KPMG LLP

Project Report

MANAGEMENT REVIEW

OF THE NORTH REGION OF

THE MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Prepared for

The Honourable Edward John
Minister for Children and Families

Submitted by

Ron Epp, Engagement Partner
Stuart MacKay, Managing Director
Gordon Gunn, Senior Principal
Stan Mitchell, Senior Manager
Chris Curtis, Senior Manager
Cecil Cheveldave, Manager
Hilary Hayes, Associate

Prince George, B.C., Canada
05-50688/GSG/gsg
February 15, 2001

KPMG LLP

Contents

Executive Summary

The mandate of the Ministry for Children and Families ("the Ministry") is to provide a broad range of public health, mental health and child welfare programs to the entire population of the province. Over the 2000/01 fiscal year, the Ministry will employ almost 5,000 employees and expend almost $1.5 billion in addressing this mandate. The North Region, one of eleven geographic regions in the Ministry, provides services in an area covering more than one-half of the province. The region provides services from a total of 29 offices and employs over 450 staff with a budget in the 2000/01 fiscal year of over $133 million.

While the Ministry makes a significant contribution to the health and well-being of children, youth, adults and families in British Columbia, its achievements are often overshadowed by instances where the system fails. In recent years, there have been a few high-profile cases, both in the North Region and elsewhere, where the child welfare system has failed to fully protect children. Recently, there have also been allegations with respect to unprofessional conduct and practices towards foster parents and other service providers in Prince George.

Within this context, the Ministry engaged KPMG LLP to undertake a review of the management of the North Region. Our review commenced on January 3, 2001 and was completed on February 15, 2001. During this period, we engaged hundreds of Ministry staff, parents, foster parents, service providers and other community stakeholders in a dialogue that addressed the strengths and weaknesses of the management system in the North Region. As much of the information provided through this process was anecdotal, our findings are based on qualitative assessments rather than statistically valid quantitative analysis. While our report acknowledges some of the strengths of the existing management system, it is focused on the system's vulnerabilities and the opportunities that exist for improvement in the North Region. Our mandate did not include an assessment of the performance or commitment of individual employees in the North Region. This report reflects our findings, conclusions and recommendations for strengthening the management system in the North Region, improving relationships with service providers and improving recruitment and retention.

Our report would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the positive contributions of both Ministry staff and service providers in the North Region. Staff in the North Region face tremendous personal challenges on a daily basis, and, in general, they face this challenge with commitment and dedication. Foster parents and other service providers are also integral participants in the overall system, and their commitment to the clients and communities served is admirable.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Our terms of reference asked us to address four key issues.

Issue 1—Improving Ministry service and rebuilding trust

The first issue we were asked to address was:

> *In light of allegations with respect to unprofessional conduct/practices towards foster parents and other service providers in Prince George, make recommendations on improving service provided by the Ministry to children and youth, as well as recommendations on how to rebuild trust and relationships between these groups, if required.*

Our key findings are:

- There is a lack of trust between Ministry employees and foster parents in the North Region. The relationship between the Ministry and other service providers also has room for improvement, but is less problematic than the relationship with foster parents.

- Many foster parents indicated that fear of retribution is a significant factor in their relationships with social workers. Our analysis suggests that this fear is inherent in the relationship between a foster parent and a social worker. Foster parents make both a financial and emotional commitment to being a foster parent and these commitments can increase over time. Foster parents have significant responsibility and accountability for the children placed in their care, but they have limited authority. As the legal guardian for children-in-care, social workers have significant authority and share responsibility and accountability with foster parents. Child protection, guardianship and resource workers are responsible for the well-being of children-in-care and must continuously assess the standard of care provided in foster homes. In carrying out this responsibility, the potential for intimidation and fear of retribution arises.

  An experienced social worker is expected to be skilled in managing these situations so that the potential for conflict is diffused. The fact that many social workers in the North Region are inexperienced may contribute to situations where the fear is increased, not reduced.

- Several foster parents provided us with examples of incidents where they believe Ministry staff have deliberately intimidated foster parents to satisfy personal objectives. We received this message clearly and consistently from many independent sources.

- The Teambuilding Protocol established between the Ministry and foster parent associations is a foundation for an accountability framework, but it needs to be greatly strengthened in design and execution to be successful.

- We have also reviewed the history of the North Region in dealing with individual performance issues, and have found a general reluctance to deal with performance issues.

In summary, the state of the relationship between Ministry staff and foster parents has been allowed to deteriorate, due in part to the lack of an effective staff accountability framework. As long as this is the case, we do not see the relationship improving.

Based on these findings, our recommendations are:

Recommendation #4:

We recommend that the North Region set clear objectives for improving the relationship with foster parents, establish appropriate performance management systems to measure progress and provide periodic stakeholder reports on actual performance.

Recommendation #5:

We recommend that the performance management system include a standard practice of surveying staff and foster parents on a regular basis to measure progress in improving the relationship.

Recommendation #48:

We recommend that the issue resolution protocol with foster parents be aligned with the North Region's complaint process and that these processes be strengthened to ensure the processes are fair and responsive. Linkages to the personnel performance system should be established.

Issue 2—Improving working relationships with community partners

The second issue we were asked to address was:

Improving working relationships with all community partners, including advice on setting up a community advisory council. As required, the consultant shall make recommendations to improve such relationships and to ensure that all partners are dealt with fairly and consistently.

