asked for more information. So there was something other than just a phone call from someone where someone had called and said I want to know more about that and we send out more information, and that has resulted in about 190 applications which has resulted in 135 or 136 new spaces.

MS ROGERS: Where are those numbers in terms of what you anticipate you need and the response that you got?

MR. DAVIS: We are always going to need new foster homes, again because the number of children in care, the number of children in protective intervention caseloads, is very fluid and changes. The other thing is that people sometimes will foster for a number of years and just say I have reached a point in my life that I do not want to do this any more. I have enjoyed it; it was good. For one reason or another, I just do not want to continue to do it. There is always that turnover. So there is always a need to continue the effort to recruit new foster families.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

I think my time is up. I have more questions. Do you have more questions?

MR. A. PARSONS: I have more (inaudible).

MS ROGERS: Go ahead.

CHAIR: Andrew.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just sticking to that area with general questions, it is our understanding there is a contract that has

been awarded for Level 3 foster care Train the Trainer development. I am just wondering who will deliver this program or deliver the training.

MR. DAVIS: There is a contractor contracted to provide that – and the name just escapes me now. Jane Helleur has the contract to provide that Train the Trainer service. That is actually under 1.2.03, under Professional Services, is where you find that actual expenditure. Jane Helleur and Associates has been contracted to provide that; it is nearing its completion and ready for rollout.

MR. A. PARSONS: In February 2013 there were some funding announcements, and I am just looking to get into specifics because you hear the announcements and they sound good and you just want to sort of follow up and see. One, for example, funding will be used to explore opportunities: Neighbourhood of Friends Family Resource Centre in Clarendville; and there was \$11,200 to help explore the development of additional child care spaces in the Clarendville area. I am just wondering about the status of that.

MR. DAVIS: We are still working with Neighbourhood of Friends. I had discussions with regard to the Neighbourhood of Friends myself. They have done some exploratory work to determine demand and so on. At one point, they felt they did not want to go any further with it, but since then we have had some further discussions because what we do is we support them to say, well first of all, let's decide if there is a need for further child care.

Once they determine there is then we go to the next step. Well, where is your focus? What are your age groups? How big of a child care centre do you actually need? Do you need a ten-place child care centre for your community? Do you need one that has forty spaces for your child care centre? Do you need more development of your business plan? Where are you going to be located? What will your cost involved be and so on? So we are working with them to get through to that next stage.

These types of initiatives involve community-based and voluntary organizations so we work as best as we can to support them through those processes, but I know for volunteers it is a lot of

work. It is a big commitment. So we do what we can for them. We know it is an important piece of work they do. For Neighbourhood of Friends, they are not there yet, but we are continuing to work with them.

MR. A. PARSONS: The Tip-A-Vista Wellness Foundation in Bonavista received \$13,500 to explore opportunities and aim to create a new medium-sized child care centre. So has there been any progress on that one?

MR. DAVIS: I actually visited them and met with them in Bonavista recently, since I came in the department, and they have a site identified. Their next stage they want to address has to do with what the building needs and design of the building, what modifications are going to be required for that particular building, the plumbing, electrical, carpentry, all those types of things.

Their next stage now is they are going to come to us again for us to assist them and support them in those next phases.

MR. A. PARSONS: So just putting on my MHA hat for a second, how would one district avail of these opportunities? Who should they talk to, to explore these opportunities?

MR. DAVIS: If there is a community-based organization in your own district or a community that feels there is a need for child care services and they want to take a step of exploring is there an opportunity for child care, is there a demand for child care and can we work with the department to help the evolution and development, we welcome them and our staff will work with them. So it is only a matter of contacting the department and we can get the ball rolling.

Rick Healey is ADM; I do not know if you want to comment any further on it.

MR. HEALEY: They can call the regional office and they can also call our provincial office. We have a director and staff who will work very diligently with each organization to support them to develop proposals and get their information –

MR. A. PARSONS: You hear about the demand all the time. I hear about it in my office, people coming in – so if there are opportunities to explore this and see if it is there, it is nice to know the proper avenue to follow to pass on to these individuals. I appreciate that.

MR. HEALEY: Absolutely.

MR. A. PARSONS: Just moving forward here, I am just wondering, you see more of these funding announcements. One is the Kilbride to Ferryland Family Resource Coalition in Bay Bulls. There was \$149,900 to support the continued operation of a sixty-space child care centre. So I am just wondering, to get my head wrapped around it, how would these funds be actually used in that?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, so there is a very vibrant, highly operating child care centre that is very much needed in the area. I know it has been celebrated by residents, especially it is a growing area with many young families, and they stepped up to the plate. It is probably a good example of a completed project, where they came forward, had a concept and a project in mind, and saw through to operation.

So we have the ability to support them from the very early stages of someone calling the regional office or calling provincial offices saying we need more child care. We have a group of people who want to form a group or there is a local community group already in place and we want to do something about child care. Then right from there until they actually opening doors and be operational, we still support them.

