Children and Youth Residential Services Review
Questionnaire

The creation of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) in fall 2003 has provided an opportunity to bring together policy and programs addressing child welfare, youth justice, children and youth mental health and services for children and youth with complex / multiple special needs. Over the past two years, the underlying importance of residential services across the children and youth service system has been identified in a number of different contexts. Therefore, it was felt to be timely to review the residential services available for children and youth with a variety of different needs.

The ministry has engaged Bay Consulting Group to undertake a review of residential services for children and youth across a number of sectors, including child welfare, children and youth mental health, children and youth with complex / multiple special needs and developmental services and youth justice. The review will include an examination of existing services, needs, strengths and weaknesses of the current system (including best practices), and a literature and jurisdictional review. Findings of the review will provide a foundation for the development of future policy and service directions. Bay Consulting Group will be collecting information through a number of different sources, including existing information systems, key informant interviews, focus groups with children and families, field visits, and this questionnaire.

This brief questionnaire is intended to solicit your views about children's residential services. We ask that as a key informant you take a few minutes and provide us with your opinions and suggestions. Your responses will be dealt with in confidence by Bay and will be used to guide and inform the review process.

To complete the questionnaire, if you have Internet access, click on the link http://www.informanus.ca/cyrs/cyrs_e.html for English and http://www.informanus.ca/cyrs/cyrs_f.html for French. **The links to the survey will be closed on Monday, November 28.** If you do not have Internet access, please fax your responses to the questions below to the attention of Vince Fearon at the Bay Consulting Group, FAX number 416-964-0828.

Thank you for your participation in this endeavour.

PART A – Background Information

1. Please identify your role in Children and Youth Residential Services by checking the most appropriate response.
   a) I am a
      - ❑ Parent/Legal Guardian/Family Member of a child who has received or is receiving services in a residential setting
      - ❑ Foster Parent
      - ❑ Front-line Worker (e.g. Child and Youth Counsellor) in a residential service provider/operator
      - ❑ Agency Supervisor/Manager in a residential service provider/operator
      - ❑ Owner/Operator of a residential service
   b) I work in a
      - ❑ Residential Service
      - ❑ An agency that seeks placement for children and youth in need of residential services
      - ❑ Another agency (not providing or seeking placement) in the children and youth services system
   c) Other (please identify)

2. If you are responding as a Foster Parent
   a) How many children/youth are in your care (check one)?
      - ❑ 1
      - ❑ 2 to 3
      - ❑ More than 3

3. If you are responding as an agency or residential service provider/operator,
   a) What sector do you primarily serve (check all that apply)?
      - ❑ Child Welfare
      - ❑ Youth Justice
      - ❑ Children's Mental Health
      - ❑ Developmental Services
      - ❑ Children with Multiple Needs

   b) What is the total capacity of your residences (check one)?
      - ❑ 1 to 3
      - ❑ 4 to 9
      - ❑ 10 to 25
      - ❑ More than 25

   c) Which of the following best identifies your situation (check all that apply)?
      - ❑ Serve primarily an urban catchment area
      - ❑ Serve primarily a rural catchment area
      - ❑ Serve primarily Francophones
      - ❑ Serve primarily Aboriginals

PART B – Strengths and Gaps

1. What in your opinion are the key strengths of residential services for children and youth in Ontario today? How can we build on them?

   Flexibility of services, creation of community outreach services e.g. therapy, counseling, Day Treatment Services, transitional programming.

2. What in your opinion are the principal gaps and how can they be addressed?

   Within the child welfare sector, CAS's need to hold the CASE but allow the resource to do the work. There is a great deal of unnecessary intervention and mixed messages which create issues for clients and families.

PART C – Priorities for Residential Services

Please review the following five (5) topics and rank them from 1 to 5, with 1 being most important and 5 being least important, in terms of how critical you think they are in ensuring high quality, safe residential environments for children and youth.

   2   **Governance and Accountability** (e.g. issues around the legislative and regulatory framework, reporting mechanisms and performance monitoring)

   5   **Access** (e.g. issues around centralized access, mandated and non-mandated services, continuums across services, availability and distribution of residential services)

1   **Quality of Service** (e.g. issues around safety, minimum expectations, service standards and definitions, quality improvement/assurance, staffing and training)

3   **Programming** (e.g. issues around age and gender specific services, educational programming, cultural appropriateness, transitions, meeting multiple complex special needs)

4   **Resources** (e.g. issues around funding and purchasing services, rate setting, transparency, and "fit" between resources and expected outcomes)

PART D – Suggestions for Improvement

Please give three suggestions for how each of the following areas could be addressed

☐   **Governance and Accountability** (e.g. issues around the legislative and regulatory framework, reporting mechanisms and performance monitoring)

- Resources reporting directly to the Ministry or a third party agency (not CAS)
- Third party accreditation of all resources across the province
- Even the disparity between private and public agencies
- All resources should belong to an Association
- MCYS – clear standards and guidelines in respect to licensing new resources

☐   **Access** (e.g. issues around centralized access, mandated and non-mandated services, continuums across services, availability and distribution of residential services)

- Resources should be mandated across province in respect to the "need"
- Registry of Resources e.g. "IRIS"
- All resources should belong to an association that assist them, monitors them along with standards e.g. accreditation

☐   **Quality of Service** (e.g. issues around safety, minimum expectations, service standards and definitions, quality improvement/assurance, staffing and training)

- Third party accreditation to be mandatory
- Evidence based outcomes as a result of a central software program
- Enhanced finding for staff and staff training

☐   **Programming** (e.g. issues around age and gender specific services, educational programming, cultural appropriateness, transitions, meeting multiple complex special needs)

- Inventory of resources available – Regionally
- Registry – inventory of resources and "needs"
- Enhanced funding for educational funding e.g. Day Treatment

☐   **Resources** (e.g. issues around funding and purchasing services, rate setting, transparency, and "fit" between resources and expected outcomes)

- All resources should be financially transparent
- Rate set to services provided e.g. "levels of care across the province"
- Standardize "Service Agreement" to be used between all resources and referring agents

> - All resources to practice best business practices and demonstrate sustainability

PART E – Other Comments

Please provide any other comments that you believe are relevant to this review of children and youth residential services.

> We feel the province should have one residential care service geared to a fee for service rate that includes a central administrative fee that's not subject to occupancy. It is vital that the Ministry or an assigned third party agency be responsible for direct funding. Child welfare would refer but are not responsible for maintaining and/or supervising. This allows for direct funding credibility which often becomes clouded in CAS's budgets. As well child welfare has established a fair number of "Children's Services Workers" responsible for supervising resources. In actuality they do little to enhance the service or the well-being of the child. As it is considerable time and energy, man hours are lost in meetings, clarifying roles, etc… A third party finding agency or MCYS combined with third party accreditation would do the same while providing evidence based outcomes.