Our key findings are:

- Some service providers have indicated a lack of trust with the Ministry. While the relationship with other service providers is not as serious as with foster parents, there are opportunities to strengthen the relationship with service providers and community partners and the common thread for improvement is increased accountability.

- The Ministry has engaged its service providers and community partners in numerous processes over the years designed to increase collaboration, strengthen the system and improve service delivery. In many cases, service providers and other stakeholders reported that they have been disappointed with the Ministry's lack of follow through.

- As a result of these past experiences, there is little current support for a community advisory council. Instead, stakeholders told us that they would like to see the North Region better support existing teambuilding processes and continue to build relationships at the local level in areas of common interest.

Based on these findings, our recommendations are:

Recommendation #2:

We recommend that the North Region, working with the Ministry, establish an improved accountability framework with respect to stakeholder acceptance of the design and delivery of its programs.

Recommendation #43:

Based upon the input received from participants in the review process, we do not recommend the establishment of a community advisory council at this time. We do recommend that the North Region support the continuing development of teambuilding relationships with individual communities and stakeholder groups.

Issue 3—Management system

The third issue we were asked to address was:

Advice on how to strengthen its management structure to best respond to the region's responsibilities to clients throughout the North. This would include providing support and advice on constructing and implementing an appropriate management plan.

Our key findings are:

- The North Region operates within a highly centralized Ministry management model. As a result, many of the proposed changes to the management system for the North Region can only occur with the approval and support of senior management at headquarters.

- While initial recommendations for the creation of the Ministry involved a devolution of authority to local communities, this degree of decentralization has never been established. The decentralized management model established at the Ministry's inception has been gradually replaced with a centralized management model.

- Due to workload constraints, the North Region has directed its staff to vary from certain policies or statutory practice in certain communities.

- Business planning, policy setting and resource allocation are primarily centralized processes that are beyond the control of regional management. As a result, management in the North Region are not held accountable for performance to the same extent as would be the case in a more decentralized management model.

- The management team in the North Region must also be held accountable for performance. A key first step in the improvement process is the acknowledgement that performance can and must be improved.

In summary, the management of the North Region can only be improved if accountability is enhanced. Further, accountability can only be increased if there is increased delegation of authority and responsibility. Leadership is required to support the change process and to ensure that the pace of change is appropriate and effective. Change initiatives will only be successful if they are accompanied by improved staff attitudes, behaviours and morale.

Based on these findings, our recommendations are:

Recommendation #1:

We recommend that the Ministry require all regions to prepare regional performance plans that clearly document the goals, objectives, priorities, strategies, plans and performance measures that ensure appropriate alignment between Ministry-wide goals and objectives and regional operations.

Recommendation #3:

We recommend that the Ministry establish an appropriate set of performance measures that support its goals, objectives and priorities. The Ministry should demonstrate long-term commitment to these performance measures so that effective management systems and reporting mechanisms can be established. A performance target should be defined for each performance measure within the Ministry and regional performance plans. Performance measures should address both internal measures of organizational capability as well as external measures of organizational performance.

Recommendation #6:

We recommend that the North Region address the issue of consistent policy interpretations. We also recommend that the North Region consider the development of an Intranet site that contains a section on policy interpretations for application in the north. Policy interpretations should be subject to review and approval procedures prior to being added to the site.

Recommendation #7:

We recommend that the North Region, working with the Ministry, set as a goal and priority the strengthening of shared values and the improvement of the work environment. This goal should be supported by effective implementation measures and an accountability framework that will support improvements.

Recommendation #8:

We recommend that the North Region, with the support of the Ministry, establish a more formal personnel performance management system that includes regular performance appraisals (including upward and peer reviews) and development plans. The system should effectively address skill and performance deficiencies and career goals.

Recommendation #9:

We recommend that the Ministry review the spending authority limits delegated to supervisors and front-line staff to ensure there is an appropriate balance between their authority, responsibility and accountability.

Recommendation #10:

We recommend that the Ministry review its management model to determine whether devolution of authority to regions could contribute to increased responsiveness and effectiveness of service delivery at a community level.

Recommendation #11:

We recommend that the Ministry ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the service responsibilities of the North Region and the resources provided.

Recommendation #12:

We recommend that the Ministry ensure that the regional management team possesses the leadership skills necessary to champion continuous improvement and support open and inclusive processes that engage staff, managers, service providers and other stakeholders in the change process.

Recommendation #13:

We recommend that the Ministry support the regional management team in its change initiatives and encourage stability and consistency in the operation of the North Region.

Recommendation #14:

We recommend that the Contracts and Resource Unit be tasked with quantifying and increasing the available inventory of foster care and residential resources and that an accountability framework be established in support of this objective.

Recommendation #15:

We recommend that the North Region consider opportunities for increasing manager presence in remote areas of the region or, alternatively, consider ways of increasing the delegation of management responsibilities.

Recommendation #16:

We recommend that the Regional Executive Director (RED) be assigned responsibility for assessing the skills of the management team with an objective of identifying and addressing any deficiencies in skills or performance.

Recommendation #17:

We recommend that the North Region, with the support of the Ministry, consolidate all human resources activities in the region within the Personnel department.

