

**CHANGES FOR CHILDREN:  
STRENGTHENING THE  
COMMITMENT TO CHILD WELFARE**

**RESPONSE TO THE EXTERNAL REVIEWS INTO THE  
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SYSTEM**

*DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES AND HOUSING*

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# “CHANGES FOR CHILDREN: STRENGTHENING THE COMMITMENT TO CHILD WELFARE”

## INTRODUCTION TO THE RESPONSE

In March 2006, Manitobans were shocked to learn of the tragic death of five-year-old Phoenix Sinclair. In response to the public concern about the safety of children, the Government commissioned two external reviews into the child and family services system in Manitoba.

The death of any child at any time is a tragedy and deeply affects families and communities. When a child dies who has been involved with the child and family services system, workers at all levels of the system also experience a deep emotional impact and sense of loss.

One review, report titled Strengthen the Commitment, focuses on case management practices across the system. The other review, called under Section 4 of *The Child and Family Services Act*, had two components. One component considered the services provided to Phoenix Sinclair and her family, and the second examined 99 cases between 2003 to 2006 in which a child had either been in care at the time of his or her death or had received service from the child and family services system within one prior year. The report from the review of child deaths between 2003 and 2006 is titled Honouring Their Spirits.

In addition to the two external reviews, the four child and family services Authorities immediately announced their own review in which child protection workers were asked to have contact with every child in care or receiving service from the child and family services system. This extraordinary measure was undertaken to assure families and the public that children receiving services from the system were known, accounted for and were safe.

The external reviews each have a specific focus. However, they share an overarching theme that recognizes the Government’s continuing commitment to the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry-Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI). While making significant recommendations that look to the future, the report on case management practices recognizes important changes that occurred in the recent past. The report states that:

*“Child welfare in Manitoba is at a turning point. We have the opportunity to make improvements now that will strengthen the commitment to all children and families. The AJI-CWI was the most significant change ever made to child welfare in Manitoba and the promise that that change represented needs to be kept. We now have the opportunity to make system wide improvements that were necessary long before AJI-CWI implementation.” (Strengthen the Commitment, page 138.)*

The Government of Manitoba is prepared to continue the agenda of restructuring, renewal and innovation that began with the AJI-CWI. The promise of hope that became the AJI-CWI was a promise that began with the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry over 15 years ago. That promise was formally made in July 2001, when the Government of Manitoba stated that:

*“This is an opportunity... to shape the future and, by doing so, create new hope for families in Manitoba. The task... is to build a new child and family service system for all Manitobans: a system that will respect the principle that First Nations and Metis people have a right to govern and deliver child and family services for their families and communities throughout the entire province” (Honourable Tim Sale, Minister; The AJI-CWI Conceptual Plan, page 16.)*

The Government of Manitoba is now continuing the commitment to children and families.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE REPORTS**

Together, the two external reviews represent one of the most comprehensive studies ever done on the child and family services system in Manitoba. There are over 200 individual recommendations for improving the child and family services system. As the Government accepts and acts upon the recommendations for change, it is of equal importance to identify what is working for children and families, and keep those aspects of the system. The report states that:

*“The AJI-CWI had as its genesis the need to address the inequities and inadequacies of the child welfare system for the Aboriginal community. [The] protection based model of child welfare has not worked for Aboriginal people in the past and it cannot work now. [The] creation of the authorities in the AJI-CWI moves toward that goal.”*  
(*Strengthening the Commitment*, pages 27, 34 and 28.)

The case management report notes that the essence of the matters that culminated in the need for the reviews existed for a long time.

*“Early in the review it became apparent that numerous concerns in the child welfare system predated this transfer [of responsibility under the AJI-CWI]. While the transfer was not the source of these concerns the review concluded that it does represent a unique opportunity to address some of them.”* (*Strengthen the Commitment*, Executive Summary.)

The values and long-term objectives of the AJI-CWI are still in the process of being implemented. This maturation must become part of the blueprint for change coming out of the external reviews. The case management report states:

*“[The reviewers] identified that the process of transferring the child welfare system to the Authorities is not yet complete [and] ... requires time to stabilize after the transfer process. ... Government, the authorities and the agencies need to strengthen and build on their commitment to the relationships, partnerships and collaboration started in the AJI-CWI process. Government must demonstrate its commitment to the child welfare system in Manitoba by providing the new resources and making the necessary*

*structural changes to build on the existing framework of the AJI-CWI initiative.” (Strengthen the Commitment, pages 38 and Executive Summary.)*

This response builds upon the AJI-CWI framework and is the continuing commitment to the relationships, partnerships and collaboration of this major policy initiative. It is a commitment to our children and families.