Of course, we work at all child care centres if they are for-profit or not-for-profit in making sure that program deliver meets our requirements, that they have the qualified staff in place. There are number of things that regulated child care centres are required to maintain at all times, but we work with them right from the very concept, idea, and thought, right through to their operations.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

Now, Budget 2013 announced \$401,600 to expand the Supporting Youth with Transitions pilot program. Is there an update that can be

provided on this? Is it being extended this year? Where does it stand?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, Supporting Youth with Transitions is one that I referred to somewhat earlier on the hiring of our life skill coordinators throughout the Province. Key positions to help youth who are in those years of transitioning from childhood to youth to adulthood. We have been doing a lot of work during the last year in getting those positions in place, and as I said in metro we contracted with Choices for Youth to provide those services. I do not think I need to tell you about Choices for Youth and the great work they do as well. I know all of us, I think, are familiar with them.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

I am going to move forward now to 4.1.01.

MR. DAVIS: Child Care, yes?

MR. A. PARSONS: Child Care Services – and last year the budgeted amount and the revised amount was exact, which is unusual when you go through Estimates for any department. So this year there is an increase there. Is that a new position; and if so, what would the title be, location?

MR. DAVIS: The increase there is reflective of the salary increases.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, so it is just spread out.

MR. DAVIS: The 2 per cent salary increase.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

Just so I am clear here –

MR. DAVIS: So, for example, under Allowances and Assistance the change that you see there we were over budget by \$100,000, and that was mainly due to increase in demand for child care subsidy. It was offset a little bit by the Early Learning Child Care Supplement. We have a number of funding opportunities when it comes to child care. They are providing supports to early childhood educators, operators. We have inclusion supports. We have child care subsidies for children on a case-by-case basis.

So there are a number of those programs that come under this area.

MR. A. PARSONS: In terms of subsidies for, say, parents, how many families are receiving a subsidy?

MR. DAVIS: Under the child care subsidy there are 2,386 children who avail of the subsidy. The Child Care Services Subsidy was \$14.3 million in 2013-2014, and this year is anticipated to be \$15.7 million.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

I have more questions on that, so I will come back again after that, Mr. Chair, and I will let Ms Rogers go.

CHAIR: Gerry.

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Andrew.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Emergency housing: Where will that be? How will that work now with the new rollout of all of the Level 4 foster care and the Level 1, 2, and 3 – emergency housing for children who come into care?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, so there are a number of spaces around the Province. They currently exist, and then will exist under the new contracts that we have as well in the communities where they currently are, but there are a number of them throughout the Province.

MS ROGERS: So what are these facilities like? What does that mean?

MR. DAVIS: What are they like?

MS ROGERS: Is it a foster home? What are they?

MR. DAVIS: No, like emergency placement homes quite often could be – there would be staffed residential placements. These operators, for the most part, buy typical homes in subdivisions and they mix in with the neighbourhood and instead of having parents operating in a household, they have staff that go in and operate the household.

MS ROGERS: How many are in the Province and where are they?

MR. DAVIS: How many emergency placement homes?

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: Do you know the number offhand? I am sure I have it here, Gerry, just give me a second to find it.

MS ROGERS: Great, thank you.

MR. DAVIS: Group homes including emergency placements, we have thirty-four spaces. There are nine in Central, nineteen in metro, three in Western, and three in Labrador for a total of thirty-four.

MS ROGERS: These are available spaces for emergency placements?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, and again they fluctuate and change based on demand.

MS ROGERS: What is the usual occupancy of them?

MR. DAVIS: I think it depends in where you are, but for the most part we are pretty close, but maybe Ms Dooling can –

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: It would fluctuate, Ms. Rogers, it depends – emergency placement is a short-term stay until we actually identify an appropriate foster home for the child or a kinship home. It is not intended to be long-term, so you would see a fluctuation. As the minister had said earlier if we know that we need to take a child in care today, we might need to put them in one of our emergency placement homes then when the social worker gets working with some of the relatives of the child, an aunt or an uncle, and they say I am willing to take the child and we do the appropriate planning to avail of a kinship arrangement then.

They could be there for a very short period of time, which is what they are intended for, until we identify a more appropriate placement for the child.

MS ROGERS: Yes, thank you very much.

How are infants dealt with at this point? Do they go to these emergency placement homes? Is there anything specific for the handling of infants?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Well, my experience in coming to the department is that we generally will have some time to make those arrangements prior to. Of course, they would ideally go right into a Level 2 foster home. I do not know of any circumstances where that has not happened prior to.

Ms Dooling just reminds me that before a child goes into care there is also a legal process we go through with the courts, and make application to the courts and then the courts would order it. So there is a bit of time ahead of time, quite often, but there are times in emergency circumstances sometimes where a court order or warrant is obtained through a telewarrant. The same as police would obtain a search warrant in emergency circumstances.

So, a telewarrant is done in very, very short time, but then there would be a follow up with the court. Most often there is time to go to court and make application. In the case of infants, you usually have a little bit of lead time to make those arrangements beforehand.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

Now for the new Level 4 residential program, you have told us how many youth will be moved. How many youth will be affected by one-year contracts?

MR. DAVIS: The one-year contracts pertain to, specifically, individual living arrangements. The reason why they are one-year contracts versus three-year contracts is because their circumstances change. A relatively small number of children in ILAs, I think thirteen in total in the whole Province, their circumstances change. They may have a need for an ILA this month, and next month we may have three or four or five of them and we no longer have a need for an ILA.