Recommendation #18:

We recommend that the North Region, with the support of the Ministry, review the extent of paper burden on its front-line workers and consider ways in which this burden can be reduced or transferred to administrative staff.

Recommendation #42:

We recommend that the North Region review all its communication processes to ensure they are effectively aligned to support shared values and a common understanding of regional policy and practice direction. The establishment of a North Region Intranet or Extranet site should be considered as a possible forum for this type of communication.

Recommendation #44:

We recommend that the Ministry's planning process provide for an environment scan of the North Region and that this information be a component in the development of plans and budgets for the North Region.

Recommendation #45:

In connection with our other recommendations on the setting of regional goals and objectives, and the identification of performance measures and targets, we recommend that the North Region establish appropriate performance management and reporting systems. In addition, we recommend that the North Region produce an annual Accountability Report to its stakeholders, that addresses its accomplishments and its areas for improvement.

Recommendation #46:

We recommend that the complaint process in the North Region be improved as follows:

- the tracking of formal complaints and foster parent protocols be consolidated;

- the position of Complaints Manager be assigned to a manager without line authority, reporting directly to the RED;

- all complaints be acknowledged on a timely basis (a performance target should be set, monitored and reported upon);

- all investigations be conducted by the Complaints Manager;

- all investigations begin by contacting the complainant to clarify (and perhaps narrow the scope) the complaint and gather additional information;

- all responses to complaints be issued by the Complaints Manager;

- the satisfaction of the complainant with the process, the timeliness and the response be surveyed routinely (a survey form should be attached to all responses, to be sent to an appropriate person in headquarters).

Recommendation #47:

We recommend that the Ministry address the appropriate role for headquarters staff in responding to complaints that have not gone through the regional complaints process.

Recommendation #49:

We recommend that the North Region, working with the Ministry, establish effective information systems to support its accountability frameworks.

Recommendation #50:

We recommend that the North Region address the issue of follow-up and incorporate specific action plans for staff as part of the region's performance plans.

Recommendation #51:

We recommend that the RED ensure managers in the North Region formally acknowledge the results of audits and reviews and that appropriate action plans are documented and communicated to all affected staff.

Recommendation #52:

We encourage the North Region to continue in its initiative to involve regional managers in the financial management process and we recommend that, in time, this process be pushed down to the supervisory level.

Issue 4—Staff recruitment and retention

The final issue we were asked to address was:

> *To further strengthen its current plan, the Ministry seeks advice on what additional actions are required to address staff recruitment and retention issues.*

Our key findings are:

- Staff morale in the North Region is poor. Many participants believe that the Ministry operates in a highly defensive way, threatening retribution to those that speak out and downloading blame onto individuals when incidents occur. There is a widely held perception that the Ministry is not prepared to acknowledge that the system will inevitably fail from time-to-time and that blame must be assigned to individuals. Our analysis of disciplinary actions in the North Region in the past few years suggests that this perception is disproportionately high compared to the actual actions taken.

- The effectiveness of management has a direct impact on organizational performance and staff morale. There is a vicious cycle of low morale, high attrition rates, difficulties in recruiting qualified staff, high levels of vacant positions and unsustainable workloads. This cycle needs to be broken through Ministry leadership.

- A recruitment and retention initiative has been underway in the North Region for some time, which may eventually help to break the cycle. However, current indications are that the region will continue to face skill shortages in the short term.

Based on these findings, our recommendations are:

Recommendation #19:

We recommend that the Ministry establish a North Region communications liaison who would be responsible for improving relationships with service providers, educating the public on the workings of the Ministry and respond, within the bounds of confidentiality restraints, to media reports related to the North Region.

Recommendation #20:

We recommend that the North Region consistently apply a comprehensive orientation process to assist in orientating new employees into their position and the community.

Recommendation #21:

We recommend that the North Region provide for team building retreats where issues raised in team meetings can be further discussed and consistent plans of delivery can be developed.

Recommendation #22:

We recommend that management and team leaders in the North Region make it part of their supervisory approach to provide visible and vocal recognition to those who are consistently performing their duties well and supportively deal with employees whose performance requires improvement.

Recommendation #23:

We recommend that the Ministry consider the merit of having its social workers and child protection workers join a professional association which could provide them with additional support, professional development opportunities and increased accountability.

Recommendation #24:

We recommend that once team leaders are in place, they should be provided with the ability to mentor and provide support to team members rather than assuming a caseload.

Recommendation #25:

We recommend that the Ministry strengthen the support for the formalized mentoring system in the North Region to assist in transitioning new recruits into full case loads, particularly in the area of child protection.

Recommendation #26:

We recommend that the Ministry consider a system of competency-based hiring where those with the skills and aptitude to be competent child protection workers are not excluded from the hiring process because they do not have a prerequisite degree.

Recommendation #27:

We recommend that the pre-employment training requirement for child protection be eliminated by the Ministry in order to improve the recruiting ability of the North Region (the Ministry announced on February 6, 2001 that this requirement was being discontinued).

Recommendation #28:

We recommend that the Recruitment and Retention manager develop strategies which respond to issues raised during exit interviews of former employees.

Recommendation #29:

We recommend that the Ministry support the expansion of the number of seats currently available in the School of Social Work at the University of Northern British Columbia to address the demand for social workers in the north.

Recommendation #30:

We recommend that the Ministry support the expansion of the regional Bachelor of Social Work program being offered at various locations throughout the north so as to accommodate more students.