## **A BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE**

The reports identify challenges facing the system. The case management review identifies administrative practices that require immediate attention; intake systems that need “fine tuning,” the need for earlier and more intensive involvement with families that may be moving toward crisis; better communication; and building more effective prevention strategies to strengthen families and enhance child safety.

The child death review concluded that “*no child died as a direct result of a breakdown in the provision of child welfare services in Manitoba*” (*Honouring Their Spirits - Executive Summary*) and calls for more inter-system collaboration, program partnerships, and community education to promote child well-being and prevent other tragic deaths from occurring in the future.

The reports are a blueprint for making substantial and long-lasting improvements in the child and family services system. They recognize that families, communities and service systems share responsibility for protecting children from harm. The recommendations offer practical and meaningful solutions to many issues which are cited as long-standing and pervasive within child welfare in Manitoba, as they are within many other jurisdictions. Other recommendations are intended to strengthen Manitoba’s unique governance structure and further the fundamental objective of AJI-CWI that Aboriginal people control and deliver child and family services for their community members throughout the province.

After receiving the final reports, the Government immediately developed a comprehensive strategy to implement this blueprint for change. “Changes for Children: Strengthening the Commitment to Child Welfare” describes the immediate response.

**Effective immediately, the Government is committing an initial allocation of over \$42.0 million in new funding until the end of 2008/09 to implement the recommendations of the external review reports.**

**This will include funding for over 150 new staff positions over the next three years. These positions will provide workload relief for front-line workers and provide preventive, timely and supportive responses for families.**

**These new resources will continue the policy of investment by the Provincial Government into child and family services. Since 1999, investments totaling \$80.0 million, representing an increase of 74% in funding, have been made.**

The Government has framed its initial response in terms of the key themes that address the substance of the recommendations in the external review reports.

## **THE BLUEPRINT: THEME 1:**

### **Keeping Children Safe Through Primary Prevention Programs**

The need to increase the emphasis on, and funding for, effective prevention is a recurring theme throughout the external review reports. The report from the review of child deaths stresses that the child welfare system cannot do this alone – responsibility for the safety of children is shared with families, communities and other service systems.

*“In Manitoba, each day children are put at risk by the inability of families, the community-at-large and the child welfare system to act in tandem to prevent child physical and sexual abuse and the victimization of children in our community. In some cases, these issues are long-standing and sufficiently serious enough to cause significant harm to the children, but have not been brought to the attention of the child welfare system nor is it reflected in this study. The community must be willing to work in collaboration with the child welfare system and families to prevent the victimization of children and youth.” (Honouring Their Spirits – Executive Summary)*

This report contains many recommendations intended to:

- build stronger relationships between service systems (e.g. – Departments of Education, Citizenship and Youth; Health; Justice; and Family Services and Housing working more collaboratively);

- involve community members in designing prevention strategies for their families (e.g. – create local community committees to work in partnership with service providers);
- reduce the risks to children by better educating the community about situations that threaten child safety (e.g. – distribute suicide prevention materials, training and education on FASD, water safety training for caregivers, use of child safety devices, safe storage of firearms, distribution of pamphlets on how to reduce the dangers of SIDS/SUDS); and
- increase the options available to encourage children, youth and families to engage in healthy as opposed to risky behaviours (e.g. – increased funding for recreational opportunities).

**The Government accepts and will act on these recommendations.**

**As an immediate priority, the Government will implement a coordinated province-wide strategy for suicide prevention.**

An action team will be responsible for implementing the province-wide strategy. The action team will include representatives from Aboriginal communities, the Provincial Departments of Family Services and Housing; Health; Education and Citizenship; Justice; and Health Canada. This action team will build on the recent studies completed on youth suicide and the recent initiative undertaken by the Department of Health in the development of a framework for Suicide Prevention Planning. This action team will work closely with the four child and family services Authorities and with communities to create locally designed and culturally sensitive programs for prevention.