The contract was done on a shorter term, but the programming services provided to persons living in individual living arrangements is highly managed. It is based on the individual needs of the child or youth.

MS ROGERS: Okay. We know there are – I forget the number you gave me, Minister, for those who are being moved from the community group homes in Burin and Bay St. George and Grand Falls-Windsor. When will these children be moved? When will they know where they are being moved to?

MR. DAVIS: The new contractor for Burin – which ones did you mention, Burin...?

MS ROGERS: Burin. I think Blue sky may have them all, yes.

MR. DAVIS: In Burin there is a four-bed group home and the new contractor provider is searching for a property. The goal we have set out in the plan is to have this transition take place in sixty days. I could see a circumstance where, depending on what transpires, it could take a little bit longer than the sixty days, but the goal is to have it done within sixty days.

MS ROGERS: Okay, and for the other two?

MR. DAVIS: The same for Grand Falls-Windsor and for Stephenville. Is that the other two you are referring to?

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, for Grand Falls-Windsor and Stephenville as well, the same thing, sixty days.

MS ROGERS: Okay. Do you know the salary that this contractor is offering to employees to take care of these youth?

MR. DAVIS: I do not offhand. I could probably put my hand on it here because – it is up to them.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: They hire the staff, and they provide – they hire their staff and they are responsible for their HR obligations, but I do not

have it off – I am sure I have it here somewhere, but I do not have it offhand.

MS ROGERS: Okay. Can you tell me the number of proposals that were submitted for the RFP for the Level 4 residential program?

MR. DAVIS: Most of the service providers submitted proposals. Some of them did not. So there are areas in the Province where there were no submissions – current operators or current service providers did not provide a submission, but I think the number is eight in total that was received.

MS ROGERS: Eight, okay.

Was the decision based on lowest bid?

MR. DAVIS: No.

MS ROGERS: Okay. What was the decision based on?

MR. DAVIS: Quality; quality of programming for children and youth, quality of service.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

Can we get the ages of the children in the three group homes that will be moved and how long they have been there?

MR. DAVIS: For Burin, Grand Falls, and Stephenville?

MS ROGERS: Yes, please.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, we can do that.

In Stephenville there is a three-bed group home and a two-bed emergency placement home. So the three-bed group home you would be looking for. In Grand Falls there is a three-bed group home and a three-bed emergency placement unit. You want the three group home there, and for Burin there is a four-bed co-ed group home. That is four, seven – it is eleven. That was eleven altogether.

MS ROGERS: Have all these children formally been told that they are moving?

MR. DAVIS: Yes.

MS ROGERS: Have they been told when they are moving?

MR. DAVIS: My understanding is – and I can refer to staff. My understanding is they have been made aware of the process and what is taking place, and that the goal is to sixty days, but we do not know on what day yet that they will be moving.

MS ROGERS: What is that process?

MR. DAVIS: The process was to go through a competitive process to find the best quality –

MS ROGERS: No, you said the children have been made aware of the process. What is the process for moving them? Is there a protocol?

MR. DAVIS: Yes. What I am saying is the process we have been going through, they are aware that we have gone through a process and there are new contractors.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: Then in the next sixty days when the new contractor gets established, then that transition from where they structurally, currently reside to the new will take place.

MS ROGERS: What is the protocol for transitioning these children to a new home and to new staff?

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: There is an individual placement plan worked out for each child, so it could be different based on the child themselves. Obviously, the social worker still has regular contact with these children even though they are in a group setting environment. So the social worker, part of their responsibility would be to communicate that individually with each child.

It is not a blanket protocol for each; it is an individual placement plan. I am sure you could appreciate, that takes some time and that is why we want to get those details right and it had to be individualized to do this.

MS ROGERS: Right, okay.

CHAIR: Gerry, do you have a follow-up to that? I am going to go back to Andrew.

MS ROGERS: Yes, I have another question.

CHAIR: Okay.

MS ROGERS: When will they be told where they are moving, where their new home will be?

MR. DAVIS: Once the locations of the new homes are known, we will let them know.

MS ROGERS: This will be within the sixty days, you are hoping?

MR. DAVIS: That is the goal.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

Does the department have a protocol to ensure that the transition is happening in a seamless and a safe manner? What is the departments protocol to ensure – aside from the individual treatment plans, what is the protocol that the department has to ensure the safety and a seamless transition of these very vulnerable children who have extremely complex, the most complex needs in our Province?

They are being moved from their homes. Some of who have been in a home for a few years. They do not know where they are going, they do not know when they are going, they do not know to whom they are going. What is the protocol to identify, to ensure that they are safe, that this is seamless?

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: Thank you.

There are regular daily meetings at this point in time with the senior staff, both the ADM for Policies and Programs, the Director of Child Welfare, and the ADM responsible for regions. In those meetings there is regular dialogue, daily dialogue at this point in time, with the Zone Manager of each region where a child is moving because, as you are aware, the legislation, the custody of the child generally rests with the Zone Manager if they are in our care, so the Zone Managers are engaged as well. They are dialoging with the clinical program supervisors

on the individual plan and the protocol to move the child, and then Michelle and her group are overseeing that process.