Recommendation #31:

We recommend that the North Region increase its ability to take on more practicum students. Those interested in practicum's in remote locations of the North Region must be encouraged by having the North Region pay for a portion of their expenses incurred as a result of relocating for their practicum.

Recommendation #32:

We recommend that the Ministry increase its efforts to provide scholarships and bursaries to those interested in pursuing a career in child protection in the north.

Recommendation #33:

We recommend that the North Region assign additional permanent team assistants who are dedicated to providing administrative support to specific teams. In offices where teams are of a small size, the team assistant would be shared.

Recommendation #34:

We recommend that the Ministry consider a program whereby new recruits are eligible to have a portion of their student loans forgiven if they agree to commit to a remote northern location for a period of at least four years.

Recommendation #35:

We recommend that the Ministry consider provision of early retirement incentives for those individuals having committed a long term of service in the North Region.

Recommendation #36:

We recommend that the North Region ensure that employees receive regular training and that sufficient coverage is provided for those employees away on training.

Recommendation #37:

We recommend that the Ministry allow the North Region to have high input into the development and local delivery of training that is relevant to specific areas of the North Region. In order to ensure that the training is relevant, employee input into training requirements should be considered and addressed once core Ministry training requirements are met.

Recommendation #38:

We recommend that the Ministry evaluate and consider adjusting the compensation currently received by its employees in the North Region through comparison to what other jurisdictions are paying similarly skilled employees.

Recommendation #39:

We recommend that the Ministry consider making housing facilities available to employees located in remote areas where access to accommodation is limited.

Recommendation #40:

We recommend that the Ministry review the continuing appropriateness of the current standby agreements for staff in the North Region.

Recommendation #41:

We recommend that the Ministry and North Region continue with the northern recruitment and retention incentives currently in place and consider changes to the following areas:

- **assess the adequacy of the annual isolation allowances provided in some of the more remote areas of the North Region to ensure they compensate the employees for the increased cost of living in those locations; and,**

- **assess whether existing annual vacation subsidies of $200 to $400 are sufficient to encourage employees and their dependants to locate in highly remote areas.**

Summary

The North Region needs to strengthen its management system by clarifying its management purpose for staff and stakeholders, encouraging and supporting organizational commitment, strengthening organizational capacity and establishing an accountability framework.

There are few quick fixes that will strengthen the management system and improve organizational effectiveness. Rather, the North Region, with the support of the Ministry, must establish effective processes that contribute to ongoing improvements in capability and performance.

Finally, a number of participants in the review process expressed doubt about the Ministry's likelihood of acting on any recommendations that might be contained in our report. This attitude is rooted in stakeholder perceptions that the Ministry has not effectively followed through on recommendations contained in past reviews. We strongly recommend to the Ministry that to overcome this perception, acceptance of any or all of our recommendations must be accompanied by a clear assignment of responsibility for implementing the recommendations and reporting on the progress of implementation. The first step is to demonstrate the willingness to change, through "good faith" actions to implement the recommendations of this report.

I
Scope and Objectives

A. Project Background

In communities across British Columbia, the Ministry for Children and Families ("the Ministry") fulfills its primary responsibility of bringing health and well being to children and families by providing a wide range of programs and services. The Ministry works with clients and communities in an effort to ensure services are responsive to people's needs and that children, youth and families have opportunities to participate in decisions affecting them.   Key program and service areas include the following (program descriptions are included in Appendix B to our report):

- Aboriginal Child and Family Services
- Aboriginal Relations
- Adoption
- Child and Youth Mental Health
- Child Protection
- Children and Youth with Special Needs
- Community Living for Adults
- Foster Care

- Guardianship
- Help for Addictions
- Management Services
- Promotion, Prevention and Early Support
- Family Support
- Supported Child Care
- Youth Justice
- Youth Services

The Ministry has organized its delivery of services into 11 regions, each of which is headed by a Regional Executive Director (RED). Typical management units within a region include community services; child protection; community living; contract and resource management; quality assurance; aboriginal services, finance and personnel.

The Ministry has indicated that the major functions of the regions include:

- conducting client, community, and regional needs assessments;

- providing and managing service delivery based on those assessments;

- regional planning, evaluation and reporting;

- allocating and managing funding within the region;

- being accountable to the public;

- establishing an effective front-line complaints process;

- ensuring equitable access to services for a diverse population;

- establishing mandatory advisory committees that include families, youth and adults with developmental disabilities; and,

- maintaining and enhancing stakeholder relationships at the regional level.

