



**PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

Fourth Session  
Forty-Seventh General Assembly

---

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

May 6, 2015 - Issue 2

Department of Child, Youth and Family Services

---

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Assembly  
Honourable Wade Verge, MHA

## **SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Department of Child, Youth and Family Services

---

Chair: Glenn Littlejohn, MHA

Vice-Chair: Stelman Flynn, MHA

Members:

Tony Cornect, MHA  
Lisa Dempster, MHA  
Glen Little, MHA  
Kevin Pollard, MHA  
Gerry Rogers, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Kimberley Hammond

---

Appearing:

### **Department of Child, Youth and Family Services**

Sandy Collins, MHA, Minister

Rachelle Cochrane, Deputy Minister

Paul Grandy, Director, Finance & General Operations

Donna O'Brien, Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Delivery & Regional Operations

Melony O'Neill, director of Communications

Ryan Osborne, Executive Assistant

Christine Osmond, Director, Adoptions

Susan Pereira, Manager, HR Planning

Paula Rodgers, Executive Director

Michelle Shallow, Director, Child Protection and In-Care

Jean Tilley, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services

### **Also Present**

Cathy Bennett, MHA

Jim Bennett, MHA

Dana English, Researcher, Official Opposition Office

Susan Williams, Researcher, NDP Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Jim Bennett, MHA for St. Barbe, substitutes for Lisa Dempster, MHA for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

The Committee met at 5:30 p.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

**CHAIR (Littlejohn):** (Inaudible) this evening, we needed the election of a Vice-Chair. We did not get to that on our first meeting, so I am wondering if we could have a nomination.

Mr. Pollard.

**MR. POLLARD:** I nominate Stelman Flynn.

**CHAIR:** Mr. Flynn is nominated as Vice-Chair.

Do I have a seconder? Mr. Little.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Contra-minded?

Carried.

Congratulations, Mr. Flynn.

Good evening, everyone. Welcome, Minister, and welcome to your staff. It is a pleasure for you to be here in front of the Committee tonight. What I am going to do first, Minister, I am going to ask our Committee to introduce themselves and then I am going to ask you – you can either introduce them or have your staff introduce themselves.

One thing that I will ask that you and your staff do, before you comment, please state your name and your position and wait for the red light to show so we get it recorded in Hansard downstairs and everybody will be appreciative. The other thing, if you have cellphones, please try to keep them away from the mics because it runs interference and our friends downstairs sometimes get a squealing in their ears. We do not want that, so that will be great.

I think we will begin with you, Stelman, and we will run across the front and then we are back to Tony and we will introduce ourselves.

Stelman.

**MR. FLYNN:** Stelman Flynn, Humber East.

**MS C. BENNETT:** I am just here observing; I did not think I could talk so –

**CHAIR:** No, you cannot, but you can introduce yourself.

**MS C. BENNETT:** Cathy Bennett, District of Virginia Waters.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Jim Bennett, MHA, St. Barbe.

**MS ENGLISH:** Dana English, Researcher.

**MS ROGERS:** Gerry Rogers, I work for the good people of St. John's Centre.

**MS WILLIAMS:** Susan Williams, Researcher.

**MR. CORNETT:** Tony Cornect, MHA of the great and cultural District of Port au Port.

**MR. LITTLE:** Glen Little, MHA, Bonavista South.

**MR. POLLARD:** Kevin Pollard, MHA, Baie Verte – Springdale district.

**CHAIR:** I am Glenn Littlejohn, Chair, and I am from the District of Port de Grave.

Minister, if you wish to introduce yourself and have your staff introduce themselves, off you go.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

I am Sandy Collins, MHA for Terra Nova district and Minister Responsible for Child, Youth and Family Services. I will begin over here with my deputy minister, if you want to –

**MS COCHRANE:** My name is Rachele Cochrane. I am the Deputy Minister, CYFS.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I am Donna O'Brien, Assistant Deputy Minister for Service Delivery and Regional Operations, CYFS.

**MS TILLEY:** Jean Tilley, ADM for Corporate Services, CYFS.

**MS SHALLOW:** Michelle Shallow, Director of Child Protection and In Care with CYFS.

**MR. GRANDY:** Paul Grandy, Departmental Controller for CYFS.

**MS RODGERS:** Paula Rodgers, Executive Director, CYFS.

**MS O'NEILL:** I am Melony O'Neill, Director of Communications for CYFS.

**MS PEREIRA:** Susan Pereira, Manager of Human Resources with the Human Resource Secretariat. CYFS is my client.

**MR. OSBORNE:** Ryan Osborne, Minister Collins's Executive Assistant.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, everyone, and welcome.

For Committee members and observers, we are beginning the book of Estimates on 15.3, Child, Youth and Family Services. Minister, I open with you to bring opening remarks. You have fifteen minutes, or anything less than that is appreciated.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will not take my fifteen minutes, I assure you.

Good evening, everyone. It is great to see everyone join us here tonight. I cannot imagine any better place to be tonight than with you folks, and certainly the pleasure is all ours.

If I can just say a little bit about the department because I think it would be important for everyone attending to have a better picture. The creation of a new department focused solely on children, youth and family services was announced in Budget 2009-2010, and between March 2011 and March 2012 staff transitioned from the four regional health authorities.

We acknowledged the systematic issues in Child Protection Services which existed in our Province and set out to lay a strong foundation to address these issues through the development of a new provincial organizational model, which continues to be implemented to this day.

In addition to the budget's transferred from the four regional health authorities, as part of its transition of services, our government has made a net investment of \$38 million into programs and services for children, youth, and their families since 2009-2010, bringing the department's budget to \$142 million in 2015-2016.

During 2010-2011, we developed a framework for the transition of employees, budgets, assets, and services from health authorities. We successfully transitioned approximately 700 staff, transferred and created appropriate budgets for inclusion in the Estimates, transferred all assets, and information technology resources were implemented.

As of March 2015, our department operates in fifty-five offices throughout the Province and has 750 permanent positions. Our department has made significant progress since its inception and I would like to highlight several of those for you now, if you would indulge.

We introduced progressive new legislation entitled Children and Youth Care and Protection Act, 2011 focusing on the best interests of children and youth. We developed new policies and a Protection and In-Care Policy and Procedures Manual to support the legislation and streamline the delivery of protection and in-care services across the Province.

We introduced a new Continuum of Care Strategy, developed to enhance placement options for children and youth in need of out-of-home care by better supporting existing homes and developing new placement resources.

A Request for Proposals for contracted staffed residential placement resources, or Level 4 as they are commonly referred, to support children and youth with highly complex needs was issued in spring 2013 and contracts were awarded in March 2014 for over 101 beds. In May 2014, an additional RFP was issued and contracts were awarded in July 2014. Since July, an additional forty beds have been made available to respond to the emerging Level 4 needs.

Our new Adoption Act, 2013 received Royal Assent in December 2013. The new legislation clarifies the law respecting adoption; assists in

streamlining and expediting the adoption process; and aligns with the principles of the Children and Youth Care and Protection Act, where appropriate. The act also provides for adult adoptions and enhanced post-adoption services.

We have begun the process of developing and implementing a new, comprehensive assessment and case management framework for Child Protection Services. This new framework, entitled Structured Decision Making, uses a series of processes to help social workers assess families and make critical decisions in the life of a case ranging from when it is in the best interest of the child to return to their parents' care to when a family no longer requires protective intervention services.

**MS ROGERS:** (Inaudible).

**MR. S. COLLINS:** The SDM, the Structured Decision Making?

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** It is in effect.

**OFFICIAL:** It is in development.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** It is not adopted yet, I guess.

**OFFICIAL:** No.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Okay.

In spring 2013, we invested more than \$400,000 to expand the Supporting Youth with Transitions pilot program Province wide in order to provide more youth with hands-on interventions and supports that will help empower them to live independently as adults. This program provides young people who are receiving services under the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services with the opportunity to avail of additional supports as they prepare for adulthood.

In terms of Aboriginal programming, we are addressing recruitment and retention through a number of measures including: implementing targeted eligibility lists for more efficient recruitment in Labrador, implementing creative

measures such as a Community of Natuashish Service Enhancement Program to fly-in and fly-out professional staff, enhancing the Labrador benefits package for professional staff living in coastal Labrador communities, and more manageable workloads.

In November 2012, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between our department and the Nunatsiavut Government and Innu First Nation leaders, Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation and Mushuau Innu First Nation, in recognition of an innovative service delivery approach being needed in Aboriginal communities. The MOUs focus on helping to improve planning around the safety and well-being of children and youth, as well as enhanced service co-ordination and delivery in the Innu and Inuit communities.

We also made a commitment to more manageable caseloads for social workers with the ratio of one social worker to twenty cases, and have added over fifty new permanent front-line social worker positions to help reach this goal since the department was created.

Budget 2015-2016 allows for the creating of six new front-line positions in Labrador. On a provincial level, we have now met the organizational commitment of a 1 to 20 ratio for social workers to caseload since the multi-year plan was announced in Budget 2012.

As you can see, a considerable amount of work has been accomplished by my department in a few short years. We will now endeavor to begin a review of our legislation in light of our experiences over the last several years, and make any necessary amendments based on our findings.

At the end of the day I am sure we all share the same common goal, the safety and best interests of the children and youth in our Province. Now I will be happy to answer any and all of your questions.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Just prior to going to Jim, I am going to ask the Clerk to call the first subhead please.

**CLERK (Ms Hammond):** Subhead 1.1.01.

**CHAIR:** Jim.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Why are we starting on page 3?

**CHAIR:** Page 15.3. That is the first page. I am sorry, Jim, if I confused you, subhead 1.1.01.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** No, but the page before says Child, Youth and Family Services, the Hon. Sandy Collins, Minister, 95 Elizabeth Avenue. I assume that is what we are here for.

There are a number of headings there, so why are we just running through this? Are we going to ignore those totals or what are we going to do?

**CHAIR:** No, I am sorry. I missed the first page Jim, so that is my fault. I apologize.

Do you have opening remarks and questions?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Minister, over the last few years the overall budget of the department has declined by quite a substantial amount. What was the cause of the decline? Have some services been moved? What has happened?

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

There have been a number of changes, of course, since the inception of the department, right from the very beginning coming over from the RHAs. When that was transitioned over, since that period we were able to look at the positions that came over and see which positions would be best suited towards the Department of CYFS. Some of course that came over, I think you will see in later years we were able to eliminate those and create more front line services.

There has been an ebb and flow from the creation of the department. Which year are you talking about in particular? Are you talking about from last year to this year?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Well from last year and the year before, if you follow the numbers through, it seems they have gone down quite a bit. I am wondering if some services were moved into another department, or if they are still being

offered? If they went to, for example, Justice or if it went to Health and Community Services? Is it the same department that we are talking about?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Something to recognize and something you are aware of course is with Education and Early Childhood Development, a portion of that new department that was recently created took Early Childhood Education out of CYFS. Now that resides in Education. That was a total of sixty-one positions.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay. What proportion of the budget did that make up?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** The sixty-one positions, with regard to Early Childhood Education?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Whatever was –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I am trying to follow year by year to see what we have today that may have moved someplace else.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Right. If I may, the restructuring of Early Childhood Education resulted in about \$48 million.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So \$14 million of services –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** No, \$48 million.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Forty-eight million dollars, okay.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Approximately sixty-one positions?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Sixty-one positions, yes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** When you compare the salary details on the attached Summary of Salary Details in Schedule 1, is that why the number drops from 812 down to 750?

**CHAIR:** Just so we are clear, Jim, are we still on the front page where it says Hon. Sandy

Collins, Child, Youth and Family Services, or are we now into 15.3, General Administration?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I think this is the department generally, because we are being asked to vote a Gross Expenditure of \$155,349,000.

**CHAIR:** Okay. We are on the front page, Minister; the very first page with the total Gross Expenditure of \$155,349,000. Rachele?

**MS COCHRANE:** If I could, the majority of those funds are related to the transfer of the early childhood program to the Department of Education. He is referring, I think, to Schedule 1 in the Salary Details book.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Yes.

**MS COCHRANE:** Yes, and again, throughout our budget we will give you a detailed accounting for the changes in the actual numbers through time. The majority of those numbers, sixty-one positions, are associated with those gone to the Department of Education.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay. So, Deputy Minister, you would know the backup for this because there are only a handful of pages here, and it is a pretty substantial department. To say we can deal with \$150 million and we have five or six or seven pages without much detail – it just gives us totals. I think the questions on Estimates would be pretty much meaningless if we were bound by just these seven pages.

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** Mr. Bennett, if I could, the minister is prepared to talk about the programs that are associated with each item, so it may look like three pages in the Budget document. He will articulate the positions according to each division, the programs that are within those divisions, and the amount of money per program. You will get a very comprehensive brief on each of those Salary Details today.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay. When you look at the very first line it says, Executive and Support Services, \$8,320,600. What is that? Who are they?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Executive Support you said, Jim?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** This is on page –

**CHAIR:** The first page it says, Executive and Support Services. Minister, the total is \$8,320,600. So we have not moved into – I guess we have moved into 1.1.01 Minister's Office and Executive Support 1.2.01, both of those combined. I think that is where we are.