MS ROGERS: Who is speaking to the children and letting the children know where they are going, when they are going, and to whom they are going?

MS DOOLING: That would be the individual social workers because, of course, they have the regular contact with the child.

CHAIR: Okay.

Andrew.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am still on 4.1.01, Child Care Services. I think I left off on Allowances and Assistance and we were talking about the subsidy. I guess just looking at this I have sort of a very specific question from a constituent who receives the subsidy, but her daycare charges her the full amount on teacher PD days and during Easter break. She has contacted the department, but the department said that this is the prerogative of the daycare. This person is in a tough spot. Obviously, this is something that the department has heard of before or been faced with. Are there any suggestions on what we tell people who are dealing with that?

MR. DAVIS: It is not something that I recall having any discussions on, but I would be glad to allow officials maybe who might have more knowledge or experience with it. Gig, do you or Rick want to comment on it?

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: Sure, thank you.

Andrew, obviously in providing child care services currently there is a mix of non-profit organizations and for-profit. So obviously if it is in a for-profit the owner wants to make a profit, that is how they run their business, and generally they do charge for the PD days and to hold the spot, basically, because the demand is there for it. So they can get it, unfortunately.

With respect to non-profits, they have to break even, so the only way they can generate money is through the fees that they charge for the placement of the children. Of course their costs do not go down because there are PD days or because somebody is on vacation. It is a price that we pay in order to hold the spot, unfortunately.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

Does the demand for the program exceed the budget, when it comes to the subsidy? Are there more people wanting it than can be taken care of?

MR. DAVIS: No, I think we provide the service to all those who –

CHAIR: Genevieve.

MS DOOLING: Demand has increased, but fortunately we have moved money around from other categories within the child care budget to cover off that demand. So we have adequate funding available in order to cover the subsidies.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The other big piece that we are going to roll out this year is on the operating grants. That is a new opportunity. We have almost \$10 million allotted this year in our budget, which is a new line, it is a new program, and that is for what we refer to as voluntary operating grants. So if a child care centre, a not-for-profit, or commercial operator wants to charge or is willing to charge subsidy rates then this voluntary operating grant subsidy may be available.

That is a new program this year so that we can deal with some of the circumstances that you are referring to.

MR. A. PARSONS: You are good; I was just about to go there and you already started, so that is good.

I am just wondering when you mentioned program criteria, can you give us a better idea on what are the criteria that they need to meet to avail of this?

MR. DAVIS: For the operating grant?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: Primarily, they will have to charge our rates. The rate that we determine it to be, that is the rate they will have to charge and then the subsidy could become available.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

Still on Grants and Subsidies, last year it was underspent by \$100,000. What was that?

MR. DAVIS: That is on less than anticipated demand for the child care initiative. There was a slight increase in demand for child care inclusion funding and a little less on the child care initiative.

MR. A. PARSONS: So obviously the significant increase there for this year takes in I think it is nine point seven or whatever it is –

MR. DAVIS: Child care strategy, yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think there is another \$500,000 increase. Is that something separate?

MR. DAVIS: There is an increase of almost \$490,000 I think. It is about \$500,000 you said, right?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: There is a deferred revenue offset from the regional health authorities. So the regional health authorities had a revenue for child care and it was being allotted to the department on a yearly basis. Prior to 2009, it was their responsibility so when the change happened, it was done as a deferred revenue basis. That is about \$500,000 in deferred revenue.

MR. A. PARSONS: How long does that continue?

MS DOOLING: We have Memorandums of Understanding signed with each of the respective health authorities where we transfer the programs in. So the timing of when the revenues would run out would be triggered by those MOUs. I would say in the next year or

two they would probably be exhausted, but these were specific monies from the federal government that were tied to child care programs. So obviously it was identified for child care, we took child care in as part of the transition, so we wanted to defer the revenues and bring those in as we needed them.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, thank you.

Just still some general questions when it comes to child care. You mentioned previously, Minister, about the inclusion. I have here there is \$1.8 million for the Inclusion Supports Program to provide additional staff or funded spaces to accommodate all children, which is up \$200,000 from last year. So is this to accommodate children with exceptionalities or special needs?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, it is.

MR. A. PARSONS: I am just wondering: Can you give us an idea on how the program looks, what sort of training did the staff have?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Specifically, as far as clinical training goes, and I cannot provide those specific details for you, but maybe Mr. Healey can provide that for us.

CHAIR: Rick.

MR. HEALEY: Primarily our inclusion staff actually come from a very sound background, and I met with a lot of those staff recently going around the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and a lot of this staff come with a specialization in child development. Specifically, a lot of these staff have been former child management specialists who work with individuals with significant developmental delays, which include autism, down syndrome, and so forth. So our inclusion staff are very specialized and I was really impressed with the educational backgrounds, and the commitment of these staff to this program is just incredible.

MR. A. PARSONS: Going back to what you said, Minister, the need last year was actually higher than anticipated?

MR. DAVIS: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

Are you anticipating that to continue upwards? I guess obviously it would be –

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Yes. That is why there is an increase in the line this year for an anticipated increase in demand.