The geographic scope of regions is reflected in the following map:

Map	Legend
	1. Kootenays 2. Okanagan 3. Thompson Cariboo 4. North 5. Upper Fraser 6. South Fraser 7. Simon Fraser 8. Vancouver/Richmond 9. Coast – North Shore 10. Central and Upper Island/Central Coast 11. Capital
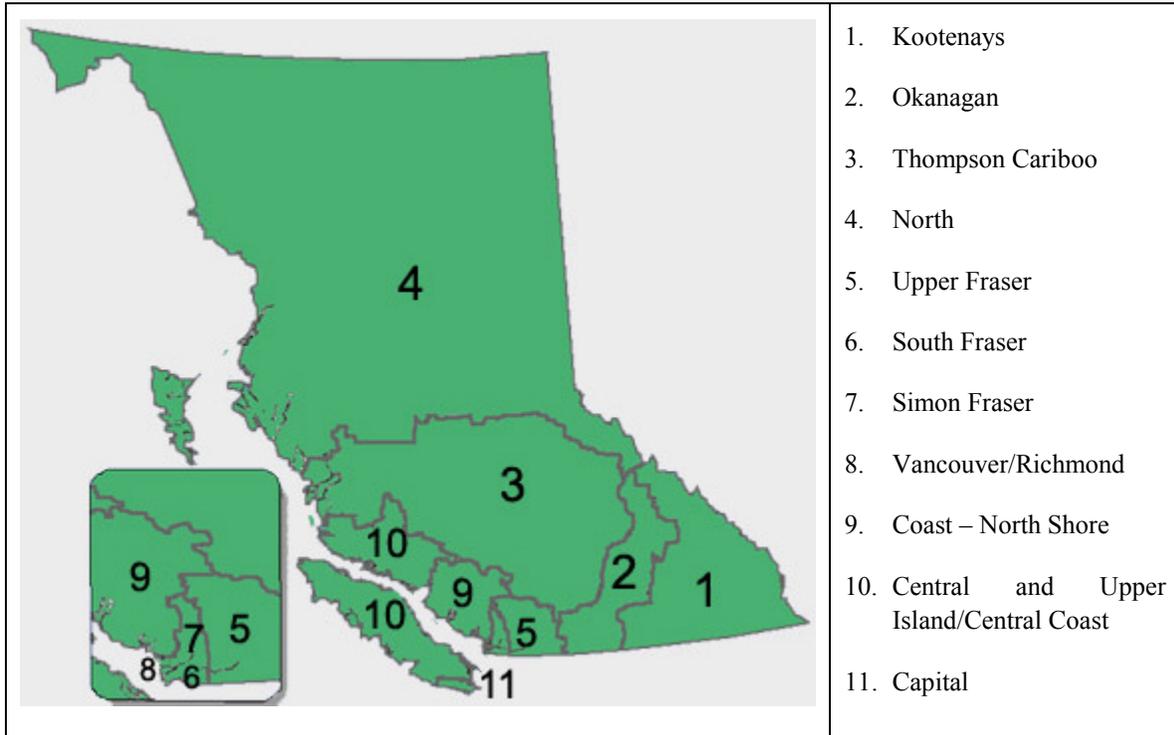
The North Region is the largest geographic region, encompassing over one-half of the province, extending north from Prince George to the Yukon border and east from the Queen Charlotte Islands to the Alberta border. In addition to the regional office, services are provided from a total of 29 offices throughout the North Region, employing over 450 staff.

In discussions with staff and various stakeholder groups located in the North Region, the Ministry has heard concerns which indicate that there is a need to strengthen the management capacity and the structural management approach being applied in the Region. In addition, the Ministry is concerned about staff recruitment and retention in the Region as a possible contributing factor to the management issues. The Ministry has also identified a need to refine its approach to working with community partners across the Region.

As part of its commitment to developing an effective management regime and to increasing employee and stakeholder satisfaction, the Ministry engaged KPMG to assist in addressing the issues identified.

B.   History of the North Region

The Ministry was formed on September 23, 1996, bringing together a wide-range of programs directed towards supporting the health and well-being of children, youth and families.   Programs were transferred from the ministries of Social Services (child protection, family support, community living, children with special needs), Health (public health nursing, alcohol and drugs, child and youth mental health services, youth forensic services, speech, audiology, nutrition and dental services), Attorney General (youth justice), Women's Equality (child care and children who witness violence) and Education (social equity programming, deaf-blind summer program).

The creation of the Ministry was in response to the recommendations in two key public reports:

- the November, 1995 report of the *Gove Inquiry into Child Protection*; and,

- the September, 1996 *Morton Report: British Columbia's Child, Youth and Family Serving System, Recommendations for Change.*

Both of these reports advised government to integrate child and family services in a single ministry, to strengthen the child protection system, build on the strengths and address the needs of children, youth and families, to better serve communities.

By April 1, 1997, programs from the Ministries of Health, Social Services, Women's Equality and Education had been transferred to the new ministry, and programs from the Ministry of Attorney General were transferred in July 1997.

Initially, the new Ministry adopted a regional model consistent with the Health Regions model, resulting in 20 geographic regions. Three regions were established within the area now defined to be the North Region: North West; Peace Liard; and, Northern Interior. Within each region, a Regional Operating Officer was given responsibility for service delivery, reporting directly to the Deputy Minister.   Within each regional operating agency, an appropriate management structure was established. Regions were initially structured as regional operating agencies with a significant degree of local authority. This organizational model was recognized to be an innovative approach that varied dramatically from the structure of the previous delivery systems. Each regional operating agency was requested to prepare a proposal for the establishment of the agency, outlining how services would be delivered to meet the needs of the local communities.

A key element in the development of the service delivery models was the involvement of local stakeholders in the process.   Transition teams comprised of staff from all predecessor ministries worked with community agencies and service providers to develop the initial delivery model.

The formation of community focus groups were proposed to address future developments. It was also proposed that stakeholders in every community would assist the Ministry in developing local complaint processes. Staff recruitment and hiring was identified as a priority and regional plans were to be formulated to respond to this need.