**MS ROGERS:** Jim, have you turned the page?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** No, I have not.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I am just on the front page. This is what is condensed, I am just asking –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** So Jim if I can just clarify, you were asking why the Estimates were up by \$345,000? Was that the question?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** No. There is a figure on the very first page. I think if it had a number it would be 15.1 probably. It says Executive and Support Services, \$8,320,600. It is a current account. I ask: What is that?

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** If I could speak to that. Sorry, we did not deal with – I apologize, we did not prep for the front page of this document, but I will give you the recap of what is in here.

Executive and Support Services accounts for our Corporate Services that support all of CYFS regional support delivery, so it would be our IT, our people involved in HR, and our finance folks, all those. It would involve our executive and it would also involve the minister's office.

This is the group that is kind of the core provincial headquarters office, for lack of a better term. They support all of our fifty-five offices.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Jim, also, we have those broken down separately with regard to the services that Rachelle just mentioned.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay. Service Delivery; what is that? Is that social workers, or contractors, or rent?

**CHAIR:** Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** Service Delivery accounts for our regional office structure. The bulk of our employees are in our regional office. They would be delivering the front services to our clients. If I could continue, the Direct Client Services would be funding to groups like foster parents; individuals who need financial support to help care for the children who are in our custody.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Private third party contractors would be included there?

**MS COCHRANE:** It is all in there, and then we have the detailed accounting in that section when we get to that in our Estimates.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** When we go down further there is revenue of \$13,544,000. It is nice to see revenue, but where is it coming from?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** That is from the federal government. We have an agreement in place with the federal government with regard to our First Nations. So we would be reimbursed for services provided to them.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay. Is this primarily in Labrador or is it some on the Island as well?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Labrador.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** On the next page 15.3, the Salaries are at \$253,400. Who is employed with that amount?

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** You want positions, you say? Sorry.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Yes, please.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** That would be the minister, the executive assistant, constituency assistant, and secretary.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Would you say that is a fairly static number, a number that would be easy to predict?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I guess the only difference would be, of course, if you had an EA or a CA or a secretary come in that would be on a different pay scale. If someone has been there thirty years compared to three years or whatever the case. So that salary adjustment, but otherwise those positions would be fairly static, I would assume.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Last year \$235,100 was budgeted and revised to \$252,900, which is not a huge difference; but if it is a fairly consistent number, why wouldn't it be forecasted at the beginning of the year, to be fairly accurate?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Primarily, that is due to the increased salary of new employees who were on different steps, as I had said earlier, pay levels that were originally budgeted for, as well as overlap between the positions. So, while employees were on summer vacation.

For example, the deputy minister's secretary filled in for a minister's secretary. Those would add up to that small amount of money.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay.

So if someone comes to replace an existing person and their pay is higher, then obviously you do not know who you are going to get from the beginning of the year to fill that position, so you do not know how much you are going to get, you just get a qualified person –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Right. Well, we know the realm. Like you said, it is somewhat static, but it cannot be brought down to a perfect number. There is going to be some variance.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** For Employee Benefits, \$5,000 was budgeted, which seems relatively low but then it turned out to be only \$200.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes. No conferences attended. So that would apply to those positions



I just mentioned to you: the minister, EA, CA, and secretary.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay, so that Employee Benefits is actually for conferences?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Amongst other things, but I understood conferences.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Transportation and Communications, \$50,000 was budgeted and it is \$22,500. Why did it come in so low?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** We were somewhat lower, but it was trying to reduce spending and try to find better efficiencies. So we kind of watched that closely.

On a go-forward basis we are going to try to do the same, but knowing at the beginning of the year it is hard to say you are going to come in at the exact number again. Of course that would be our intention; however, it was through efficiencies and just watching the budget.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So it was discretionary and what you did not have to spend you did not spend, so you saved money?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** To a certain degree.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** You do not want to be limited to \$22,500 this year and find that you end up with \$30,000.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Right.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Some would say you went over budget.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I would rather say we were efficient and saved some as opposed to limiting ourselves.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I think we can all live with that.

Supplies, I suppose that is the same thing?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Same situation, yes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** You are just careful with the money, and Purchased Services.

Under Executive Support, Salaries last year \$899,400 was budgeted and it came in at \$1,094,400. That is a fair bit over. What happened there?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Those were two positions added during 2014-2015.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Would you like me to go into a little bit further detail with regard to that, Jim?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So you added two positions. What were the positions?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** An Executive Director and a Senior Policy Analysis. You will be happy to know those people were primarily hired to deal with the Child and Youth Advocate.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Are any of them with you tonight?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Paula is, yes and doing some great work, might I say.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** What types of issues were they dealing with?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Those two positions?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Yes.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Of course, you know, as we know, the recommendations came forward and as I spoke about earlier in Question Period with regard to your question there has been quite a bit of work done with regard to the back and forth with recommendations, but more importantly with making sure that all available information is put forward to the Advocate. Someone needs to be there to collect information.

For example, if there is an incident that happens in the department, we make her aware. As soon as we are aware, she is aware. Then she requires some follow-up information that can get quite complicated, especially when you have to go back and there are boxes of files. So we need someone to disseminate that information and be able to do that in a very timely fashion.

So prior to those two positions being created, that was a bit of a task because of course you were taking people from other positions and trying to get them to do that work. We wanted somebody dedicated to be able to meet that need.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So was this for the older filing issues?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Not necessarily, it could be on a go-forward basis as well.

Take recommendations, for example – not recommendations, sorry. When the Advocate does a study, when she releases studies on different circumstances – and we have seen a number of them in the past – she would do an investigation. She would have to work hand in hand with the department to make sure she can get the relevant information.

We wanted to have someone on the ground in the department that could meet her needs. Someone she could call and she could get the information she needs quickly. Because that is what we had felt and heard in the past that she was not able to get it as quickly as she wanted, so we wanted to make sure the resources were there to meet her needs. I think it has been working very well since.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So did this relate to the Advocate's office or any other issues?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Primarily the Advocate's office.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I appreciate that the issues are not easy to deal with –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** No, not at all.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** – the glue sniffing and the gas. I mean, it is a whole range of social issues that are not easy to deal with, even if you had tons of money.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Right.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** They are difficult issues.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Some of these investigations I have seen first-hand literally

boxes and boxes and boxes – banker boxes – full of information. So, it can be quite complicated and lengthy.

**CHAIR:** Gerry.

**MS ROGERS:** First of all, I want to thank you very much for coming this evening. I think it was a beautiful day out there, wasn't it? I have been in here, so I am not quite sure.

I also want to thank you for the incredible work that you do. I know that this is a very, very, very difficult area, particularly the area of child protection. I have a number of cases that come to my office just from the small community of St. John's Centre, so it is just a fraction of what all you folks are dealing with and what your staff is dealing with. I know it is a very difficult area and also very rewarding when you know that you are able to help people, some of the most vulnerable people in our Province. So thank you for your work, and thank you for coming this evening.

I just have two points of clarification before we move on. Sandy, you were saying that the salaries, it is a minister, an executive assistant, and the CA; do you have a CA out of the minister's office as well?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** No, I do not.

**MS ROGERS:** So it is –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Oh, sorry – no, my CA is in my district.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, so that salary is probably not coming out of – is it?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** My understanding that the CAs – that is not something I choose. When you become a minister, your CA then would be covered off by a ministerial salary allowance. That is my understanding.

**MS ROGERS:** Oh, I see, okay.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Which is kind of odd, but that is the protocol.

**MS ROGERS:** So you have a CA – do you have another CA salary along with your constituency office?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I just have the one CA –

**MS ROGERS:** Just the one CA.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** – and the one EA who operates out of CYFS, yes.

**MS ROGERS:** Great, okay. All right, just, because I had not heard that before.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** No, it is fair.

**MS ROGERS:** Then the Employee Benefits, I am a little bit confused about that. I always thought that Employee Benefits were like the MERCs, but is that something different? What kinds of things are covered under Employee Benefits?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** That would be, say, for example if the administrative staff needed to do training, if they were to attend a conference, those types of things, educational opportunities and whatnot.

**MS ROGERS:** Oh, okay, I did not know that. Thank you.

So, none of that was spent for the Executive Support? No training last year?

**MS COCHRANE:** Correct.

**CHAIR:** Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** If I could, in terms of the new, as we move into 2015-2016, we did hold the line on some of what we call professional development opportunities. We will continue to do that throughout the year. However, we do want the opportunity to make sure our staff is availing of the best techniques that are out there. So we have asked to keep our budget at the previous level in order to make sure that, if there are new opportunities, our staff get an opportunity to take advantage of those.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**MS COCHRANE:** We will, I expect, spend some of that in this coming fiscal year.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** If I can add, Gerry, at a FPT meeting that I was a part of recently we did it by conference call, not only myself, but a number of ministers across the country just because our calendars could not line up. Meetings are taking place, but just not the travel perhaps, which is great.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you.

Transportation and Communications; was there something specific you were going to do last year that you did not do? I see there is a reduction in spending there from revised.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I was happy to see the reduction. I did not see that from day to day. I did not see the lack of that being provided. So I do not think there was any impact, would it be fair to say, Rachelle?

**CHAIR:** Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** If I could, the minister and I have started a process. We are trying to visit all of the offices in the next year at least. Hopefully, we can get it done in fifty-two weeks.

We did a visit to Labrador towards the end of March. We visited four or five offices up there. Our plan is to do the other side of the coast so we get a sense of what the issues are on the ground. We are going to try to do that for the rest of the Island as well.

It may be higher next year in our strategic plan. Our goal is to get out, because we are trying to meet with our staff and understand what is happening on the ground so that we can support them better.

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** With that being said, of course, I live in Central so I will try to do some of that while I am out in Central. If there are

any other opportunities that arise, I will certainly do the same so we are not backtracking every week over the highway, type of thing. I think we will be able to do well and manage.

**MS ROGERS:** Great. Purchased Services there; what kinds of services would you have purchased there?

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** It accounts for our advertising, media monitoring, our printing, any meeting costs, entertainment, and general purchased services.

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

Then 1.2.02, Corporate Services.

**CHAIR:** Subhead 1.2.02, Corporate Services?

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** It is page 15.4 for the members who are following along.

**MS ROGERS:** Under Salaries there was an unspent amount of \$1.3 million. Would that be the Early Childhood Education part?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** That was due primarily to vacancies and delays in filling positions. Examples of vacancies during the year would include three Clerk Typists IIIs – I had a couple of examples here – of Finance and the IM division, as well as a Financial Officer.

**MS ROGERS:** Also, Sandy is it possible the opening remarks that you gave us – you were very quick and I was trying to read.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Was I? I tried to speak slowly. That is my bayman, I am sorry.

**MS ROGERS:** You delivered it beautifully.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

**MS ROGERS:** However, I had a hard time keeping up with you. Is it possible to get a copy of that?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Absolutely.

**MS ROGERS:** Great, thank you very much. I did not want to miss a word.

Those vacancies, the three clerks, have those been filled?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I can certainly find out. I would imagine some of those would have been filled, but I am not entirely sure if they are all currently filled now.

We have quite a bit of movement in the department, as you can appreciate. If you ask me today my answer may be very different tomorrow, from the next day, to the next day. I can certainly find out for you.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Minister, just to be clear, what we provide one member, can we ensure that we provide both members the same information?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Absolutely. Yes, no problem at all.

**CHAIR:** That will save some repetitiveness later on.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Sure.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

**MS ROGERS:** Great, thank you.

We have a reduction in Salaries in the budget for 2015 by \$357,000. How come?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** It is due primarily to year over year staffing changes and the budget reduction initiative, which is worth \$392,800. That is to abolish vacant positions. There are six in total that were deemed not required by the department, so, for example, a Clerk IV and a Program & Policy Development Specialist.

I can go further there. There is an \$11,700 adjustment by Budgeting Division for attrition, as well as no salary savings for three positions associated with relocation of Training Unit; savings are noted in Transportation and Communications account.

**MS ROGERS:** So you are losing six positions in the department? This is still under Corporate Services?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes.

**MS ROGERS:** They are vacant, yes. Are they going to be filled? No. There are six vacant positions and they will not be filled. So we have policy development – these are not positions that are disappearing through attrition. These are vacant positions that are going to be collapsed.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Correct.

**MS ROGERS:** Cut. Okay.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Not cut, but abolished. They are currently not filled though they are vacant positions.

**MS ROGERS:** Oh, it is a saving opportunity.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Absolutely, finding efficiencies.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. Can I have a list of those positions?

Great, thank you very much.

In Transportation and Communications, we see a significant reduction in the revised amount in 2014-2015. Was there something specific you did not do that you were planning?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** No. Well an increase in use of technology such as Microsoft Lync. We tried to reduce the travel expenditure as well, similar to what I had said earlier.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, thank you very much.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** You are welcome.