MR. A. PARSONS: Now, in the Budget it was a workplace training program announced – I think there is \$500,000 allotted for that. Who will deliver this program?

MR. DAVIS: For early childhood educators, you are referring to?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: We encourage early childhood educators to further their education. There is a requirement under regulated child care that you have an ECE, early childhood educator, Level 1 in a homeroom. Also, employees can be brought in, do an orientation, and then come in as a trainee, which is the right term we use for them right now. We encourage them to further their education. While they are working in the child care centre we encourage to extend – and, of course, we all know the benefits of the further your education then the better employee and better service that you can provide.

There are a number of things that take place there. We support them per course that they do, we work with the child care centre to ensure that the opportunities exist and support those initiatives as well, but once they reach the Early Childhood Education Level I, as a homeroom Level 1 ECE then there is a \$6,600 benefit to early childhood educators. For centre operators there is \$10,000 a year that we provide to them when they work in Early Childhood Education as a homeroom person, they have their Level 1 certification, we provide that to them.

So, we help them with their training and we give them the incentive that once you achieve Level 1 in the homeroom we are going to give you

\$6,600 a year to continue to work in child care, and as an operator you will get \$10,000.

MR. A. PARSONS: That money goes towards the training and then after the training the benefit that they receive for doing that?

MR. DAVIS: Right, yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

MR. DAVIS: We support them financially with their training.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

I still have a few questions left after so I will let you go ahead, Gerry, and then –

MS ROGERS: (Inaudible) care homes, how many public sector jobs will be lost?

MR. DAVIS: None.

MS ROGERS: Has there been a budget for severance costs for the workers who will be laid off in the three group homes in Burin, Cape St. George, and Grand Falls-Windsor?

MR. DAVIS: Yes.

MS ROGERS: How much is that?

MR. DAVIS: For severance? Just a moment now.

MS DOOLING: What we asked of the current service providers for the three group homes that you referenced is we will advance them their first quarters' grant, like we always have, because we expect that the transition would occur within sixty days; but as well, we are advancing the full quarter because obviously they are going to need some time to wind up their operations. If they do not utilize all of the funding that we give, they could pay the severance out of that. If they are short, they can submit some information to myself and Paul and we will review the funding at that point in time.

MS ROGERS: So, all of the severance that would be required with their public sector agreement would be covered?

MS DOOLING: Through obligations – because the employer, of course, is the group home. We advance them a grant, they would pay the grant as they saw fit. They may have some savings within that grant because remember now the transition plan is really for sixty days. The first quarter grant is for ninety days, so there would be some funding there. If there is not enough funding in the current grant to absorb any of the, I guess, severance and the paid leave and that sort of thing, they would come back to us with their shortfall.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

What are the years of experience of the staff that are being let go at these homes? Then what would be the expected years of experience of the new hires for the new – I guess also what I would be looking for as well: What are the standards that the department has set for these new operators in these particular group homes?

MR. DAVIS: As for years of service, we do not have that information. That is something that their employer would have. As for the standard of care and the program delivery, it was part of the assessment process before we entered in to these new contracts.

Their plans vary from operator to operator but, very generally speaking, the focus was clearly on program delivery, provision of service, the quality of service that they were going to provide and how they do that. Blue sky is an example. I know from my discussions with representatives from Blue sky is that once employees come into their employment that they have ongoing in-service training requirements that they require their staff to partake in. It would so depend on who they hire, what their current qualifications are, and what Blue sky sees as their needs to be able to provide that quality of service that Blue sky requires.

MS ROGERS: Is there any concern with the department that the amount of money that is being offered to new hires may affect the level of experience and training of new hires?

MR. DAVIS: You mean the salaries that they are offering?

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: No, I do not have any concern with that.

MS ROGERS: So \$13 an hour probably –

MR. DAVIS: Blue sky, as I understand right now, they are a big operation and have somewhere around 500 employees right now. They have not expressed any concerns with being able to find qualified people to provide the service.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

With the fact that there were not any proposals on behalf of Labrador, what is the long-term plan then?

MR. DAVIS: Right now we are very focused on the contracts we have announced and to ensure that we have as seamless as possible transition to the new operator. So we are very focused on that right now. Knowing as well that in the regions and in Labrador the oversight from our front-line staff continues – that continues everywhere as this transition takes place, but in particular in Labrador, that oversight will continue in Labrador. The current service providers will continue to provide that service.

Once we get through this contract transition piece that we are working on, on the Island portion that we have announced, then we are going to turn our attention to dealing with Labrador. We will have to have a look at where we are, talk to service providers that are providing service there now, and potential other service providers to try to figure out the best way to move forward.

I do not have a specific plan or strategy mapped out as of yet, but it is important for us to go through that competitive process for Labrador as well to make sure we get the best services that are available.

MS ROGERS: Thank you.

To go back now to 4.1.01, Child Care Services, just some general questions.

MR. DAVIS: Ms Rogers, if I may, Ms Dooling just reminded me of another piece that pertains to Labrador.

Through our MOUs now we have planning circles with our communities in Labrador. Part of those planning circles discussions includes the care for what would be Level 4 and all levels of foster care as well. So we are also talking to them in these planning circles we have had. We have some very productive discussions. I have not had an opportunity to attend or participate in any way yet with the planning circle, but I have had discussions with community leaders in Labrador.