Beginning in the 1997/98 fiscal year, each regional operating agency was required to develop a regional operating plan. The initial plans were developed with some direction from Victoria, but the regions were allowed a significant degree of flexibility to meet the local needs of their communities. In essence, the plans were treated as a contract between the regions and the Ministry.

For the 1998/99 fiscal year, the Deputy Minister provided guidelines for the preparation of the regional operating plans to ensure that there was increased alignment with the Ministry's goals and priorities and consistency in the content of the plans. These guidelines required the regions to prepare a two-year plan, with an expectation that the Ministry would eventually adopt a three-year planning horizon. It was also envisioned that future plans would include an annual report from the prior year. The annual reports were to include regional geographic and demographic information, a summary of the region's progress, the service outputs for the region and progress made in achieving goals. The plans were expected to address both Ministry-wide goals, outcomes and strategies, as well as regional goals, outcomes and strategies. The guidelines also included a set of clear performance measures associated with each of the Ministry's goals.

For the 1999/00 fiscal year, the Ministry suspended the development of individual regional operating plans. This decision signaled a significant change in organizational direction, moving away from the decentralized management model initially implemented to a more centralized model. Regional Operating Agencies were redefined as regions reporting to an Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Operations. Regional Operating Officer positions were renamed as Regional Executive Directors (REDs) and their responsibilities were realigned with this new organizational model. In this new environment, the Ministry and its regions were guided by a centrally-prepared, Ministry-wide business plan, the first draft of which was completed on March 3, 1999. This plan, finalized on October 1, 1999, documented a set of 15 Ministry priorities which remain intact today.

On February 1, 1999, another significant change affected regional operations. The Ministry revised the regional organization structure, moving from 20 to 11 regions. After two years experience with the 20 region model, an internal review identified a key weakness in the model — some regions could not support the delivery of both the current and coming initiatives of the Ministry. It was identified that while there was equal expectations of each region, management capacity was varied. The variation in size and funding of the 20 regions was also noted as a contributing factor.

Under the 11 region model, each region was expected to serve a population base of at least 125,000 (55 years and younger), with a budget of at least $40 million, and manage a team of 130 FTEs or more. Support of the Ministry's Aboriginal Strategy was also addressed in this model, providing for six Aboriginal Services Managers, one assigned each to Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland and the Interior, and three assigned to the North Region.

In the north, the North West, Peace Liard and Northern Interior regions were consolidated into the North Region. This reorganization greatly increased the geographic scope of the region and resulted in the creation of a single RED position. To assist the new RED in managing the region, the Ministry approved the creation of two Associate RED positions.

For the 2000/01 fiscal year, the operations of all regions are guided by the Ministry's Performance Plan. The Performance Plan was developed following a planning session involving REDs and the Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Operations (now the Community Services and Program Support Division).

The Ministry has indicated that the 2001/02 planning process is underway and that there will be a requirement for regions to develop a regional plan to implement the Ministry's priorities in the next fiscal year.

C. Project Objectives

Recently, public allegations and concerns have been raised around the operation of the Prince George offices of the Ministry. Included in these allegations were concerns about the Ministry's relationship with foster parents and community organizations, and management practices.

In order to address these allegations and concerns, as well as to support management in the region to prepare and implement a workplan to address these and other issues, the Ministry has engaged KPMG to conduct an independent review of the North Region's management approach.

The independent review was intended to provide a safe opportunity for all interested parties to make submissions, expressing their concerns and recommendations for improvements in the service provision.

The review was asked to look at and make recommendations on the following issues:

1. In light of allegations with respect to unprofessional conduct/practices towards foster parents and other service providers in Prince George, make recommendations on improving service provided by the Ministry to children and youth, as well as recommendations on how to rebuild trust and relationships between these groups, if required.

2. Improving working relationships with all community partners, including advice on setting up a community advisory council. As required, the consultant shall make recommendations to improve such relationships and to ensure that all partners are dealt with fairly and consistently.

3. Advice on how to strengthen its management structure to best respond to the region's responsibilities to clients throughout the North. This would include providing support and advice on constructing and implementing an appropriate management plan.

4. To further strengthen its current plan, the Ministry seeks advice on what additional actions are required to address staff recruitment and retention issues.

In addition, if during the course of the review KPMG staff became aware of areas that required urgent attention, especially with respect to concerns that children might be at risk, these concerns were to be brought to the Minister's attention immediately. During our review, there were two instances where we did bring such concerns to the attention of the office of the Minister.

D. Our Approach

To address the review's terms of reference, we engaged stakeholders and Ministry staff in a consultative process designed to identify the key issues with respect to the management of the North Region and to seek advice on suggestions for future improvements. In addition, we gathered information from a variety of sources that provided information on the existing management team and processes.

Critical elements in our approach included the following:

- Engaging Ministry staff and managers, foster parents, service providers and other stakeholders in a dialogue on the strengths and weaknesses of the current management structure. This dialogue involved focus group sessions in Prince George, Terrace and Dawson Creek. In addition, we conducted individual interviews, in person and by telephone, and received written submissions.