**MS ROGERS:** Professional Services; what would you have done under there? Professional Services; nothing was spent. Is that again training?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** No, for consultants or reviews and whatnot. They would happen periodically. We may have a number of them in the upcoming year, but not the last.

**MS ROGERS:** Great. Purchased Services; what kinds of services would be purchased under there for Corporate Services?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Advertisement, lease accommodations, meeting room rentals, printer and photocopier lease costs, repairs and maintenance of equipment, costs associated with the Training Unit, and other general purchases.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, so that is not where you would purchase consultants?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** No.

**MS ROGERS:** Great. Thank you very much.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** You are welcome.

**MS ROGERS:** Program Development and Planning, 1.2.03; under Salaries we see a jump in salaries there. Are there new positions?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes. Additional temporary positions being hired during the fiscal year that was not included during the original budget; so, for example, two Program & Policy Development Specialists for Structured Decision Making which we had spoken about earlier.

**MS ROGERS:** A little bit slower please.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I am sorry.

**MS ROGERS:** I am older than you are.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Okay. I will slow it down.

**MS ROGERS:** Thank you.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Once again the additional temporary positions being hired during the fiscal year that was not included during the original budget process. As I said, for example, two Program & Policy Development Specialists for Structured Decision Making – and I referred to that in my opening comments – with developmental work, and severance for one position in adoptions that was not budgeted. So someone who had left we had to pay severance to. Of course, that was unforeseen.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, and then for 2015-2016 an additional \$460,000?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Right. There are twenty-seven positions there; twenty-two permanent and five temporary in Program Development and Planning. The variance is due to year over year staffing changes, the 3 per cent salary increase, of course, and then the step increases that we had talked about. Budget 2015-2016 includes funding for positions that are planned to be filled for 2015-2016 and that includes three Program & Policy Development Specialists, two for Structured Decision Making and one for adoptions; one Social Worker for adoptions and one Aboriginal consultant for Level 4.

**MS ROGERS:** The Structured Decision Making –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Gerry, can you hold that thought?

**MS ROGERS:** I will just ask quickly. Is that the lien?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Pardon me?

**MS ROGERS:** That is not the lien?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** No.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great.

Can we get a list of those positions that you created?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Sure.

**MS ROGERS:** Great, thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** Jim.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Minister, still on 1.2.02, Corporate Services, last year \$3.6 million was budgeted and then only \$2.3 million was used. That is about 40 per cent less and then this year it is back up quite a bit. Could you just walk me through what is going on there?

**CHAIR:** Subhead 1.2.02, Salaries?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Subhead 1.2.02, Salaries, Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Why are they down by \$357,000; is that your question?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** It is down a whole lot and then it is up quite a bit. I am just wondering if you could take me through that. What is happening there?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Sure.

It was year-over-year staffing changes; the budget reduction initiative which was \$392,000 and that was to abolish vacant positions, six in total; and \$11,700 adjustment by the budgeting division for attrition.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** That is in this Salaries line that started out last year at \$3.637 million?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay, you are reading from something –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Can you give us the list?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Absolutely.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** That would make it probably somewhat easier.

It looks like a big drop and then a big recovery. If you have it down that much, then why is it up so high or why was it estimated to be so high and then come so low?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Again, I am guessing with regard to the vacancies and delaying filling positions, primarily.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** These were positions that were not filled last year – approximately how many?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Just bear with me there, Jim. I can certainly get that.

**CHAIR:** Jean.

**MS TILLEY:** It would vary throughout the year because if a person left, we might wait a couple of months before we filled the position. At

different times throughout the year, there are different numbers of positions that have been filled.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** These positions are in Corporate Services, so this is not front-line social workers and that sort of thing. Is it managerial and are people recruited from within, or what happens there?

**MS TILLEY:** It would likely be recruited from within government. They would be a combination of management and bargaining unit positions. There could be Clerks. There are QA Auditors that are in our Grand Falls office. They are being recruited right now; there are three. We have a Financial Officer position which is vacant, which we are planning to recruit for as well.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** The estimate for this year includes positions that some of which are not filled yet, but they may be filled in the course of the year?

**MS TILLEY:** Yes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I think it would be best if you could provide the list so we do not spend a whole lot of time trying to finesse what may be there, only to have you just produce a sheet with ten or fifteen lines and it gets all the information. That would seem to be more useful use of time.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Okay.

**CHAIR:** I do not want to interrupt you, but Ms Bennett has to leave.

**MS C. BENNETT:** I just wanted to say hi and bye and thanks for letting me get orientated (inaudible).

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Have a good night.

**CHAIR:** Jim.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I encourage people who have not come to Estimates who may have to come to Estimates – you should just come and sit in and maybe never come back. I did not mean it; Estimates are just fine actually.

When you go to the bottom, Operating Accounts, what was budgeted last year was \$714,000 and it was revised at \$392,000. What does that cover?

**CHAIR:** Operating Accounts, which would be 2.02.02.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Employees Benefits provides for conferences, seminar and training courses, registration fees for staff; Transportation and Communication provides for the travel, telecommunication, postage, fax and courier charges; Supplies provides for the purchase of office, promotional, meeting room supplies, and equipment supplies.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** This is actually – that is the subtotal. Okay, I understand. I thought it was a separate number, but it is not.

In Transportation and Communications was a substantial amount of that, which is further up. So Transportation and Communications started at \$280,900 and went to \$155,000. What types of expenses were they?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Primarily there, we are relocating the existing training unit division to St. John's from Stephenville. Currently there is a training division in Stephenville; it is located at the College of the North Atlantic. We have had some real trouble with recruitment of staff there, so it is going unfilled. There are vacant positions there. What we are finding is that the training that is taking place in St. John's now, not only due to the fact of lack of staff in Stephenville, but of course the critical mass of our workers who need the training are located in metro, so that would be savings realized from the travel which was extensive having to ship people over there, when we were able to do it, as well as the office space. We are able to house them now in a provincial office – in my office space, upstairs from there, there is vacant space. So we will not have a lease cost associated as we do now with the College of the North Atlantic.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** What types of training would it be?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Who would be best? Donna, probably.

**CHAIR:** Donna.

**MS O'BRIEN:** In terms of training, for the most part it is basic core training to our social work staff and our supervisory staff. It is the key elements of practices, various elements of practice.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Does this mean that if you hire a social worker from MUN School of Social Work and the person has no real hands-on of this, like the training or internship, for want of a better word?

**MS O'BRIEN:** Before any of our staff really get into direct practice in terms of working with clients, they must participate in certain core pieces of work. There is a pre-core component. As they progress through the profession, in terms of working with us, as they are ready, as they are leaning, we put them through a series of practice training sessions to complement and to support other training that they would have received either academically through the university or through other professional development.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Would this also be used for existing employees if you wanted to cross train them on different types of work that they would need to do within the department?

**MS O'BRIEN:** Absolutely. All of the program areas – it not just child protection; it is youth corrections, adoption services, the full range of it. Our staff will enroll and all of our staff must complete all of those core elements over a given period of time.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So that was being done at the College of North Atlantic in Stephenville and now it is being done in St. John's?

**MS O'BRIEN:** The unit itself was located in Stephenville, training was provided both in Stephenville and in other areas of the Province; but we came to the realization, by the middle of last year, we were struggling with recruitment of appropriate staff who were prepared to go work in Stephenville to provide that critical training that we need for our staff.

As a result of that, basically we made the decision, based upon the travel expenses

associated with it, that it would be in everyone's best interest, particularly our front-line staff, that we have the training services as close to where the service needs are.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** It would seem to make sense, just for numbers, just for critical numbers, not having duplication and filling up your classes or whatever. Why would you run two when you can run one?

The next category deals with Program Development and Planning.

**CHAIR:** Subhead 1.2.03, Jim?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Yes, that is correct.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** What does that do?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** The activity here would include Child Protection and In Care, adoptions, and Community Youth Corrections.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay. Who is doing this work? So it is program and planning for all of these services? Is that correct?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Last year, the budget was \$1.4 million, about \$100,000 more than was budgeted. Now, this year, it is up around another 25 per cent or so. What is happening there?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** There are twenty-seven positions; twenty-two permanent and five temporary in Program Development and Planning. The variance that you had spoken of is due to year to year staffing changes, the 3 per cent increase of course, and step increases.

Budget 2015-2016 includes funding for positions that are planned to be filled for 2015-2016. That includes three Program & Policy Development Specialists, two of which will be for the Structured Decision Making and one for adoptions; one social worker for adoptions; and, one Aboriginal consultant for Level 4.



**MR. J. BENNETT:** You refer to temporary positions from time to time. Why would there be temporary positions?

**CHAIR:** Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** Our temporary positions are there because during the year, or in our strategic planning process, we will identify from time to time specific projects that need work. For example, our Level 3 foster care this year, it is our priority to try to move the supports to families who want to become Level 3 foster homes. We need special attention placed on that just for that one point in time during the year.

Once that piece of work is done we would no longer need that position. There are ins and outs through different project works that are required.

**CHAIR:** Follow up Jim?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I will come back to that.

**CHAIR:** You are good? Do you want to follow up to that before we go off?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I will ask about foster care in a little while, but it may take more time than would be reasonable.

**CHAIR:** Okay, fine.

Gerry.

**MS ROGERS:** Thank you.

I cannot remember now where I left off. I do believe we talked – back to 1.2.03, Operating Accounts, Employee Benefits. That is an area of training, of professional development?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Conferences, those types of things, yes.

**MS ROGERS:** Probably there was a reduction in that budget in the year 2013-2014 as well, was there?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I would assume so.

**MS ROGERS:** I can see it is going down and down.

Do you feel that the need for professional development is minimizing?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** No, no not at all. Certainly we see the importance. As I mentioned earlier, any time we can use technology – so whether that be a conference call as opposed to a plane ticket, or using Skype or Microsoft Lync, those types of programs; any time we can minimize the amount of travel without jeopardizing the amount of professional development, we do so.

**MS ROGERS:** So front-line social workers, if they were to go to a conference or do training, which budget would it come out of?

**CHAIR:** Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** They would be out of regional operations which are following 2.1.01. They would be under regional operations.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you very much.

Transportation and Communications; there is a significant reduction there in the revised budget from \$141,000 to \$39,000. Those saving were?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Not to sound repetitive, but again the same situation as before, just trying to watch every penny, while at the same time being able to provide opportunities, but through the use of technology.

**MS ROGERS:** So if you were not saving every penny, if you did not have to save every penny, what would you have done with that \$141,000?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** In my ten years in government people can always find somewhere to travel. I am sure there were conferences that we could find for people to go to, but in the times we are in we are trying to find the best opportunities for people to attend what they can. If opportunities exist where someone does not have to fly across the country, and can do it using technology, that is what we do.

Of course, Gerry from year to year conferences change and situations change. Perhaps this year more opportunities will present themselves that people may have to attend. It is hard to say from year to year, but any time we can do it better or

cheaper by still delivering the training, we will do so.

**MS ROGERS:** Sometimes what happens when people get together in a room and have certain levels of expertise – that is valid.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Right. Sometimes we see conferences coming here, so of course the travel would be affected as well as opposed to having to travel out.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you

Professional Services; there is a significant revision there. What had you perhaps intended to do and did not do?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I am going to get one of the staff to talk to that because that has to do with Structured Decision Making.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** In 2014-2015 our Professional Service's budget was primarily for the completion of the Structured Decision Making model. It was to pay consultants who are working with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency to help us with the model that we are developing, and other consultant costs, but that was the bulk of it.

In the new year, in 2015-2016, we have asked for the same budget for Professional Services. We still have more work to do on that Structured Decision Making model, hence why we are hiring those couple of positions the minister referred to earlier. We do think that we are going to need some of that in 2015-2016.

In addition, the department – as the minister indicated in his opening remarks – is almost five years in and a statutory review is likely coming, according to our legislation. We will plan for that in 2015-2016. We may need some consultant work to help identify any gaps we may have in our legislation that we may need to pay attention to during that statutory review.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. Rachele, can you tell me again the name of organization you had consulted with?

**MS COCHRANE:** Certainly. It is called the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

**MS ROGERS:** How did it go? You are still doing that? You are in the process of doing that?

**MS COCHRANE:** Yes, we are in the process. We are developing an information management system as well. We are still on the Health system, I guess, for lack of a better word, you know where we came in from Health. The training will happen on the Structured Decision Making model because all of our staff has to get trained on this. It is all sequential. Our IM system needs to be running and then we do the training because it would be –

**MS ROGERS:** What is your IM system?

**MS COCHRANE:** Our information management system.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**MS COCHRANE:** I am sorry.

**MS ROGERS:** That is okay.

**MS COCHRANE:** We are on the Health information management system today. We will have one dedicated for Child Protection once this system is developed. In 2016 our goal – with information management it is always a challenge, but we are working diligently to try to get that system up and running. Then we will roll out our Structured Decision Making model to staff.