MS ROGERS: Great.

Just one more thing about the Request for Proposal, I believe you said there were eight submissions. I went on the department's Web site and I could not find – I think, Minister, you had said that the successful applications would be available.

MR. DAVIS: The contracts would be available, yes.

MS ROGERS: Are they available yet?

MR. DAVIS: I do not have an update and the people who can tell me are right here, but what we had to do on the contract was two things. One, we have to work with the contract providers to ensure that their financial interests and business interests were considered and also contracts deal specifically with specific children, so we had to ensure the privacy of those children was protected as well.

MS ROGERS: I understand.

MR. DAVIS: So that process is underway, but it is not completed yet. Ms Dooling is nodding her head yes, so that is still where we are. We fully intend once we get that done – it is a piece of work that is ongoing as well – that we will be posting them online.

MS ROGERS: Could we be notified when that is available?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, we can do that.

MS ROGERS: Great. Thank you very much.

For child care services, when will the department review the income ceiling for the

subsidy rates? We have seen such an increase in the cost of living and young families trying to deal with housing costs as well.

MR. DAVIS: Yes. That is the type of decisions we look at on an annual basis when we are looking at our budget and our child care subsidy for next year. Right now, family net income threshold is at \$27,840, and that provides subsidy rates which vary depending on the age. For infants, for example, it is \$44, for toddlers and preschoolers it is \$30, and for afterschool care it is \$14.

MS ROGERS: When was that last raised, the threshold?

MR. DAVIS: I do not know. I do not know if anybody –

MS ROGERS: How long has it been the current threshold?

MR. DAVIS: I do not know, but if you want we can do some research for you and see if we can get it for you.

MS ROGERS: Yes, that would be interesting. Thank you very much.

Can we have a breakdown of the centres, the number of private versus community-based?

MR. DAVIS: Yes.

MS ROGERS: The number of family daycare centres?

MR. DAVIS: Yes.

MS ROGERS: And the number of spaces by region, that would be great to have.

MR. DAVIS: The number of child care spaces by region?

MS ROGERS: Yes. If you can send it, that is fine, rather than use everyone's time now.

MR. DAVIS: A lot of this information we have carried on our Web site, but if you –

MS ROGERS: Okay.

MR. DAVIS: Okay, so if you want –

MS ROGERS: Okay, that is fine. I can go find it there if it is all there.

MR. DAVIS: We will get it for you and ensure –

MS ROGERS: Great.

MR. DAVIS: We will get it for you and we will give it to you.

The number of spaces now; December 31, and if memory serves me correct, we had 7,837 is the most recent number up to December 31. I am sorry, 7,823 provincially.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: I am not sure if I have the breakdown of which ones are – you are looking for profit versus not-for-profit. Is that what you are looking for?

MS ROGERS: Sure.

MR. DAVIS: I am not sure. I think we can put that together for you.

MS ROGERS: Great, thank you.

Andrew?

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

CHAIR: Andrew.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am moving forward to 4.1.02, Family Resource Program. My question under Grants and Subsidies is, are the recipients of these grants and subsidies all non-profits?

MR. DAVIS: Under Family Resource, yes they are.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

Is it possible to – this is something we might be able to get after – get a full list of all the different groups that are receiving this grant and the amounts per group?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, I can provide that for you.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

MR. DAVIS: I think there are thirty –?

OFFICIAL: There are thirty in total.

MR. DAVIS: Thirty in total. I was going to say thirty or thirty-one, but it was thirty in total. We can get that for you.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

To just put it on the record, I know the one in Port aux Basques out there, they are doing a great job and I appreciate the work they are doing.

MR. DAVIS: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: I am just going to go back. This is sort of a general question going back to the child care. I had asked a question about the coalition out in, say, I think it is Kilbride.

What I am wondering is it seems like these groups all come forward and they are looking for funding. They are trying to explore the need and everything else, and you are getting it coming from here and there. Has there been any departmental analysis on where this is, sort of a study maybe on the need where we are going to be in five years? Because right now, obviously these groups come forward and you work with these groups, but I do not know if there are any gaps. It is just sort of a general question I am tossing out there.

MR. DAVIS: Yes. We know where the biggest needs are. We know there are needs in parts of the Metropolitan area. We know there are needs in Labrador West. We know there are needs in Clarenville, and there are some pressure point areas that we are aware of.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, and of course if we have multiple applications come in the one time we know we need to focus on where those biggest needs are first.

MR. A. PARSONS: As a department, do you have sort of a plan for say X number of years down the road – we know the birth rate, people coming back home or people moving away – of where you need to be in five years, in ten years, anything along those lines?

MR. DAVIS: We do not have anything long term like that, but right now we know where those challenging areas are or those pockets of areas are, so that we know there is a demand.

Clarenville, for example, we know there is a demand and we continue to work with that group. We have had other groups that have contacted us that have an interest in doing a not-for-profit operation in Clarenville as well. So knowing that is a pressure area today then we will focus on that particular area.

MR. A. PARSONS: Are there any numbers in mind, any sort of specifics?