- Performing a thorough analysis of the existing management structure (the "As Is") in order to determine the objectives, strengths and deficiencies of the existing system;

- Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the "As Is" management structure;

- Considering practical alternatives to the existing management structure that could effectively address the deficiencies of the existing system and developed recommendations for the "To Be" management structure;

- Identified the "Gap" between the "As Is" and "To Be" management structures including the actions and resources needed to close the Gap, as well as the constraints to change that must be overcome;

- Developed performance measures and clear accountabilities for recommended changes; and,

- Provided an implementation strategy for moving to the "To Be" management structure.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the management structure, we developed assessment criteria in advance of our evaluation work. This criteria was based upon:

- Ministry policies and procedure documents that address the objectives for management structures;

- Ministry priorities as outlined in the Ministry's performance management plans and other planning documents;

- The twelve attributes of effectiveness as outlined by the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation[1]; and,

- The "criteria of control" put forward by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants as a framework for effective organizational governance[2].

Our assessment framework is outlined in Appendix D to this report.

The project commenced on January 3, 2001 and our final report was targeted for completion by February 15, 2001. In this timeframe, it was not possible for us to fully explore and address all issues raised during the review. Our findings were based on information gathered in interviews, focus groups and documentation provided. Accordingly, our conclusions are not based on a structured, statistical analysis. The focus of our review was on the North Region, and while some of our findings and conclusions reflect on the Ministry in general, our scope did not extend to other regions in the province.

---

[1] *Effectiveness Reporting and Auditing in the Public Sector, Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation, 1987.*

[2] *Guidance on Control, The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, November 1995.*

II
"As Is" Management Structure

In this section, we describe our understanding of the existing management structure of the North Region. Our description is not intended to be a thorough description of all aspects of the management system, but rather reflects the key elements identified during our review work. It is also important to point out that the management of the region has faced significant change in the years since its inception and continues to be subject to change over time. It is our observation that the management of the Ministry, and the North Region, is dynamic rather than static. This meant that, in some areas, our assessment was dealing with a moving target. In this environment, we found it difficult to always be definitive about the management structure and processes. The description of the "As Is" management structure is structured in line with our overall assessment framework which is outlined in Appendix D.

A. Management Purpose

A.1   Clear Objectives

Objectives should be established and communicated. The Ministry's programs should be well-integrated and understood and be appropriately reflected in the organization's plans, structure, delegations of authority and decision-making processes.

- The current objectives of the North Region flow from the defined objectives of the Ministry. Section A of Appendix A to this report documents the vision, mission statement, values, goals and priorities of the Ministry as documented in the 2000/2001 Performance Plan. These goals and priorities have remained relatively stable over the past several years.

- The goals reflected in the Performance Plan are:

  o to promote the healthy development and functioning of children, youth, adults, and families;

  o to protect children and youth from abuse, neglect and harm;

  o to support adults with development disabilities to live successfully and participate in the community;

  o to ensure public safety; and,

  o to support the achievement of the Ministry's goals through innovative and responsive corporate programs.

A.2   Risk Assessments

The significant internal and external risks faced by an organization in the achievement of its objectives should be identified and assessed.

- The development of the Ministry's Performance Plan is based upon an environmental scan that considers economic, social and demographic changes.

- The Ministry utilizes a socio-economic model to forecast the demand for services and resource requirements for the Ministry's programs.

- While the North Region's RED participated in the planning process, we did not identify that a risk assessment specific to the North Region was performed or considered in the development of the Ministry's Performance Plan.

A.3   Relevance

Programs should be periodically assessed to ensure they make sense in regard to the problems or conditions to which they are intended to respond.

- The Ministry's performance planning process takes into consideration the ongoing relevancy of programs and delivery models.

- Some participants in the review process expressed concerns that Ministry services are not always available or accessible in their local communities.

A.4   Acceptance

Programs should be accepted by the stakeholders in the communities to which they serve.

- The Ministry routinely consults with community stakeholders and contracted service providers to identify opportunities to increase acceptance of its programs and service delivery systems.

- Some formal consultative processes are in place at a regional and community level to seek input from community stakeholders and service providers.

- In 1997, the Ministry conducted an extensive client satisfaction survey. This report provided useful feedback to the Ministry on the extent of client acceptance of programs.

- Consultation processes with service providers and other stakeholders that do occur are sometimes perceived to be a token response to the need for real consultation and participation.

- The complaint process in the North Region is perceived to be dysfunctional. The perception is that many complaints are either not responded to or are not responded to on a timely basis.

- Foster parents are generally dissatisfied with the level of contact and interaction with social workers.

- Many foster parents expressed a concern about the extent of information provided by Ministry staff concerning the background of children placed in their care. In some instances, foster parents felt that information was deliberately withheld or misrepresented.

A.5   Policies and Procedures

Policies designed to support the achievement of an organization's objectives and the management of its risks should be established, communicated and practiced so that people understand what is expected of them and the scope of their freedom to act.

- A wide range of government and Ministry policies, practices and procedures guide the operations and delivery of service in the North Region.

- The development and communication of operational policy is the responsibility of the Community Services and Program Support Division (previously the responsibility of the Policy Division which was recently amalgamated with the Regional Operations Division).

- Financial and administrative policies are the responsibility of the Management Services Division.

- Human resource policies and procedures are primarily derived from government-wide policies established by the Public Service Employee Relations Commission (PSERC) which acts as the employer for all provincial government employees.

- Ministry policies are based on broader government policies, priorities and goals, strategic plans, as well as on the assessed needs of the public.