**MS ROGERS:** When are you hoping to roll that out?

**MS COCHRANE:** We are saying 2016, but again, it is our best guess.

**MS ROGERS:** I know it is mentioned in the plan here, but can you give me a thumbnail sketch of what that Structured Decision Making is and why it is so important?

**MS COCHRANE:** I will ask Michelle Shallow. It is under her division. She has been working with the consultant so I will ask Michelle.

**CHAIR:** Michelle.

**MS SHALLOW:** Structured Decision Making will replace our current Risk Management System.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**MS SHALLOW:** It is the best research-informed approach to using a series of tools to help social workers make critical decisions at critical junctures in the involvement of the lives of families who become involved with our system. Right from referral, intake, prioritizing what the call is and what the issue is, and when and how we need to respond, to planning with the family and providing intervention to mitigate risk or making other decisions, if necessary, right up and including case closure.

**MS ROGERS:** I imagine then that staff will have to be trained in that. So in this budget of \$442,000, does that include training for staff or is that –

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** The training for staff – if the regional operations staff need to travel for training, we will deliver the training we are expecting, in-house. Maybe we will bring in a consultant to help us with that because we have used this National Council on Crime & Delinquency before. So when we get to the training side we may bring in an expert to help with the training, for quite a while, I suspect, if we do use then.

The travel for the staff, when they come in for that training, that will be captured under regional operations because that is where our social workers are budgeted, under regional operations.

**MS ROGERS:** So this must be exciting? It is a whole different way of doing business.

**MS COCHRANE:** I think it is good news.

**MS ROGERS:** It is such a tough area.

Thank you very much for that.

Purchased Services, I think there is \$22,000 left over from that.

I am going on now to General Administration continued, 1.2.04, Operating Accounts: Property, Furnishings and Equipment. The budget was for \$280,000, only \$45,000 was spent. What was the change there?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** That is budgeted for items – for example, there were two purchases there. I guess it would be as needed, so there were a couple of purchases – a side by side to be used in Hopedale. Of course, the roads network up there is very different than here so they need different modes of transportation. That, for example, was \$17,000. As well, in Natuashish there was a pick-up truck that was just about \$30,000. Again, it is as the need arises. That could have been four pick-up trucks, but thankfully it was only one. It is hard to determine from year to year.

**MS ROGERS:** The original budgeted amount of \$280,000, that was not budgeted for anything in particular then you –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** It was for land or a house in Hopedale, but we were unsuccessful with that. So now what we are going to do is proceed with a lease because when we own a property on the Coast of Labrador having it maintained and those services provides, whether it be maintenance or whatever the case is, it is very difficult. So we are proceeding a little bit differently.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great.

Thank you very much.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** You are welcome.

**MS ROGERS:** I guess I will turn it over to Jim.

**CHAIR:** Jim.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** When we left off, we were at 1.2.03. I think some of the explanation included maybe some foster family training. You said Level 3, I think. That was just my recollection.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** What number, Jim, sorry?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** When I was asking questions before, included in the Salaries line was some foster parent training. I think the deputy minister said for Level 3 foster parents.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I think that came under Transportation and Communications, wasn't it, Rachelle?

**MS COCHRANE:** I apologize if I am on the wrong section because I am not quite sure which number we are on.

**CHAIR:** Heading 1.2.03, under Program Development and Planning, page 15.4 and Mr. Bennett asked in the last question but I think it came from Transportation and Communications, and the difference, but you said something about Level 3 training and foster care. I do not know if it is Professional Services or Transportation.

**MS COCHRANE:** Oh, perfect. I apologize now; I was on the previous questions.

In our Continuum of Care Strategy we have four levels of care for our children that are in care. We have had very great success with the services that we are offering on Levels 1, 2, and 4.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** What is encompassed in each one?

**MS COCHRANE:** Level 1 is kinship, families who want to foster.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I am somewhat familiar with it because we have done referrals from my office and I kind of think you may be under promoted.

**MS COCHRANE:** Okay. This is where we are heading this.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Grandparents and whatever, they get an alcoholic mom and a disappearing dad from Alberta or whatever, the grandmother is stuck with the kids and going to be kicked out of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and it is a total mess, so we usually come to you guys.

**MS COCHRANE:** Right. So our plan is this fiscal year coming, we have spent a lot of attention on Levels 1, 2, and 4 level of care. What our goal is now is to enhance our Level 3 placements. We are going to try to –

**MR. J. BENNETT:** What does Level 3 do?

**MS COCHRANE:** Level 3 are for our high-needs children. They have multiple barriers and they are difficult to place in a normal foster home because they are such high need.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay.

**MS COCHRANE:** We need to train either our current foster homes –

**MR. J. BENNETT:** It could be ADHD?

**MS COCHRANE:** All of those issues and they have addictions, multiple barriers.

Our foster families have told us they need special training in order to accept these children into their homes. So this year our goal is to reach out to the Foster Families Association and those that are registered foster homes and see if we can enhance their acceptance of children who have these high needs and by providing them with a substantial amount of training.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** What ages are they typically, generally a little bit older?

**MS COCHRANE:** Our older children are the hardest to place, obviously; and with higher needs, they are even harder. We have children with special needs from all ages, but certainly the harder to place ones are the older children.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** How many foster families do you need now?

**MS COCHRANE:** Do we need?

**OFFICIAL:** That is the magic question.

**MS COCHRANE:** Yes.

Our caseload changes on a daily basis. It has been relatively constant, if I can say it that way, up and down, several children from time to time and from different levels. Our caseload now is

at about 7,000 all in, which are those who are still living with their families and those who we have to take in care. We have about 1,000 children that are in care; that is we are their families if I can use, for lack of a better term. They have been out of their homes and we have found placements for them, including foster families.

**MS ROGERS:** So you said 7,000 are kids who are not in their homes?

**MS COCHRANE:** No, no we have – most of the children are in their homes –

**MS ROGERS:** Oh, I see, okay.

**MS COCHRANE:** There are about 1,000 of those 7,000 that, for multiple reasons, they had to be removed from their homes and they are in our care. Those are the ones we find either kinship programs for them or our structured foster homes, or our residential care homes or now, hopefully this year, our Level 3 specialized foster homes we are calling them.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** In cases, some of the children I suppose even though the family might be less than a perfect family, the solution might be worse than what you already have, you may be able to put in supports and monitoring or whatever with the biological family and work with them.

**MS COCHRANE:** Absolutely. I mean, ideally nobody wants to remove a child from their family. That is our goal; however, that is not always possible. We will wrap supports around a family to help with parenting or to make sure they have the right supports they need. It could be a single mom, multiple issues going on in a home, and they may need supports themselves. If we can provide supports to the home so that the child would stay in that home and be protected, we would do that.

Our social workers are out doing those types of programming all the time, but from time to time obviously those things break down and we have to take the children out of their homes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** With the Aboriginal children you have, or we have I guess – we are all in this together – an awful lot in the Northern

Peninsula, Roddickton area who are there in significant numbers. The percentage of Aboriginal children seems to be really high compared to overall percentage. Do you foresee a time when that may be a lower number?

To me it seems like an endless pit. I do not think you would ever want to say that or make that sort of an admission, but it is not an easy task.

**MS COCHRANE:** Oh no; no question.

Donna O'Brien has been working with the Aboriginal leaders now for quite some time and has built up a considerable, I guess, expertise in the services and the needs of the children who are in Labrador.

Minister, maybe Donna can speak to that.

**CHAIR:** Donna.

**MS O'BRIEN:** Yes, and thank you for the kind remarks, Rachele; I appreciate that.

I will say, you are absolutely right; there are far too many Aboriginal children being removed and having to leave their home communities. That is not something that the community wants and it is certainly not something from a CYFS perspective that we want.

I will say to you that while we always look at the numbers of children being removed, it is really, really important for us to always remember that just about 80 per cent of the children who do need to be removed from their parents' care continue to be supported in their home communities and in their culture; but there are still far too many who have to leave their community for whatever else because there are no resources available.

What I will say to you, Mr. Bennett, is that we have been working very hard with both the Innu leadership and the Nunatsiavut Government and their officials around finding ways to be more creative in identifying foster homes, caring homes, in those communities; so much so that we work with them to adapt foster parent training, work co-operatively with them to develop their own recruitment campaigns,

creating that capacity on the ground to help support it.

The other component that I think is important to mention as well, we have been investing heavily into Labrador in terms of our staffing, in terms of training, being innovative and creative in working with families so we are more visible in the community. We do not want to be the social workers who are there removing children. We want to be the social workers who are in the community supporting that capacity building there, and we are seeing some very encouraging results. Regardless of what you have heard perhaps in the media in terms of Natuashish, there is some really, really good work being done by our very hard-working staff in those communities.

I will also say to you that we have developed Memorandums of Understanding with the Innu and with the Nunatsiavut Government that we are currently in the process of reviewing now. We made a commitment that we would review those MOUs to make sure that they are current and in keeping with today's realities. We have developed some good relationships there in terms of strengthening our service co-ordination, strengthening service delivery, by helping leadership on the ground accept not only responsibility, which they have done, but as well to help them build their own capacity to the extent that we can.

As well, I will say, Minister Collins, Minister Russell, and government generally has done a good job of advocating to the federal government for additional services and supports in those communities to reduce the need for more children to have to be removed.

That said, there are still some very long-standing issues in those communities, but there is some good, strong leadership in many of these communities now. We are continuing to foster good relationships that can only lead to positive results. It is a very slow process, too slow for us, but it is moving in the right direction and that is what gives me encouragement every day.

**CHAIR:** A follow-up, Jim.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I will come back to that because I may need a little time on it when I do come back.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

Gerry.

**MS ROGERS:** Donna, to keep on that track, how is it going with the recruitment of Aboriginal social workers?

**CHAIR:** Donna.

**MS O'BRIEN:** We have had some success, as you are likely aware, Ms Rogers. The Nunatsiavut Government sponsored, I will call it, an affirmative action of sorts initiative to get more BSW graduates who have Aboriginal backgrounds, who are Aboriginal themselves. There have been some initial, early successes in recruitment from a CYFS perspective. However, many of those staff that we were able to secure have remained in the Labrador region, but many of them have gone to work in other areas as other opportunities would come up.

We are competitive in terms of our salary ranges and whatnot, but this work is very, very difficult. Many of the staff – all who were interested in employment in Labrador were able to secure it, as far as I understand; but we have not been able to retain too many of them, although we continue to try. So we try to find other innovative ways.

I will say to you, we do have a significant representation of Aboriginal employees who work in supporting capacities within our offices, which is perhaps not as important as the social work roles, but they are the face of the community: our community services workers who are interpreters. So they certainly bring the Aboriginal perspective into the decision-making process for our social workers. Plus, we have a good relationship with the hired staff of the various Aboriginal groups as well that helps to strengthen that.

We would like to have more Aboriginal social workers. We take as many as are available and willing to come work with us, but we have to find other ways when we are not able to keep them for long periods of time.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Gerry, if I may.

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

I actually had the pleasure of attending that inaugural graduation and some of those faces – I think it was all young ladies in that particular class – I seen a number of those people along the coast when I went up, familiar faces. So I am glad to say that some of those have continued to work at CYFS, but many have moved on as Donna had said.

I also had a conversation with the leadership, Mr. Penashue, in Sheshatshiu and we had a talk about what the Innu perhaps would like to do with mirroring a similar program. That is something they would like to do, but they are not at a place to do quite yet. That will be the key to our success I think is recruiting more local folks with sensitivity around the culture and an understanding of that. We have seen great success with those who currently work there. It was a good question.

**MS ROGERS:** Donna, how many Aboriginal children or youth do we have in care now?

**CHAIR:** Donna.

**MS. O'BRIEN:** I am sure I have the numbers here in front of me somewhere. We have, I would say, a little over 300. About 30 per cent of the children in care in the Province – children and youth in care; I think it is important to make that distinction – have Aboriginal status. So it is a little over 300 – I would say in the range of about 330.

**OFFICIAL:** That sounds right.

**MS O'BRIEN:** Yes, in the range of about 330.

**MS ROGERS:** Where are they?

**MS O'BRIEN:** Where are they located? As I would say to you, between 70 per cent and 80 per cent are actually living either in their Aboriginal community or certainly living in Labrador. There is a percentage of children, primarily Inuit, but also there are Innu children represented in the Roddickton area which is as

close to Labrador as we were able to secure and they –

**MS ROGERS:** They are in foster homes in Roddickton?

**MS O'BRIEN:** In foster homes in Roddickton. We have a small number of Aboriginal children, because of their higher needs, who are placed for treatment in out-of-province treatments. Now, generally, those are shorter term because they are there to receive treatment.

We have seen a significant reduction in that need over the past couple of years, particularly in the past year, with the opening of the two treatment centres in the Province that have been very responsive in terms of meeting those needs. At the very least, although children may need to be removed to receive treatment, they are receiving that treatment more often now closer to home as possible.