MR. DAVIS: The number of spaces that are required?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: When a group comes to us – again, we know Clarenville with the group that you mentioned, Neighbourhood of Friends, part of the first piece that we fund them to do is to hire a consultant to do that study to determine: Is there a need, and how great is that need? If we are going to move forward with a child care centre, then how many spaces would we need to have in that child care centre? Would it be twenty spaces, forty, or a sixty-space child care centre?

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

MR. DAVIS: We fund them specifically, that group in that area where they want to – if someone comes in from Labrador West tomorrow and says we are looking to open a child care centre, what do we do first? We say well, the first thing is you have to get a handle on the very high level, where that demand is. We bring it down as we go through it step by step.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I could just have a moment.

MR. DAVIS: I am just reminded here again by the deputy, that we also work with Newfoundland Statistics Agency in the gathering of that type of information. They assist us and support us in identifying those pressure points.

MR. A. PARSONS: Just to clue up, I have gone through it and I appreciate your time in asking about this.

One of the things we have asked a lot about was the release of the Child and Youth Advocate's reports. There was one in December last year. I am just wondering, you mentioned earlier that you are expecting the Child and Youth Advocate to come out soon and discuss the recommendations. Generally speaking, how does the department feel they have done? Do you feel you are going to have met these recommendations when she comes out and makes this announcement? Do you have any idea on when?

MR. DAVIS: I firmly believe that it is important for us to have an open line of communication with the Child Advocate and Child Advocate's office. I am a firm believer in to make progress and make improvements you have to look at the past. You have to look at what you have done in the past and could you have done it differently? The Child Advocate plays a significant role in the provision of that type of reflection.

As far as recommendations go, it varies by report. With sixteen, there were two recommendations that did not really mesh with the vision that we had in the department. We are talking to her about that, and we have made the commitment to continue to work with her. She has made the commitment to have that dialogue and ongoing work, because we know recommendations that come from reports quite often result in a continuation of work.

All of the other recommendations, except for those two – well, even in the case of those two, we feel we have made work on them but we have gone in a different direction than what she has recommended, but we talked to her about that. Other than that, the recommendations have either been implemented or are ongoing, depending on the nature of the recommendation.

MR. A. PARSONS: One of the things that I have noticed is that when you look at the Turner report and the recommendations that came out of that and then what came out of sixteen, there are a lot of very similar recommendations which would indicate that they had not been put in place. Obviously the department is taking this very seriously and is going to ensure that these recommendations are met, especially the ones that have been long standing.

MR. DAVIS: If you look at the timeline of sixteen versus, for example, the clinical study that Susan Abel carried out in 2008-2009, their timelines overlap each other. The Susan Abel report, I think it was 400 cases that she reviewed and based on that came up with a number of recommendations, which was really the foundation of the forming of the new Department of Child, Youth and Family Services.

In the number of recommendations that she has made in the Susan Abel report, you will find them in other subsequent reports. As the department rolled out, the department in 2009 was essentially a minister's office and a very small provincial office and it was not until the years following that the regions – because child protection provisions or the services were being provided by the health authorities. Then it was over a two-year period that the regions started to come in and be part of the department.

When metro was coming into the department, that fire which was the centre point of much of sixteen, I think that metro came in the next day of that fire. There is an overlap in service but we knew as a government that this was the right way to go by having a standalone line department. We had to make advancements and improvements in services for children and youth and we said this was the way to do it, so that overlapped. When you look at sixteen which just came out this fall, the circumstances related there are circumstances that would have been identified in other reports which resulted in us going in the direction that we have gone.

That is why when you look at a recommendation, you say oh look, we are doing that or we have done that. Quality unit is an example, a big piece of work for us in the department, a big focus for me on quality

documentation those kinds of things that we have heard, themes of these through these reports.

I think every time that I have met with groups of staff and I have done that a number of times since I came to the department, I have raised the importance of documentation in your file, managing your file itself as an example. That is the theme we have seen through some of those reports.

MR. A. PARSONS: Just one more question, going back to these reports, one of the things that were mentioned is staff turnover due to burnout. Speaking as a lay person, obviously with these front-line workers what they are doing is extremely tough. I am just wondering if there are any departmental initiatives or anything ongoing to reduce this or work with this issue, which obviously has been there, is there, and probably will be there.

MR. DAVIS: There are a number of things there, Mr. Parsons. The structure of the department – it was critical when the department was formed to have, and I referred to this earlier, a structure of social work teams with support staff on a team and social work supervisors, which forms a team of social workers, and then that whole structure of a social work supervisor reporting to the zone manager, to the regional directors, and so on. Then as we did that, also knowing that the burnout and pressures of the job quite often are directly in proportion to the number of cases and files and the workloads of front-line social workers, we knew that we had to reduce the number of caseloads.

So we watch the ratio. We know now that we are 1 to 22 provincially. There are areas of the Province where they are lower than that, and there are areas of the Province where they are higher than that. So we know, based on the model that we have developed, that we need to continue to work. Those positions announced in this Budget are primarily to look at those pressure areas so that we can start bringing those ratios down. So, you look at where they are the highest, and that is what we need to target to bring them down.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Chair, I just want to say, that is the end. I have no further questions,

I appreciate the minister and staff taking questions, and I appreciate actually – I know some of my questions were not Estimates related

MR. DAVIS: No, that is fine.