**As recommended in the child death review report, the Government will make funding available to implement an information campaign to educate the public and service providers about how to reduce risks to children.**

**These initiatives will complement the existing prevention programming such as the Manitoba Strategy for Responding to Children and Youth At Risk of, or Survivors of, Sexual Exploitation. This program received \$2.8 million in 2006/07.**

## **THE BLUEPRINT: THEME 2:**

### **A Priority Emphasis on Early Intervention for Families**

As a complement to the recommendations for increased primary prevention, the external reviews also propose that the system adopt a “differential response” model to increase the system’s capacity to provide early, more intensive and effective supports for families under stress. According to the case management review report:

*“Families need the opportunity and assistance to provide appropriate parenting. Intervention measures are required that will allow support to be provided to family to reinforce the benefits of keeping children in their family and communities...Programs need to be developed using community development models to reinforce a child’s sense of belonging in a community and the need for families to look after one another.” (Strengthen the Commitment, page 25)*

While recognizing the importance of existing early intervention programs (such as those offered through Healthy Child Manitoba), the report recommends investment of substantial new funding to build a “differential response” capacity in the child and family services system. “Differential response” means the system is able to provide a different group, or stream, of services to families. The report notes that this approach has had success in other jurisdictions and recommends that Manitoba begin by studying a similar initiative recently undertaken in the Province of Alberta.

**The Government agrees and will immediately begin the work necessary to implement the recommendations for a “differential response” early intervention initiative.**

When fully operational, this initiative will create a new capacity to provide support services where, following a comprehensive assessment, it has been determined that a child protection investigation is not warranted but that a family is struggling with challenges. If left unaddressed, the challenges would likely result in children being at risk in the future. The “differential response” is a preventative and supportive approach that will be provided early so that more intrusive and adversarial child protection responses may not be required. In practical terms, this can include funding for intensive casework; respite service for parents; income supplements; housing assistance; in-home family support; and active support to attend community-based programs. Much of this

approach will involve more formal linkage with community-based service providers. In all situations, the safety of children will remain a paramount consideration.

By offering early and meaningful alternatives, the number of families requiring a child protection response will diminish over time. This should have a significant positive impact on the workload of front-line workers as fewer children will require protection services. This is a critical component of an overall workload management strategy.

**By 2008/09, the Government will have invested an additional \$22.5 million for the implementation of a differential response model across the province.**

**These initiatives will complement existing unique and effective prevention and early intervention programs such as:**

- **150 new residential placement resources in such community-based partners as New Directions and Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre;**
- **Healthy Child Manitoba programs such as Family First, Health Baby and Triple P Parenting;**
- **Neighbourhoods Alive and Lighthouses.**

### **THE BLUEPRINT: THEME 3:**

#### **Enhanced Support for Front-Line Child Protection Workers**

The reports refer to pressure on the child welfare system that has and continues to grow due to broader societal factors. The reports state that:

*“The issues of poverty, poor housing and unemployment run rampant in some communities. These are complex issues that the child welfare system cannot be expected to address. Yet repeatedly when a family has no money for food, or their hydro has been cutoff, it becomes a child protection issue.” (Strengthen the Commitment, page 137.)*

*“We repeatedly heard that they felt that child welfare was a dumping ground to address all the ills of society and was used regularly by other overburdened systems.” (Strengthen the Commitment, page 137.)*

And, lastly:

*The Child Welfare System cannot alone ensure the well-being of all children. (Strengthen the Commitment, page 25.)*

In the last ten years, every province in Canada has experienced a substantial rise in the number of children in care and families experiencing crisis. Other factors such as increasing rates of domestic violence and lack of resources within reserve communities have also contributed to the growing workload demand placed on child and family services systems.

Without question, the reports indicate that high workload is one of the most significant challenges facing the current child and family services system. Workload has been a long-standing issue that has contributed to high rates of staff stress and low retention rates in most child welfare systems across the country. Addressing this as a priority is critical to ensure that child protection workers are able to follow recognized best practice approaches in their work. Simply stated, workers must have more time in their day-to-day work to assess situations, engage with their clients, and support children and families.