**MS ROGERS:** In the two new youth treatment facilities, is it?

**MS O'BRIEN:** Yes, the one in Paradise and the one in Grand Falls-Windsor.

**MS ROGERS:** Are there any youth in corrections?

**MS O'BRIEN:** Are there any Aboriginal youth in the correction system? There are some. I do not have that number, but I can get that for you. There are a small number, I will say to you –

**MS ROGERS:** Where would they be?

**MS O'BRIEN:** Pardon me?

**MS ROGERS:** Where would they be?

**MS O'BRIEN:** No different than any other youth in the correction system, if they require closed custody services, they would be supported through Whitbourne, through the youth centre. If they are in the open custody status, most likely, depending on what they have been charged with or what they have been found guilty of, from an open custody perspective, they could be in one of our two groups homes, open custody group homes for youth corrections. One

is located in Corner Brook and one is located in St. John's.

It is no different than any other youth who has been introduced to the correctional system.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. I would love to have a list of that.

**MS O'BRIEN:** Of the number?

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MS O'BRIEN:** Yes, I will certainly provide that to you.

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

What additional kinds of resources are needed to help fully serve the Aboriginal communities?

**CHAIR:** Donna.

**MS O'BRIEN:** We have gone through a fairly significant process, working through the planning circle process through the MOUs with both the Nunatsiavut Government and the Innu leadership in identifying resources not only through the recruitment of more foster homes and getting more naturalized, I will call it, family-based care, but there has also been a recognition that where that is not possible, in order to keep child and youth closer to home, that they may require other types of placement needs.

We are now going through a process that we will probably get through, to this conversation now, working with the Aboriginal leadership around identifying – they have already identified, through the planning circle process, some of their needs. Some of those Level 4 requirements, such as emergency placements, such as other forms of group living, more individualized arrangements for children with very complex needs who are living in those communities, to be able to develop that capacity in their communities because now they come out for those services.

**MS ROGERS:** And so far away.

**MS O'BRIEN:** It is so far away, but what is very important is that we have to work within the leadership in the community to build that capacity so that they can take up not so much ownership, but certainly take some level of responsibility of ensuring that the services can be available in their communities. We want their people, their members, their staff to be working and providing those levels of support. I am sure you can appreciate the complexity of going in on reserves and putting kinds of services in place.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes, I have done that kind of work.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I will say to you, the leadership both from the Innu and the Inuit perspective have been very responsive –

**MS ROGERS:** Great.

**MS O'BRIEN:** – and have shown great leadership in identifying what their requirements are. So very soon, in the coming weeks, we are going to be having meetings with them, because they have already identified their need and we have now received the okay to have those conversations in terms of what their future needs would be and how we can get those services in their communities as soon as possible.

**MS ROGERS:** Great, thank you very much.

If we go over to page 15.6, it is Regional Services

**CHAIR:** Regional Services, page 15.6, subhead 2.1.01, for those following along.

**MS ROGERS:** Under Salaries –

**MR. J. BENNETT:** (Inaudible).

**CHAIR:** We vote inclusive, Mr. Bennett, if that is okay with you.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** (Inaudible).

**CHAIR:** Okay.

Here we go.



**MS ROGERS:** Under Salaries there was a reduction, unspent amount, revised less \$7.6 million – what would that reflect?

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Again vacancies, delays in filling some positions, particularly around the hard-to-fill positions.

**MS ROGERS:** How many vacancies?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Do we have the vacancy number?

**OFFICIAL:** It is 10 per cent to 15 per cent.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Is that a fair – 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the total?

**OFFICIAL:** Yes.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I will see if I can get you a number, Gerry. Again, that changes from day to day of course.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** We talk about the difficult jobs they do, and that lends itself to turnover and we have very high turnover.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Folks come in on child protection, they do their time there and it is difficult work, and of course you have that turnover as a result of that.

**MS ROGERS:** The revised is what we ended up with at the end of the year. There was not a targeted revision during the year. The revised, is that a reflection of an outcome of vacancies that you could not fill or was there a targeted reduction throughout the year?

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** The salary savings that you see in 2014-2015 are caused by staff turnover; it was not caused by any target of savings, nothing to that effect.

About 10 per cent to 15 per cent of our staff, as we call it, are churning over every year for multiple reasons. They move offices; it takes a couple of months for us to fill a position. They decide to leave the social work or whatever, the caseload, because they want to find jobs in other sectors. Eighty-eight per cent of our salary budget is in the regions and most of the vacancies are also in the regions. People are moving around constantly.

**CHAIR:** I am going to hold you there, Gerry, and go back to Mr. Bennett.

Mr. Bennett.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** We were talking about foster care and, in particular, the Aboriginal population. With recruiting social workers, is there any program or any focus on recruiting or promoting, through affirmative action or otherwise, Aboriginal students who would be introduced to the opportunity to do social work, say, from high school, to go to university, potentially, to go back – you can never insist they go back – but do we do that in this Province? Do we identify them and encourage them to go to Memorial or elsewhere to do social work and track them and maybe have them want to go back home?

**CHAIR:** Donna.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I will say to you that generally, not just in Aboriginal communities, but in terms of looking to recruit social workers generally speaking, there are career fairs. There are things of that nature that we – I am a social worker as well – as a profession look to promote the profession.

I will say from an Aboriginal-focus perspective, staff in our Aboriginal communities regularly visit schools and talk about the work that they do. I will also say to you that once admitted to the School of Social Work, we put a real focus on looking to recruit Aboriginals. We do our own separate eligibility list for Labrador and if there are people with Aboriginal status who are participating in the BSW programs, we actively pursue them in terms of trying to recruit them for positions.

Generally speaking, I will say in the education system in the school systems, we do promote the profession. I cannot speak to whether we actually have a specific focus on trying to recruit Aboriginal students into the profession, any more than we would anywhere else; but I am aware that are staff are actively in schools and engaging in career fairs, things of that nature, where possible, to promote the profession within those communities.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Some of the professional schools in other parts of Canada accept quotas for Natives. For example, I studied at a law school that had a Mohawk quota.

**MS O'BRIEN:** Yes

**MR. J. BENNETT:** They came from six nations. Presumably, they went back. There were some Ojibwa. Dalhousie, for example, has what they called an IB&M program: Indigenous Blacks & Mi'kmaq. So I am wondering if we have something like that so people might be more motivated to go back if they were pre-selected early. I know it is a long fuse because it is four years or more after high school but if they wanted to go back, it might help with the retention rate in Natuashish and Sheshatshiu for sure.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I am not aware of any specific targeted number of applicants within the social work program here through the MUN School of Social Work. I am not sure if any of our staff would have any knowledge of whether there is a particular affirmative action. I am not aware of one. I can certainly check that, but I am not aware of it.

I know that regularly we go into the school to promote working in Aboriginal communities on a regular basis, but whether there is a specific targeted number to try to attract more Aboriginal people, I cannot specifically to that.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Is there an issue in dealing, particularly with foster children, much to do with fetal alcohol syndrome?

**MS O'BRIEN:** It is quite prevalent in Aboriginal communities. Yes, it is.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Is there any sort of programming to – I am not sure how you convince someone not to drink when they are already expecting a child. Is there any focus on that because that would seem to result in lifelong consequences and a big obligation for the department for a long, long time?

**MS O'BRIEN:** There is a focus and I will say to you, most of the funding actually comes directly to the Aboriginal groups themselves, to the governments and to those communities through Health Canada to promote a lot of training and support for families who are experiencing addictions issues. Some significant progress – and I will say to you, recently in Natuashish they held a several week addictions program particularly focused on younger moms and women. They had, I think, somewhere in the range of about thirty graduates, which was the first time ever they had successfully gone through a program through their Healing Lodge.

I know with the Nunatsiavut Government they also have been focusing on the development and delivering of their own training to their own people around dealing with, what I will say, their mental health and addictions issues. A lot of it is based on intergenerational trauma and all of those social ills that come with all of that, but it is quite prevalent in many Aboriginal communities.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** In the non-Aboriginal population, do you also see that in children that end up in care?

**MS O'BRIEN:** FASD?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Yes.

**MS O'BRIEN:** Yes. I would not be able to give you a specific number, but yes we do see a high level of prevalence of children with high needs behaviours, where there has been a diagnosis of either Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or like symptoms, suspect symptoms – yes, we are seeing it.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I am not sure if the question was asked before. Under Professional Services last year \$442,000 was budgeted and

\$34,400 was used, and it is back up to \$442,000 this year.

**CHAIR:** Just for clarification Jim, what section are we under now?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Subhead 1.2.03.

**CHAIR:** Subhead 1.2.03, Professional Services?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Yes, that is correct.

**CHAIR:** I believe it was answered.

Rachelle.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** You may have answered earlier and I did not get it.

**MS COCHRANE:** Sorry, this is the one we may have talked about a bit earlier –

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I am always suspicious of numbers that change a whole lot and equally suspicious of numbers that do not change at all.

**MS COCHRANE:** I understand.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** How can it be exactly the same? Make it a dollar more or a dollar less but –

**MS COCHRANE:** The Professional Services budget was primarily for the completion of the Structured Decision Making model project. It was to pay for consultants from the National Council on Crime & Delinquency that you talked about earlier. That is the one.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay, I knew the answer. I was not sure what question it applied to, so I am good with that. Thank you.

On the next page, 2.1.01, last year there was \$50,446,000 budgeted for Salaries and \$42,783,000 actually was used. Is that for front line – what is that?

**CHAIR:** Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** The Salaries, 2.1.01, is for our Regional Services and that is the bulk of our support in the department for front-line service delivery.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So why was it almost \$8 million below budget?

**CHAIR:** I think the minister just answered that.

Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** Yes, he did. As the minister indicated earlier, the Salaries are almost \$8 million lower primarily due to vacancies. This is the churn in our staff that we referred to –

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay.

**MS COCHRANE:** – delays in filling positions. So once one person leaves, it takes us a couple of months to get somebody in and then if it is a hard to fill, it takes longer. Our turnover in our staff is between 10 per cent to 15 per cent a year and, again, the bulk of this is in the regions. So it would not take long with a 10 per cent turnover in staff to save \$6 million or \$7 million.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I am not surprised that the turnover would be 10 per cent in social work. That means you stayed ten years.

**MS COCHRANE:** Which is probably good news.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I mean, think of it, this sort of front-line work probably uses up a lot of energy and everything else. So ten years doing this type of front-line work and the person moved on to managerial or did something else; to me, that would not seem like a lot of turnover actually in that type of work.

This year we re-budgeted back up to \$49,000. So are those positions filled now, or are you still looking for people. or do you have a rolling 10 per cent more or less that you are trying to fill all the time?

**CHAIR:** Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** We always have vacancies, if I can say it that way. There is a fair bit in this so I will take a moment, if I could.

The variances are due to the following: we have twenty-one vacant positions that are no longer required as part of our staffing model. So we have a certain number of positions in the

department to deal with this 1 to 20 caseload of social workers. We had twenty-one of those positions that are no longer required. They have been vacant for several years. We are just going to eliminate those.

So, that is part of it. We have three positions that are part of the attrition target that were established by government. We will find those throughout the year. We do not anticipate having any problem meeting that target without impacting our front line. So we are going to do that corporate function as opposed to our front line.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Where do you see the three positions coming from, generally?

**MS COCHRANE:** We have four or five individuals who are eligible to retire.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Are they administrative or are they –

**MS COCHRANE:** They are definitely headquarter functions, yes. We know the names of the positions and who is in them, but until the individuals make their decision on when they plan on retiring, we are just going to hold in this mode. Throughout the year, we will know and we will have a better idea what actual positions are going to be affected.

It is also partially offset by the addition of new positions that happened in 2014-2015. For example, we have a Manager of Service Delivery and Regional Operations that is about to be recruited and will be working directly with Donna to help our front line, to make sure the corporate decision making is supporting the front line. We have a 3 per cent caused by salary increases. That was collective bargaining. We have step increases of about \$250,000 throughout the year. So that is bulk of it.

In addition to those changes, those are the decreases that occurred during the year.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Is that a list?

**MS COCHRANE:** Yes, absolutely we can get you that list.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay, that might be easier.

**MS COCHRANE:** This is the good news. I have to take a moment now, Minister. I have to talk about Labrador because it is such a good-news story.

We did give up some vacant positions, but they told us that we could create six new positions for Labrador. So we are going to create, this year, one Clinical Program Supervisor, four Social Worker II's, which is a high level of classification so it helps with recruitment, and one Clerk Typist III.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Where in Labrador?

**MS COCHRANE:** We still have not worked out the details of that. We are going to review our caseloads now in the next several weeks and we will be able to identify, with the regional team on the ground, where best to place these resources.

**CHAIR:** I am going to hold it there and I have watched people kind of fidget –

**MS ROGERS:** Just to finish that one.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

Gerry.

**MS ROGERS:** Rachele, did you say you are going to create six in Labrador?

**MS COCHRANE:** In Labrador.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

I saw people fidget just a little bit and some people walk out, so I am going to suggest ten minutes and I would ask everybody to be punctual on the ten minutes. We will reconvene here – well, actually nine minutes; it is 7:15, so we will take a moment to pause and that also gives our people a break downstairs. We only have one individual downstairs and they need a break too.