MR. A. PARSONS: Not every minister is willing to answer questions like that, so I appreciate all your time here this morning.

MR. DAVIS: Oh, you are welcome.

MS ROGERS: Thank you.

I just have two questions.

MR. DAVIS: Sure, yes, absolutely.

MS ROGERS: The status of the review of the child care inclusion program, I know that there have been problems with wait times. What is the status of that review?

MR. DAVIS: Ms Dooley.

MS DOOLEY: Ms Rogers, the inclusion program, the review that is currently ongoing, we did have the piece of work done. It has made its way up to me at this point in time, but certainly we felt it was important to have a lot of regional dialogue on that, so we took the time to consult with the regions before the recommendations came up. So I imagine that will be on my desk very shortly.

MS ROGERS: Oh, great. Will it be released?

MS DOOLEY: Will it be released – it is in the internal review. It is not a report, as such; it is recommendations, I would assume, from our own staff member who did it within our child care division.

MS ROGERS: So, will those recommendations be released?

MS DOOLEY: Well, I have not seen them yet. I have not seen what the analysis is.

MS ROGERS: All right. Thank you very much.

The Family Resource Program, is there any plan to increase the number to have new ones?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Again, quite often it is community driven. When community groups and organizations come forward, quite often you will see that these can be centre points for parents and families, especially in smaller communities as well. They are very well utilized. What quite often will happen is that family resource centres will come to the department similar as not-for-profit child care centres and say we want to do something in our community.

There is work underway in some areas. Ms Dempster is aware there is some work that we are trying to reach a conclusion on in her district, to move that forward. That is an ongoing process of development and an ongoing process of evolution.

One of the things we want to do is make sure that when they get them open, they keep them open and provide the services. We do not like to see any time that they do close from time to time for one reason or another. Of course, we never like to see that.

MS ROGERS: Great.

I want to thank you as well for all of your incredible work under, I know often, again difficult situations in dealing with some of most vulnerable people. Thank you for your time and for your willingness again to answer some of my questions which also may have ranged outside the regular Estimate questions.

I do have some concerns about the rollout of the new group homes and what that will mean for our children. To displace whole groups all at once, very, very quickly is tough. It is tough for kids; it is tough for staff. I have concerns about that. I am sure you do as well.

Thank you very much.

MR. DAVIS: Just in a closing comment, if I can, Mr. Chair.

On your last comment, Ms Rogers, some may argue that it should be done faster and that it should not be done shorter, it should be done faster, but I can assure you – and you referred to this in your opening comments – that as a department, as a staff providing services to children and youth who find themselves in challenging circumstances, I can assure you that their best interest is top of mind for all of us. I can speak for everyone who is sitting around this table as well as throughout the Province, if we did not believe that this was in your best interest to do what we are doing, let me tell you it would not be done. It is being done because we believe that this is going to provide them with the best services available to them.

I want to thank them as well for coming. You made a comment earlier about the work they do. It is challenging work, and I say quite often to front-line staff especially who work in the department – and I worked with many of them in my former life as a police officer. As a police officer I had two different assignments in the RNC's Child Abuse Unit. I worked side by side with child protection workers and know first-hand the challenges that sometimes they can face on a daily basis. I commend them every day for the work they do. It is very difficult work, very challenging work.

I see my job as providing them with the best supports that we can to ensure they have the best opportunity to do their best work. I know that when 4:00 o'clock comes and they turn off the light and walk out of the office, that a lot of times those files and their workload goes home with them. We need to continue to do that.

This group that is around me here do fantastic work in providing leadership. We have some significant experience just here in the room with me today in the provision of the needs of children and youth. I rely on them heavily and I appreciate all the work that they do in supporting me, in supporting the department of children and youth.

I thank you all for your questions this morning and your conversation.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister, and thank you to all your staff for attending this morning and being very open and willing to answer any and

all questions that came your way. On behalf of the Committee, I thank you.

We have a few formalities, Minister, and we will let you go back to your work today.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you.

CHAIR: Kimberley.

CLERK: Subhead 1.1.01.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, clause 1.1.01 carried.

CLERK: Subhead 1.2.01 to 4.1.02 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 1.2.01 to 4.1.02 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, clauses 1.2.01 through 4.1.02 inclusive carried.

CLERK: Total.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, total heads, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of Child, Youth and Family Services carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services carried without amendment.

CHAIR: Just before I call for adjournment, a couple of reminders to Committee members.

Our next meeting of the Social Services Committee will take place on Monday evening, April 7, at 6:00 p.m. when we will do the Estimates of the Department of Education. As well, I remind all Committee members that if there are substitutions to take place – in the Opposition Offices in particular, critics, et cetera – that we have our forms completed prior to the beginning of the meeting. Outside of that, I want to thank all Committee members once again today.

The last thing I need to do, we have an old set of minutes from May 7, 2013 from the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services. Could I have a motion to approve the minutes of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, May 7, 2013?

Moved by Mr. Pollard; seconded by Mr. Little.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: A motion to adjourn?

Moved by Mr. Parsons.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Meeting adjourned.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for your time this morning.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.