**The Government agrees with the review finding that workload must be reduced to a manageable level.**

Although there has been a 25% increase in the number of front-line child protection workers since 1999, this has not kept pace with the continuing increase in workload. The Government also supports the recommendation that a multi-faceted strategy is necessary so that complementary strategies can also have a meaningful impact on reducing workload pressures.

The reports also cite the high level of intense scrutiny and the unrealistic expectations often placed on the child welfare system. Front line staff work under very stressful conditions as they strive to meet the needs of children and families. Given the realities of the child welfare environment, systems must provide better training and support to front-line workers so that our professionals remain committed to doing this difficult and challenging work.

**Therefore, the Government is investing \$15.0 million in new funding from now until 2008/09 to implement the following five initiatives to provide enhanced support for our front-line workers. This includes a full commitment to the recommendation to establish an annual workload relief fund of \$5.0 million.**

**1. Workload Relief Fund:**

As recommended, the Department of Family Services and Housing will immediately establish a fund for **hiring additional staff specifically to reduce the high workload demands on front-line child protection workers**. The Government also supports the recommendation that this fund be used to hire a variety of different staff depending on the source of workload pressure. Through their Authorities, agencies will be able to access this fund to hire more professional caseworkers; resource aides to take over non-social work support duties; and/or administrative staff to assume some paperwork responsibilities of professional staff.

**As an interim measure, one of the first priorities will be to fund additional positions for workload reduction in the Designated Intake Agencies across the province.**

**This continues the investments already made to support front-line service delivery. According to inquest reports, in the 1990’s workloads of front-line workers were typically reported to be between 40 and 70 cases per worker. Since 1999, 113 new front-line positions have been added to the system to address these workload concerns. The workload relief fund is expected to achieve a further reduction in workload for front-line workers.**

**2. Information System Upgrades**

The reports cite the importance of child protection workers having access to comprehensive file information in a timely manner. A system-wide electronic information system is a vital component of any modern child and family services system. Information systems must be user friendly; allow access to the information needed for casework decisions; and effectively track children and families involved with the child and family services system. Information systems must also be easy to use so that the high administrative demands already placed on child protection workers are not compounded by cumbersome or time-consuming data requirements. The current computerized case management system, designed in the early 1990’s as a case tracking system, lacks many features of modern computerized systems and requires such extensive training that casual users find it cumbersome and difficult. In the last two years, the Government has provided computer access to reserve communities and has made substantial gains in the redevelopment and expansion of the system’s capacity. The Government agrees with the finding that substantial improvements are needed so that the key electronic information systems can be used more efficiently and effectively to enable and support child protection work.

The Government will immediately review the capacity of the Child and Family Services Information System (which was put in place in the early 1990’s) and the more recently created Intake Module. Priority will be given to upgrades that will **expand access across the province, enhance the quality of information available, and reduce time needed for collecting data**. This, too, should result in workload reduction and more effective use of time by professional child protection workers and supervisors.

**3. Improved Access to Information After-Hours**

The Government agrees with the recommendation that new funding be available to allow child and family services agencies to **hire staff that would be available to respond to after-hours requests for information**.

**4. New Training Programs**

While the reports support new entry level qualifications standards and current investment in competency-based training for child and family services and youth care workers, the recommendations suggest that more can be offered to prepare and assist new and current staff to work in the unique and stressful child welfare environment.

**The Government supports the recommendations that a new orientation and mentoring program be offered for new workers; refresher training for front-line staff be provided in strength-based approaches; and that supervisors receive training in techniques for building teams and supporting staff. Staff should also receive training in provincial case management standards; risk factors associated with suicide; techniques for de-escalating a threatening situation; and best practice approaches in child protection.**

**The new training programs will supplement the approximately \$5.0 million that has already been invested in post-secondary education specifically for professional development of staff involved in child and family services.**

**5. Province-Wide Capacity for Critical Incident De-Briefing**

The external reviewers heard many times that the stressful, and sometimes adversarial, nature of child protection can subject workers to situations that have a negative emotional and psychological impact on them. There must be a timely and effective intervention available for staff affected by adverse events in the workplace. The importance of

providing a supportive, caring and local opportunity to de-brief at the individual, team or agency level is well-understood in health and psychological care systems.