Thank you.

Give us eight minutes.

**Recess**

**CHAIR (Littlejohn):** Order, please!

Mr. T, please.

Thank you.

Gerry.

**MS ROGERS:** (Inaudible).

**CHAIR:** I think we are on 2 –

**MS ROGERS:** We are on 2.1.01, Regional Services, Transportation and Communications. The underspending is not that much in terms of the proportion, but we see a reduction of \$118,000 for 2015 - 2016.

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Gerry, you may recall I spoke about the training unit. Myself and Jim had that conversation.

Thank you, Sir. I sound much better now.

The total savings expected would be \$197,400. As I had said, that has to do with the reduced travel costs as well as what we have to now pay with lease arrangements in Stephenville. That will no longer be the case because it is going to be incorporated in the provincial office.

**MS ROGERS:** It is not at the College of the North Atlantic here in St. John's?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** No.

**MS ROGERS:** It is at the provincial office.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes, we have space available.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. When it was in Stephenville who was providing the training?

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** It was CYFS, our staff.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. Yes.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I am sorry, I thought you meant specifically who.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great. Thanks.

You were looking for names, were you?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** No, no, but names of positions. It was CYFS, yes.

**MS ROGERS:** Great, thank you.

Purchased Services; the revised was revised by \$2.2 million in 2014-2015. What were the Purchased Services that you did not purchase?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I will tell you what we did purchase and then we can go from there.

**MS ROGERS:** Sure.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** They would include approximately \$3.4 million for leased accommodations. Lease accommodations are mainly used for offices in various locations throughout the Province. For example, St. John's was just over \$1 million; Corner Brook, \$340,000; and Lab City was \$207,000.

**MS ROGERS:** That is for office space?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Correct.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Again, we realized savings. Rachele, do you want to speak to that because, again, it was spending and trying to keep spending –

**MS COCHRANE:** Under control.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Right.

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** At any one point in time during the year, as our leases are expiring we are not always able to forecast what they are going to come in at because we go through a competitive process.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MS COCHRANE:** Particularly in the Avalon, our lease costs continue to grow. That money we have had in there in anticipation of further cost in our leases.

**MS ROGERS:** You experienced a reduction.

**MS COCHRANE:** We did experience a reduction. That is right.

**MS ROGERS:** Did you close any offices?

**MS COCHRANE:** No, we did not in 2014-2015.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. In 2015-2016, will you be closing any offices?

**MS COCHRANE:** We are planning an amalgamation of our offices on the West Coast. We are amalgamating our Piccadilly office, our Stephenville Crossing office, and our Burgeo office; three offices. We are moving them into Stephenville.

Our staff –

**MS ROGERS:** Piccadilly, sorry Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** It is Piccadilly, Stephenville Crossing, and Burgeo.

**MS ROGERS:** It is all going to go into Burgeo?

**MS COCHRANE:** Into Stephenville.

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

If I can just add to that, Burgeo, we are looking at December, 2015. That has one staff person out there. We are working with that staff person now to try to find a good fit. It is not a layoff. We are trying to find other opportunities for that person. We are thinking that they may go to Stephenville, or the opportunity may exist for them to go to Port aux Basque to perform the same work they are doing now. Historically, the caseload has been very low, about ten. As you have noted before, we have set our case ratio – our target is one-in-twenty.

This person has historically low levels. If you look at the actual cases that are taking place in Burgeo itself, I think there are two active cases for that one worker. It is rather low. We have actually been giving work from the Stephenville area, as well as some of the casework from Port aux Basque, over to that worker to deal with in that position because they have been so low.

We are looking at bringing that person into – working with the employee, hoping to bring her in to Stephenville or look at other opportunities that may exist for her to be able to work at the same job she is doing now, just from a different location.

**MS ROGERS:** How many positions in the Piccadilly office?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** In Piccadilly there are eight positions. Gerry, if I can just go on, in Stephenville Crossing there are seven positions. That will be moved 2015-2016. It will be transitioned into Stephenville. Piccadilly will be –

**MS ROGERS:** Sorry, Stephenville is how many positions?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Sorry, Stephenville Crossing is seven positions.

**MS ROGERS:** And they are all going to go to Stephenville?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes.

**MS ROGERS:** All seven?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Not immediately. Correct, yes.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** So 2015-2016 is our target date for Stephenville Crossing. Then Piccadilly is pushed off a little bit further. There are eight positions in Piccadilly and that will be transitioned over in 2016-2017.

**MS ROGERS:** To?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** To Stephenville.

**MS ROGERS:** All eight positions?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Correct.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great thanks.

What kind of work was done in the Piccadilly office for instance?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Sorry, Gerry, I do not want to mislead there. There is a plan for attrition with that office as well.

**MS ROGERS:** Which one?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** For Stephenville.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** So over five years, if you were to take those total numbers which I gave you, I think it add up to thirty. Over five years, if case ratios stay where they are and we suspect where they will be, we look at probably about twenty workers who would be able to – over five years ten positions through attrition.

That will be adjusted. If we get more case levels we have to – our magic number is one to twenty, that ratio. That is what guides us and guides all of what we do out in the region. Based on that, when we look at it today we think it will probably be ten positons through attrition, and still be able to remain one to twenty and not impact front-line services.

**MS ROGERS:** Those are in addition to some of the other positons we see that are going? They are not anywhere else, right?

**MS COCHRANE:** Correct.

**CHAIR:** Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** Correct. This is a direct regional service operations change.

**MS ROGERS:** The salaries for those positions are under the Purchased Services?

**MS COCHRANE:** No. Sorry, if I could. The salaries are under Regional Services, Salaries.

**MS ROGERS:** Under Salaries?

**MS COCHRANE:** Yes, correct.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, so we saw there the 10 per cent to 15 per cent reduction and then there are twenty-one vacant positions.

**MS COCHRANE:** Right.

**MS ROGERS:** This is an addition to that?

**MS COCHRANE:** Correct.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. This is going to be over five years?

**MS COCHRANE:** Through attrition, over five years.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

I think that is all for that page.

Direct Client Services.

**CHAIR:** Subhead 3.1.01, page 15.7, for those who are following along.

**MS ROGERS:** Follow the bouncing ball – I am just looking at something here now.

Allowances and Assistance: In your revised amount for 2015, there was \$20.8 million not spent. Can you tell me a little bit about what is covered under Allowances and Assistance?

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

It provides funding for direct payments to clients and third parties on behalf of clients related to programs and services provided by the department. Examples of payment include payments to foster parents and vendors for goods and services on behalf of clients.

**MS ROGERS:** Is there any intention to raise the rates for foster parents this year?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I am actually happy to say that we are very competitive.

Donna, if you want to speak to rates across jurisdictions but I know when we attended the

Foster a Future Campaign and the Foster Families Association was there that was one of the comments that came up. They talked about how we were so competitive so I do not know, Gerry, if – anyway, I will let Donna speak to the specifics on it.

**CHAIR:** Donna.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I will say to you, Ms Rogers, that early in 2013 we introduced a new payment structure for foster families and we made some significant increases in the investments to foster families. Not only are we competitive with other jurisdictions, for many jurisdictions we have exceeded their rates. In some cases, we have almost doubled certain basic rates, depending on the type of care that is being provided by families.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you, Donna. You can call me Gerry.

The difference, though, in the budget and what was revised was \$20.8 million. Can you tell me why that was so?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes, that was primarily due to a change in expenditures from Allowances and Assistance to Grants and Subsidies resulting from the contract signed with residential service providers, those being the Level 4. So the budget was transferred from Allowances and Assistance to Grants and Subsidies.

**CHAIR:** Okay, Gerry, I am going to ask you to save the rest of your thoughts for a moment.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Jim.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** We went through foster care, there are other living arrangements for young people when they turn sixteen, some of them can go independent. I am not sure what we call it, independent living or whatever. I am thinking emancipated minors, but I know we do not use that term here.

**CHAIR:** Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** It is our Youth Services Program. They sign youth services agreements.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** How many do we have currently?

**MS COCHRANE:** Sorry, I have to defer –

**CHAIR:** Michelle.

**MS SHALLOW:** We have about 150 young people who are taking advantage of our Youth Services Program through those signed agreements.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Are they living independently and they are supported, or are they in some sort of other arrangement?

**CHAIR:** Michelle.

**MS SHALLOW:** The youth that we are supporting are unable to live with their family, due to them being in need of protection. So, we would work within the community to determine the best residential facility for them.

We often try to maintain them – if they were in our custody, we would try to maintain them in their arrangement, whether it is a foster home or a residential home, or try to support them with family or in a supportive-type living arrangement. However, it is a voluntary program and at the end of the day they can make a decision to reside where they want.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** What sort of budget do you have for accommodations for such a person, an individual?

**MS SHALLOW:** We have a series of rates for the program that are outlined in our Policies and Procedures Manual, which is on the government website and would be available for your viewing, that would outline what we would pay for a monthly rate of allowance for a young person to live independently in the community and other supporting payments, such as for food and basic living expenses, graduation costs. It is a very thorough set of financial supports that we have actually built over the past five, six years. It is a pretty significant support package for these young people.



**MR. J. BENNETT:** Is there a requirement that they be attending school, or can they simply be living on their own because they want to live on their own?

**MS SHALLOW:** The Youth Services Program can be for young people who in our custody before they were sixteen or they can come to us at the age of sixteen, and being in school is not a requirement to be a part of that program. The requirement is that the young person would have to be in need of protective intervention as defined under our legislation. We would apply the same definitions to youth as we would to a child, different assessment processes but the same legal determination.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** To what age does it go?

**MS SHALLOW:** Eighteen. There are some exceptions, but generally it is eighteen and beyond that.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** If they are in full-time attendance at a school or college or university, is there a provision that it be extended?

**MS SHALLOW:** We provide services and we actually enhanced the legislation in 2011 to allow young people to stay until they are nineteen, if they are in a school program.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** It goes to how old?

**MS SHALLOW:** Nineteen, which is the age of majority.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay.

Are there other arrangements for foster care, foster parents past nineteen?

**MS SHALLOW:** For children in care?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Yes.

**MS SHALLOW:** If you were in care and are wanting to attend any kind of post-secondary or schooling program and you were in the custody of one of our zone managers, we would support you up until your twenty-first birthday and provide full payment for post-secondary education.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** What would the distinction be between someone who was eligible to remain in care until twenty-one versus nineteen?

**MS SHALLOW:** The distinction would be if you were in our custody before you were sixteen.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Before you are sixteen.

**MS SHALLOW:** Yes. We would have a different type of responsibility to children who are in our custody and grew up in our foster care system.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** It goes on through to twenty-one if you are attending post-secondary.

**MS SHALLOW:** That is correct.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Now, I am looking at page 15.7, which is 3.1.01.

**CHAIR:** Page 15.7, Direct Client Services, 3.1.01.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** The page that most people have been waiting for: the last page.

**CHAIR:** Here you go.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Just kidding.

Allowances and Assistance initially was budgeted at \$72 million and then only \$51 million was used. The line next to that was budgeted at \$15 million and ended up at \$32 million. Did some move from one line to the other? The overall total, the differential is only \$4 million, whereas in the top line it is about \$17 million? What is actually happening there?

**CHAIR:** Rachele, do you want to –

**MS COCHRANE:** Under Allowances and Assistance, for 2015-2016 our estimate is \$16 million less than in the 2014-2015 budget. The variance is due to really an accounting transaction for a budget transfer mentioned above. So we have moved that from Allowances and Assistance to Grants and Subsidies. It is just an accounting, in and out.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Really it is the same money.

**MS COCHRANE:** It is in and out, that is right. It is in different accounts.

The offset is also partially increased – the following increases in our budget are due to some additional revenue for home support increase related to minimum wage. So we have some of our Level 4 homes that we will give them additional funding as minimum wage goes up.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I missed where that was.

**MS COCHRANE:** It is out of Allowances and Assistance and it is now moved into Grants and Subsidies.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay. You said some of it is related to minimum wage positions?

**MS COCHRANE:** Yes, if I could. For 2015-2016, you see there is a bit of a difference there. It is not just an exact amount transferred. There is a difference of about \$600,000. That is due to additional money we will be giving to some of Level 4s, associated with the cost of the increase in minimum wage.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Where are they working? What type of services are they performing?

**MS COCHRANE:** They are providing some type of care for the children we have in our In Care Program who are living in group homes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Are they primarily in St. John's?

**MS COCHRANE:** No, they are throughout the Province.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay. How many residents would a group home have?

**MS COCHRANE:** It can vary from one to four, depending on the needs and depending on the home.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So the people providing the services, they are doing cooking or cleaning? What are they doing?

**MS COCHRANE:** They would be assisting the children with daily living.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay.

**MS COCHRANE:** The social workers who would be in those homes are more of the clinical types. They would be providing more comprehensive supports to make sure the children are – behavior issues and things of that nature.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Almost like surrogate parents.