**The Government will immediately allocate new funding for the initial and continued development of Critical Incident De-Briefing programs.**

## **THE BLUEPRINT: THEME 4:**

### **Improved Communication**

The external review reports emphasize the need to improve communication in the new concurrent jurisdiction system that was created by the AJI-CWI. While there is recognition that the system still “*requires time to stabilize after the transfer process*” (page 38), the report recommends immediate attention. In a related issue, the child death review report provides a reminder of how devastating the intense attention can be upon a family, community and child welfare workers who grieve the same loss:

*“The Review Team was also concerned about the politicization of the tragic deaths of children and youth receiving services through the child welfare system. All members of our community must remain mindful of the impact of public statements concerning the death of a child and how that might reflect upon those who are most directly involved. Family members and caregivers in the midst of feelings of guilt, grief and loss find such comments distressing at such a difficult time in their lives.”*  
(Honouring Their Spirits, page 8)

The case management review report also stresses the importance of open communication among agencies to ensure a smooth transition and seamless service delivery for children and families. This review notes that a more formal mechanism is required to allow regular and ongoing communication about best practices, new developments in the system and for sharing experiences.

**The Government supports the recommendation for an annual child and family services symposium; a formal process for resolving case issues between agencies and to improve communication among all child and family services agencies.**

## **THE BLUEPRINT: THEME 5:**

### **Strengthen the New Governance Structure**

The case management review concludes that additional resources are needed to support the collaborative governance relationship that currently exists between the Department of Family Services and Housing and the four Child and Family Services Authorities:

*“The creation of the Standing Committee provided the forum in which to consider the needs of child welfare in the province as a whole. It is composed of the Chief Executive Officers of the authorities; the Director [of the Child Protection Branch] and an additional member appointed by the Metis Authority... We believe that the structure of the Standing Committee does not allow it to achieve the goals of the AJI-CWI. Beyond the functions formerly the responsibility of the Director, there must be an appropriately resourced mechanism to develop and implement the goals of the AJI-CWI. A structure is required that allows for diversity within a consensus model. We believe that can be accomplished through the creation of a child welfare secretariat. (Strengthen the Commitment, page 28)*

**The Government is immediately allocating resources to enhance the capacity of the Authorities to work jointly on system development. The Government agrees with the recommendations with respect to the funding requirements and the scope of actions required to implement the goals of the AJI-CWI.**

**These investments will add to the \$4.0 million which supports the current 40 positions in the child and family services Authorities and will thereby augment the governance capacity.**

Related to governance, the external review reports cite program and policy issues related to the intake program at Winnipeg, Rural and Northern Child and Family Services (Winnipeg regional office) (referred to in the reports as the Joint Intake and Referral Unit or JIRU). Under the current plans to further the AJI-CWI transfer of work, this program is scheduled to become a separate agency mandated by the Southern First Nations Child and Family Services Authority in the fall of 2006. The Government agrees with the recommendation that the JIRU reporting relationship be clarified and that the identified issues be addressed. The Southern Authority will be conducting a “mandate review” to

ensure that all issues are addressed prior to the program becoming a separate agency. The interim board for JIRU has assigned a project team to work with management to address these important issues.

## **THE BLUEPRINT: THEME 6:**

### **Fiduciary Obligation of the Government of Canada**

The external review reports include a strong reminder that the Federal Government, through the Departments of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Health Canada and Human Resource and Social Development Canada, must be a key partner in any initiative to improve child and family services in Manitoba.

The Government of Canada is responsible for funding child and family services within reserve communities. Currently, approximately 40% of children and families receiving service are the responsibility of the Federal Government. However, there have been, and continue to be, inequities in the resources available for reserve communities. The reports conclude that this cannot continue as it clearly disadvantages these communities and establishes a two-tiered system of service delivery. The reports recommend that federal and provincial funding be “harmonized” so that there is a fair and equitable distribution of resources to meet the needs of all children and families in Manitoba regardless of where they live.

Further, families that receive child and family services are often also involved with other services, such as employment training or income assistance. These programs, and the different levels of government that deliver them, have different jurisdictions, policy foundations, eligibility requirements and objectives.

It is important that all governments consider children from a client-focused service model that places the needs of the child ahead of differences in program criteria. All programs need to ensure that supports and services complement each other and that the best outcome for the child is considered to be the best outcome for the program. Services that operate in isolation, or without coordination, stand little chance of ensuring an overall integrated and effective model is in place.