**MS COCHRANE:** Pardon me?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Almost like surrogate parents.

**MS COCHRANE:** Well these kids are in our care. They needed protection from their families. They still need care and I guess, yes, we are providing that care.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** The federal revenue amount was \$11 million higher than budgeted. The feds are not that generous so why did they pay more money?

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** I call it an accounting error, but it is not really an accounting error the accountants tell me. However –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** That was from the federal government, correct?

**MS COCHRANE:** The feds made the error, not us.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** For the record.

**OFFICIAL:** Just to clarify.

**MS COCHRANE:** Just to be clear, yes.

The variance is due – we received two years of revenue in one year. They were late sending us the cheque. The bills were to them by the end of March and we did not get the cheque until the end of June. Hence it has to get recorded in this year.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So was that for the prior year? It is not double –

**MS COCHRANE:** Yes, it was for 2013-2014. They gave us two years in one, so they gave us the revenue for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So it is like \$11 million plus \$13.5 million.

**MS COCHRANE:** That is right.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** They were slow in paying really.

**MS COCHRANE:** Slow in paying their bills.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I am going to defer to Ms Rogers.

**CHAIR:** Gerry.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. Thanks Jim.

If we could go back there to Allowances and Assistance, Grants and Subsidies, can we have a list of – I know you do not want to reveal the names of foster homes, that kind of thing, but can we have a list of all the Allowances and Assistance, Grants and Subsidies, the list of group homes, who runs the group homes, and how many children or youth are in each group home?

**OFFICIAL:** Capacity?

**MS ROGERS:** Capacity and also, I guess, whether they are filled or not. I know to have the number of beds per night –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes, beds available. Generally we are good on capacity.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes. Okay.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Sure, absolutely.

**MS ROGERS:** As you can imagine I am horrified to think that anybody working in a Level4 home would be paid minimum wage and that we would have to augment that money. Are there people in our Level 4 group homes being paid minimum wage?

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** Yes.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. So the owners or the service providers of each group home – and can we see their contracts?

**MS COCHRANE:** I stand to be corrected, but I think the contracts may be online.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, the contracts – that is right I saw them last year. That is right. The appendices are not though.

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** Some of the information is proprietary.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MS COCHRANE:** We cannot release the information that would – for corporate reasons. We have released as much of the contract as we can provide without affecting the rights for privacy.

**MS ROGERS:** Ongoing training and professional development for workers in the group homes; I cannot remember, is that built in to their contracts? Is there money provided in their contracts for professional development and ongoing training?

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** We have a list of quality items that we require our group homes to comply with. There are certainly some strong compliance issues in their contract. For example, they have to have completed experience and completion of a program in dealing with children. That is in their contract. We also monitor the group homes our social workers are in. They meet with the child or youth once a month and they also do a review of the home.

In addition, the homes are required – and this is because we have these contracts with them now. We can put these things in a contract. They are also required to file a quarterly report with us. That report outlines the number of children, the

substance of the child, and what their plan is, a clinical plan for the child. So if it is behaviour issues, what services they are providing to that child to deal with the behaviour issues, and what is their education goal as an example. In many instances you will see something on employment as a child gets older, so what the plan is for the child. That comes in as well on a quarterly basis.

We are just starting now – in the contracts as well they are required to file annual reports with us. We are about to start that for the ones we have one-year contracts with and that are now at the end of that cycle.

**MS ROGERS:** How many group homes do you have one-year contracts with?

**MS COCHRANE:** I do not have the number right in front of me, but there are a few. I would think maybe forty to fifty.

**MS ROGERS:** How many group homes do we have?

**MS COCHRANE:** Fifty-two.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**MS COCHRANE:** Just give me one second. We have fifty-two homes for a total of 142 beds in those homes.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great.

Do we have any kids or youth in Alternate Living Arrangements, ALAs, right now?

**CHAIR:** Donna.

**MS O'BRIEN:** Gerry, as you asked me to call you, when we let the contracts last spring for Level 4 resources, there continued to be a need to have some level of – and when we say ALAs, for clarification, for anyone in this room, they are CYFS staffed homes in a very short-term emergency types of situation. We had managed three homes; we are now down to one home.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I do believe that, at least in the near future, we will maintain one residence, but

we fully expect between now and the end of June that we will not have any CYFS staffed living arrangements at this point. We will continue to lease a home from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, should an emergency need ever be required where we have to place.

More often than not children placed in our ALAs are there for a few days until they are able to be placed most appropriately; but, on a Friday night, there may not be a good, suitable match immediately and, therefore, they are there on a very short term. Some children are there longer because they are not easily matched with other groups, particularly if there are larger sibling groups, things of that nature. Our primary goal is always to find a more natural family environment, a foster home, for children wherever we can.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

The three group homes that were closed and then transferred over to Blue sky last year, Grand Falls-Windsor, Burin, Stephenville, are they established now in communities?

**MS O'BRIEN:** Yes, they are. For clarification purposes, the group home in Western is not in Stephenville; it is in Corner Brook.

**MS ROGERS:** It is now in Corner Brook?

**MS O'BRIEN:** It is in Corner Brook. It was established in Corner Brook.

**MS ROGERS:** So they are established –

**MS O'BRIEN:** They are up and they are running, and they are at somewhere in the range between an 85 per cent to 90 per cent occupancy at all times.

**MS ROGERS:** What about the Burin one? Where is that now?

**MS O'BRIEN:** The Burin one is actually in Marystown itself. The Burin group home, the T.J. McDonald group home, was on the border of Marystown and Burin, so it is all in the same community.

**MS ROGERS:** The Grand Falls-Windsor, where is that?

**MS O'BRIEN:** It is in Grand Falls-Windsor.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

What is up with the Botwood group home?  
Who owns that? What is going on there?

**MS O'BRIEN:** Botwood is actually an emergency placement home; it is intended to be for short-term placement. When you ask what is up with the Botwood group home, I think I will defer to the minister or the minister can defer back to me, if he so chooses.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

The children and youth that we have going in these homes have very high needs. So from time to time, there will be situations obviously when you have someone in there – we have specialized staff in there with training to deal with situations.

**MS ROGERS:** Who is running this place?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Blue sky.

**MS ROGERS:** Blue sky, and there is specialized staff?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** There are trained staff, of course.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** From time to time, you have instances arise – again, we are dealing with very vulnerable people, people with special needs. I think what you are referring to is probably a news story that was in the media recently. I would say that is one of those situations – and particularly when these homes are operating in small towns, something may be newsworthy; whereas if it were in your District of St. John's Centre, that same lens would not be applied to it. So we may not even know. There are a number of these homes operating in St. John's and we are not even aware they are there, many of us. There is a little bit of that going on as well, which is unfortunate.

**MS ROGERS:** If it is an emergency placement, these are kids with really high needs –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Absolutely.

**MS ROGERS:** – so there are specially trained staff for the needs of this house.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Blue sky would have trained staff, yes.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Qualified staff, I think, would be the more appropriate term.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

We will get a list then of the staffing there, great. I just have a few questions.

Thank you so much. I know everybody has had a really long day.

**CHAIR:** Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** I just have to make a correction for the record, if I could. It is not that our group home staff are paid the minimum wage; it is that the home support that is needed for families, those individuals are paid at the minimum wage.

**MS ROGERS:** What is that?

**CHAIR:** Donna.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I can speak to that.

Sometimes we support families in the provision of respite services, community access types of services, including child care like babysitting and things of that nature; more often than not, they are at the minimum wage. Families actually purchase that service themselves and we assist them.

Generally speaking, that is of that nature. Generally, in our group homes – not generally, the group homes, the EPHs, and the individualized living arrangements are not paid minimum wage; they are paid higher than minimum wage. More often than not, I think in the majority of the cases they are negotiated

rates because they are unionized staffing and whatnot, just for clarification purposes.

**MS ROGERS:** Great.

This would be the Jones family, they have a child, they are under stress and so they have a respite worker come in –

**MS O'BRIEN:** It is possible on an individual basis. We access that from what we call families who are on the PIP, the Protective Intervention file; but as well, we have foster families who are caring for very high-needs children who may need some level of respite themselves, or may need some level of additional support in addition to the package of services that we provide.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MS O'BRIEN:** From time to time we will provide funding to those families to purchase those services so they get that much-needed relief when they require it.

**CHAIR:** Jim.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** The 1 to 20 ratio, how universal is that; or are there areas where it is a much higher ratio due to the size of the caseload, like rural versus urban or whatever?

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

I will get Donna probably to go into specifics, but it is true – so 1 to 20 is what our focus is and we have reached that goal in many areas; however, as we have acknowledged earlier with cases particularly in Labrador, coastal Labrador, those numbers are higher. With the six new positions, we are trying to get to that number. Again even if we have the positions available, filling those positions is somewhat challenging, as you can appreciate. So, challenges do exist, particularly I would say in coastal Labrador.

I do not know, Donna, if you wanted to add to that.

**CHAIR:** Donna.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I will say a 1 to 20 ratio – when our services transitioned into a new Department of CYFS, the caseloads certainly were not at the level that they are now. One to 20, you need a target in which to focus upon and 1 to 20 has been that established target. It is based on best practice models not only across the country, but generally speaking in the Western world, I would certainly say that.

Some caseloads are not necessarily 1 to 20 because of the specialization of them. We are talking about on average on a ratio, on the basis of how the caseloads are assigned. So we do a general averaging of a 1 to 20. If you have very high-risk cases, you may have a mix of high and lower risk cases, or you may have a smaller number with very high risk; but the average overall from a departmental perspective is 1 to 20, which is considered to be an acceptable, reasonable industry standard from a social work practice perspective.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Donna, if you just want to elaborate –

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

If you just want to elaborate, not all cases are equal because that is something I have learned as well. So twenty cases, you may have adoptions in there, you may have something that is in process –

**MS O'BRIEN:** Absolutely not. You would weigh them at the level of needs and the level of engagement that is required. Generally speaking, across this Province – not without exception, but generally speaking, we have what we will call a mixed caseload so that to the extent that we can, we try to maintain the 1 to 20 to have a mixture of very highly complex cases along with more lower maintenance types of activities in terms of the numbers of visits that would be required, the level of documentation that would be required.

A case is not necessarily a case, which is a case.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I understand that – and this comes from one of the Advocate's reports – there is some concern about the social worker

providing different services to a young person, and there may be some conflict whether that person is providing some sort of service related to the justice system versus the other parts of the system. Do you have cases where somebody might be seen as being in a conflict whereby they have to oversee their probation order, or while at the same time they are supposed to be providing other social services to them?

**MS O'BRIEN:** Where the youth or the child has a corrections component and as well may require some other level of service – and I am just wondering, if perhaps Paula Rodgers, who is our executive director who is working through those issues with the Advocate, can speak to that?

**CHAIR:** Paula?

**MS RODGERS:** Yes, I have had ongoing consultation with the Advocate on that very issue over the last several months in particular. I totally appreciate, from the Advocate's perspective, where she is coming from.

I think she is primarily concerned about a youth who is involved with Youth Services and who is also involved in the Youth Corrections Program. From the youth's perspective they do feel they are being serviced by a probation officer. When they have other, what I call, therapeutic needs to talk about things that are troubling them, they may not perceive the corrections worker as a person who they can go to.

We are having ongoing discussions regarding that. We have a meeting coming up very shortly to propose some options to the Advocate, but I do believe we are going to come to a positive resolution there.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So the young person – presumably there would be an obligation for the person working in Youth Corrections to report to Corrections.

**MS RODGERS:** Absolutely.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Whereas on the social work side, there would be an obligation to provide confidential counsel to the young person.

**MS RODGERS:** Yes, but where the complexity comes in to that, both individuals – so the Youth Services person and the Youth Corrections person – are of the same professional background; social work. If the youth is being seen by a Youth Services worker and discloses information that appears or does violate the person's court order, the Youth Services worker is under an obligation to report that to a Youth Corrections worker.

If we accept the recommendation and provide two social workers to the young person – and we may go in that direction, that has not been totally resolved yet – it does mean that there has to be that sharing of information when it is appropriate, and the young person has to know that.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So there would be no barrier. No Chinese wall, so to speak.

**MS RODGERS:** Right. Ethically, you have to share information if you become aware of information that is compromising the young person's rehabilitation.

There may be other conversations you might have with that young person that you can keep totally confidential because it is not harming, in any way, the order of the court.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** With respect to the housing allowance or the lodging allowance, is there a differential in different parts of the Province? St. John's would be a lot more expensive than Daniel's Harbour, for example. If the young person is sixteen and now they opt or they need to live on their own, is there a different amount depending on where you are and what the cost of housing might be?

**CHAIR:** Michelle.

**MS SHALLOW:** We actually made some recent enhancements to policy around housing to allow for exceptions where housing is considered more of a challenge for young people. So the answer is yes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** It would be higher?

**MR SHALLOW:** There is an ability to provide different rates depending on where the young person lives, yes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** What is the maximum?

**MS SHALLOW:** I do not know. I do not remember. You mean the maximum of the approved rate?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Yes.

**MS SHALLOW:** There is no cap on the exception that I can recall. I would have to go and bring the policy out. I do not remember the exact amount right now, but we can certainly get that for you.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** It is like MHA office space. If you have an office out there somewhere and the budget says this much and nobody is getting it for the budget, it has to be approved.

**MS SHALLOW:** No, I think that we were very realistic in our policy development around supporting young people. It is such an important area for our department and really an emergent area as well for these young people.

I believe the enhancements that we made are reflective of the needs of those young people and that we would look at it, yes. The minister just said we would look at them on an individual case-by-case basis and that the policy would allow us to make different decisions depending on the circumstances.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So there isn't a hard cap? Is it driven more by whatever is the market?

**MS SHALLOW:** I do not remember. Honestly, I would be guessing right now.

**OFFICIAL:** (Inaudible).

**MS SHALLOW:** Absolutely, it is in our policy manual which is online on the government website, on our department's website. We can certainly provide you with a copy.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Okay. I suppose you would maybe look at it as an emergency place to stay. A young person is charged with an offence

under the YCJA and released by the judge. This is a thirteen or fourteen-year-old with no place to go. CYFS then provides them with a place to go or stay. What is your role there?

The judge says: I am letting you out. The kid is already charged with assault, drugs, sexual assault, arsonist, who knows – an alleged arsonist.

**CHAIR:** Michelle.

**MS SHALLOW:** I thought you said Rachele, sorry.

We actually have a director for Youth Corrections, so I do not wear that hat. What I will say to you is that if the court orders the director find a place for a youth to live, then that is what we do because we do not want to go to jail.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** So that would be like a Friday night.

**MS SHALLOW:** Yes.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** It would be like 11:30 Friday night on a long weekend.

**MS SHALLOW:** Whenever. I mean that is why we have emergency placement homes available to us.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I do not have any more questions.

**CHAIR:** You do not?

Okay, Gerry, to clue up.

**MS ROGERS:** Sorry?

**CHAIR:** To clue up.

**MS ROGERS:** To clue up. Yes, I have some questions.

**CHAIR:** Yes, I know. That is what I am saying.

**MS ROGERS:** I know you want to make sure that we are thorough.



Sorry, I should know this. A youth is sixteen in care and then continues to be in care. So where does their money come from, their living allowance? Is it AES, or does it come from the department, from CYFS?

**CHAIR:** Michelle.

**MS SHALLOW:** A youth can remain in our custody until they are eighteen.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MS SHALLOW:** If they are in our custody, the custody of one of the zone managers – we have thirteen of them in the Province, so they are charged with custody of children and youth in care – then all of that money would come from our department. They would live in our approved level system arrangements.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great. Thank you.

What was the budget announcement of \$422,000 for youth outreach programs and services? Was it the Supporting Youth with Transitions pilot program? What was that?

**CHAIR:** Michelle – Rachelle.

Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** I apologize, I missed the question.

**MS ROGERS:** What was the budget announcement of \$422,000 for youth outreach programs and services? Was it the Supporting Youth with Transitions pilot program?

**MS COCHRANE:** Youth outreach. Michelle, maybe you can take that one.

**CHAIR:** Michelle, back to you.

**MS SHALLOW:** Supporting Youth with Transitions is a program. It is a pilot program that we introduced to enhance our program and support two young people who are in the Youth Services Program, through the provisions of what we would call enhanced life skills, to help them transition from being in a system and growing up in a system potentially, to having to,

at some point, naturally transition out into adulthood.

The program, we had a policy framework and training for staff that we hired – we call Life Skills Co-ordinators – to provide that one on one in addition to having social work support. So they would have kind of an enhanced service through that program, and it is delivered outside of the metro through our own staff and inside through a partnership with Choices for Youth.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. The ones outside of metro, your own staff, so it would be a social worker doing life skills training or –

**MS O'BRIEN:** No, we call them Life Skills Co-ordinators.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**MS O'BRIEN:** Then in metro, because we have a long-standing partnership with Choices for Youth –

**MS ROGERS:** They doing great work.

**MS O'BRIEN:** They absolutely do. So we entered into discussion and partnership with them around how they would provide this same type of support. We do not care what they call their staff – not that we do not care. I mean, they are an independent organization –

**MS ROGERS:** As long as they provide the service.

**MS O'BRIEN:** – but we wanted to make sure that we applied the same policies and processes.

**MS ROGERS:** It was a pilot program. Is it going to be extended into 2015-2016?

**MS O'BRIEN:** Yes, it is.

**MS ROGERS:** Will it still be a pilot program or is it established?

**CHAIR:** Rachelle.

**MS COCHRANE:** Under our Professional Services, we indicated that we had a number of things that we need in our strategic planning process that we want to get to. One is the

evaluation of the supports we are providing, including the Life Skills Co-ordinator positions and our partnership with Choices for Youth and several other service providers that are helping us with the services we provide to children.

We will be working through Professional Services, either through a formal evaluation or some internal evaluations throughout the year to inform our planning for the legislative review in 2016.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. So the evaluation you will do this year, is it?

**MS COCHRANE:** That is our goal, yes.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great.

The protective, PIP – I know pip used to be when you did not go to school. Are all the teams in place for the PIP, the six social workers, the one Clinical Program Supervisor, and the clinical admin supports?

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** All our teams are in place, absolutely.

**MS ROGERS:** Oh, great.

Are both phases of the training of the supervisors complete, the supervision and the complex case managements?

**CHAIR:** Rachele – maybe.

**MS. COCHRANE:** I am going to have to defer this one to Donna.

**CHAIR:** Donna.

Donna is looking at Michelle.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I think Michelle is probably best to answer. I can give you a response that I think would be correct, but I know that you would be absolute –

**CHAIR:** Michelle.

**MS SHALLOW:** The supervision project that we are partnered with the university on, we have

provided now to all supervisors in every region across the Province.

**MS ROGERS:** Great.

I am just about done here, folks.

Supports for families, where is that in the budget line? How much would be allocated specifically in supports for families? If you cannot find that now, I would be happy if you could send that to me.

**CHAIR:** Can we say that we are going to send that to Ms Rogers, Minister?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Are we clear on exactly –

**MS O'BRIEN:** Are you looking for a breakdown of supports for in care versus supports in biological families and others?

**MS ROGERS:** Yes, supports for biological families.

**MS O'BRIEN:** It is all in Allowances and Assistance, but you are asking for it to be broken down?

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I do not believe we have that level in terms of line by line by line.

**MS ROGERS:** What I would be interested in is: How much money is spent in supporting families who need help so that their children can stay with them?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** It is \$4.1 million.

**MS ROGERS:** It is \$4.1 million.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** It is \$4.1 million, yes.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** You are welcome. That is for PIP – just to be clear. Correct?

**OFFICIAL:** That is what she asked for, yes.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Just for PIP, Gerry or –

**MS ROGERS:** Would that support only come under PIP?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Well, of course we have the in care, which would be almost \$40 million.

**MS ROGERS:** I am looking at families that are under stress, you have a single mom, and the kids might be a little bit at risk so mom needs some support. How much money is spent –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** It is \$4.1 million for that instance.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, to keep kids at home.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Yes.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great.

Thank you.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** You are welcome.

**MS ROGERS:** The Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association, did they get an increase this year?

**CHAIR:** Michelle, you are nodding your head. Is that a yes?

Michelle.

**MS SHALLOW:** They did get an increase in 2014-2015 – in the previous fiscal year, sorry.

**MS ROGERS:** What are they getting in 2015-2016? Is it the same?

**MS SHALLOW:** It is status quo.

**MS ROGERS:** It is status quo. Okay, great.

We are going to get a list of how many foster families we have now, but you mentioned that I think.

We have asked for a breakdown by region of the number and ages of children in residential care, foster home, Level 3: Specialized Foster Homes – I think we talked a little bit about that.

**CHAIR:** Yes, we did.

**MS ROGERS:** If we can have that, that is great.

**CHAIR:** I think we have that covered.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

Is there any plan for any kind of additional supports or any kind of additional program to help keep children in their home?

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** We certainly are having a discussion, as we lead into our legislative review in 2016, on whether or not families need additional supports. Our goal is to keep as many children as we can with their families –

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MS COCHRANE:** – and part of our review is to assess what we are currently providing and are there gaps that we need to address to make sure that they get the full services they need.

**MS ROGERS:** Great.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** In addition to that, of course, the focus being on the –

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

In addition, the focus on the Level 3 homes as well, the Specialized Foster Homes. We are going to put a real focus on it as well in the year upcoming.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great.

Is it possible to have a number of how many kids aged out of care at sixteen years, like in the past year?

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** That is a great question. I will defer to staff –

**MS ROGERS:** Is that possible?

**MR. S. COLLINS:** – is that possible, to get that number?

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** We would have to look at our database. I am not sure whether our database allows us to do that –

**MS ROGERS:** Okay.

**MS COCHRANE:** – but if it does, we will include it in our list.

**MS ROGERS:** Then how many youth decided to stay in care –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Right, to do the voluntary service, yes.

**MS ROGERS:** – up to nineteen, up to twenty-one?

**MS COCHRANE:** We do have that number.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, that would be great.

**MS COCHRANE:** We have the voluntary number.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, great.

Do have any kids in care in boarding houses – if so, how many and where, what communities?

**MS COCHRANE:** No.

**MS ROGERS:** We have none in boarding houses?

**CHAIR:** Michelle.

**MS SHALLOW:** All children in care and custody would have to be in an approved home, either family based or residential.

**MS ROGERS:** The ones that are over sixteen as well, because –

**MS SHALLOW:** Well, anyone who has entered into a voluntary agreement with us –

**MS ROGERS:** Yes.

**MS SHALLOW:** – who is not in our custody, they may live in another type of arrangement, but if they are in our custody they have to live in an approved facility.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay, but if they are voluntary and over sixteen, are there any living in boarding houses?

**CHAIR:** Rachele.

**MS COCHRANE:** No –

**MS ROGERS:** Oh boy (inaudible)-

**MS COCHRANE:** – they live under our approved residential model.

**MS ROGERS:** I love to see that answer. That is great.

The number of kids – I do not know need that, I do not think.

So, the housing –

**CHAIR:** Gerry.

**MS ROGERS:** Yes, I am just about done.

**CHAIR:** I think we have just about covered it. I am sure –

**MS ROGERS:** Yes, I am just about done.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

**MS ROGERS:** You know, all these people are here and we want to make sure that we get all the information that we need and that they would like us to have.

Mental health services: Is there a challenge with mental health services for children and youth that CYFS is experiencing in terms of being able to get the mental health services that are needed by children and youth in your care.

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I can speak to that.

**CHAIR:** Donna.

**MS O'BRIEN:** I will say to you that any child in our care or in our custody who requires mental health and addiction services is able to access those services. Those services can be obtained through the public system. They can be obtained through purchased services. Or sometimes we need to enter into agreements, whether that be out-of-Province or whatnot, only if the service cannot be provided in the Province.

I am not aware of any child or youth in our care who is on a waiting list for mental health and addiction services that we cannot acquire, either through the public system or through our own private – using our own initiative to secure those services.

**MS ROGERS:** Okay. Great.

That is it. Are we going to wrap up? Would you like me to say thank you?

**CHAIR:** If you want to say thank you, you are certainly welcome to do that.

**MS ROGERS:** Thank you.

I would like very much to say thank you for your incredible work and dedication, your passion and compassion. Thank you for your time this evening. I know it makes for a very, very long day. You probably will have to be in early in the morning as well.

I appreciate all of the information that you were able to provide this evening. I look forward to working with you.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Jim, do you have a closing comment?

**MR. J. BENNETT:** She said it better than I could and did not leave anything left to be said.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

I will ask the Clerk to call the clauses, please.

**CLERK:** Subhead 1.1.01.

**CHAIR:** Clause 1.1.01.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subhead 1.1.01 carried.

**CLERK:** Subhead 1.2.01 to 3.1.01 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Subhead 1.2.01 to 3.1.01 inclusive.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those opposed, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.2.01 through 3.1.01 carried.

**CLERK:** The total.

**CHAIR:** Will the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those opposed, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

**CHAIR:** Minister, I want to thank you and your staff for being here this evening. I really appreciate your ability to answer all of the questions that came your way, the sincerity, and the work that you do.

On behalf of all of us this evening thank you so much for your time. It was greatly appreciated.

**CLERK:** The minutes.

**CHAIR:** Yes, I have that too. I am just saying thank you.

Before I close, I need the approval of the Social Services Committee minutes of May 4, 2015, for the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

I need a motion don't I? I need a mover.

Moved by Mr. Pollard; seconded by Mr. Bennett.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

**CHAIR:** I want to remind members that our next meeting of the Social Services Committee is Tuesday, May 12, Justice and Public Safety.

Motion to adjourn.

Moved by Mr. Little; seconded by Mr. Bennett.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Carried.

Good night everyone. Thank you so much.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.