First Nations communities are especially vulnerable to the inefficiencies and ineffectiveness that arise from jurisdictional discrepancies and poorly coordinated services. Larger societal concerns including poverty, inadequate housing, lack of clean water and insufficient health services contribute to the issues that bring families into

contact with the child welfare system. Children, families and communities will not be able to heal themselves until the basic physical and social infrastructure has been addressed.

**The Province of Manitoba agrees and together with First Nations leadership will immediately pursue a meeting with the Federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to begin discussions about a timely resolution of this funding inequity and related policy/jurisdictional matters.**

## **THE BLUEPRINT: THEME 7**

### **Section 10 Reviews**

The case management report raises a number of concerns about the current approach to completing child death reviews as required under Section 10 of *The Fatality Inquiries Act*. Although concluding that the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) “continues to perform its reviews with professionalism and independence” (page 46), the report specifically cites resources, lack of independent monitoring once reports are completed, and the need for an expanded mandate as issues requiring attention. The report recommends that the responsibility for conducting these reviews be transferred to the Office of the Children’s Advocate (OCA); that two staff positions be transferred from the OCME to the OCA; and that funding be provided for two additional positions to assume this responsibility. The report also recommends that the Office of the Ombudsman perform an external oversight function to monitor responses to the recommendations in these reports. Legislative amendments are required to implement these recommendations.

**The Government accepts these recommendations and will immediately begin the process necessary to achieve the required amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act*, *The Fatality Inquiries Act* and *The Ombudsman Act*.**

## **COMPLETING THE “CHANGES FOR CHILDREN: STRENGTHENING THE COMMITMENT TO CHILD WELFARE”**

The initiatives described in this response represent the Government of Manitoba’s initial response to the recommendations in the external review reports.

By 2008/09, the Government will have provided approximately \$42.0 million in new funding to the child and family services system. The “Changes for Children: Strengthening the Commitment to Child Welfare” is an agenda for change that is still in development. It will develop further as the Government considers the full range of recommendations contained in the external review reports. The Government will be announcing further enhancements in the near future. These include:

- A comprehensive strategy for supporting children and families dealing with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD);
- A foster parent strategy with emphasis on recruitment, training and increased funding;
- Continuing the development of new emergency foster homes to reduce reliance on hotel placements;
- A new quality assurance and outcome measurement strategy within the child and family services system, including a new approach to the development and implementation of standards;
- A commitment to establish additional new residential care resources;
- New approaches for funding to allow agencies to provide supports for families as an alternative to bringing children into care;
- Strategies to further increase collaboration and coordination between government departments in the best interests of children and families;
- Improvements to services for children in care who are reaching the age of majority;
- A plan of action to address service and training issues related to the intake system in Winnipeg; and

- A process for making the legislative amendments that may be required to fully implement the new initiatives described in this report.

The “Changes for Children: Strengthening the Commitment to Child Welfare” represents a comprehensive framework for achieving meaningful and long-lasting improvements in the child and family services system. As suggested in the case management report, building on the significant enhancements already made in the last five years by implementing the recommendations from the blueprint documents, “*Manitoba will move forward and position itself as a leader in child welfare (Strengthen the Commitment – Executive Summary)*).

## **IMPLEMENTING “CHANGES FOR CHILDREN: STRENGTHENING THE COMMITMENT TO CHILD WELFARE”**

The development and implementation of these initiatives must be done in a timely manner and through an inclusive process. The process must respect both the new partnership structure that is the cornerstone of the AJI-CWI model, and the importance of a multi-sector response at the government level. Given the broad scope, potential impact and focus on community-based options, it is also important that collateral service providers and community members be involved in implementation.

**To do this, the Government is naming two co-chairs to oversee and assist with the implementation process.**

The four child and family services Authorities, who have responsibility for managing and delivering child welfare services in Manitoba, will have the support and assistance of the Change for Children co-chairs. The co-chairs will have responsibility for coordinating implementation among the Authorities and the various government departments, advising the Minister, consulting with stakeholders and monitoring progress.

The Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Children’s Advocate will be provided with updates and will report on the implementation of “Changes for Children: Strengthening the Commitment to Child Welfare.” A communications strategy, including a website, will also be developed.