- Some staff and service providers expressed a concern that, while there are well established standards of practice, there is not consistent direction or interpretation of those standards by some supervisors and managers.

- Past audits, reviews and special investigations have documented instances of non-compliance with Ministry policy.

- Due to workload constraints, the North Region has directed its staff to vary from certain policies or statutory practice in certain communities. We understand that the region has advised headquarters of some instances where

policies and procedures are varied from in order to address workload conditions.

While concerns were expressed that these advisements have not always been acknowledged, we have reviewed correspondence that indicates that headquarters staff did review, approve and acknowledge the variances It is possible that all staff may not have been apprised of this approval.

A.6   Plans

Plans to guide efforts in achieving the organization's objectives should be established and communicated.

- For 1997/98 and 1998/99, each Regional Operating Agency was responsible for the preparation of a Regional Operating Plan, consistent with the funding level provided by the Ministry. These plans were submitted to and approved by the Deputy Minister.   These plans were considered to be a contract between the Ministry and the Regional Operating Agencies.

- The Regional Operating Plans documented the alignment between Ministry goals and priorities, regional goals and priorities, and the operations of each region.

- For fiscal 1999/00, the Ministry opted to replace Regional Operating Plans with a Ministry-wide Performance Plan. We understand that a primary motivation for this change in process was to ensure a greater degree of consistency and alignment with Ministry goals and priorities.

- Today, performance plans are centrally developed within Ministry headquarters. REDs participate in an annual planning process that leads to the development of an annual Performance Plan and an annual Performance Management Plan. Regions are responsible for executing these plans at a regional level.

- The 2000/01 Performance Plan documents the Ministry's vision, mission, operating principles/values, goals, objectives and performance measures.

- The current Performance Management Plan was formally released to staff on March 3, 2000 by the Management Services Division. The Performance Management Plan recognized the contribution of all divisions, the Office of the Auditor General and the Internal Audit Branch, Office of the Comptroller General. As indicated in the Performance Management Plan, it "serves as a foundation for the implementation of a system of performance management activities within the Ministry at the provincial, regional, and local levels.   This document will evolve over time as the Ministry's understanding of performance management increases, the service needs of the public change, and the Ministry modifies its priorities and plans."

The Performance Management Plan recognizes that performance management is a relatively new approach in the public service sector and is particularly challenging for the Ministry due to the broad diversity and range of programs and services for which it is responsible, as well as its varied mandate, priorities, history, and approaches to effect performance management.

The Performance Management Plan recognized that it was at an early stage of development, particularly in terms of measurement of outcomes of the client services that the Ministry provides. The Plan documents an intention to develop a multi-year Performance Management Plan within months of the Plan's release. To date, this multi-year plan has not been completed.

The Performance Management Plan defines performance management as "an overall approach within which an organization can plan, implement and monitor its activities." It primary purposes were defined to be:

- o to improve the outcomes and processes of the Ministry's activities; and,

- o to enable accountability for the process and outcomes of the activities.

The Performance Management Plan identifies six key components:

- o Planning;

- o Implementation;

- o Performance measurement;

- o Reporting (to the Ministry, service providers, the public, persons served, and the Legislature);

- o Assessment or Reassessment; and,

- o Information.

- While the Ministry has made some progress in implementing the Performance Management Plan, much more remains to be done in order to support its accountability objectives.

- The Ministry recognizes, that as contracting is the major means of service provision, it is imperative that the principles and practices of performance management be incorporated into contracting practices.

- In the current environment, we found little evidence of documented plans within the North Region that ensure that regional operations are effectively aligned with the Ministry's priorities or that indicate what priorities are critical for the North Region. For an organization with a budget of approximately $133 million and a staff of over 450, the lack of a detailed performance plan is a serious departure from sound management practices.

- It is unclear how the Ministry's plans passed to the North Region take into consideration the specific issues and demographics affecting the north. We would expect that an individual region's priorities would have to be supplemented somewhat from the Ministry-wide plan to ensure that local needs are addressed.

- Some service providers expressed a concern that Ministry objectives and priorities are continuously changing making it difficult to adhere and adapt to. Concerns were also expressed about ad hoc decision making that is not based on long-term planning.

A.7   Performance Targets and Indicators

Objectives and related plans should include measurable performance targets and indicators.

- The Ministry's 2000/01 Performance Plan documents examples of performance measures that link to the goals and objectives. However, there is no indication that these examples represent a complete set of performance indicators.

- We found a number of areas within the Ministry where program performance indicators are being developed to meet the requirements of the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act.

- On February 8, 1998, the Deputy Minister issued guidelines for the development of the 1998/99 Regional Operating Plans that included an appendix outlining a comprehensive set of performance indicators related to the Ministry's goals and objectives. While some of these indicators are included in the *Measuring Our Success* report, these performance indicators have not been incorporated into the Ministry's current performance management system or applied specifically to regional performance assessment.

- We did not find any specific performance indicators related to the performance measures documented in the Ministry's Performance Plan.

- We did not find any specific performance indicators or targets that have been uniquely developed for the management of the North Region.

B.   Organizational Commitment

B.1   Shared Values

Shared ethical values, including integrity, should be established, communicated and practiced throughout the organization.

- The Ministry's Performance Plan documents the following set of operating principles and values:

    o the Ministry's responsibility to community safety and to the people we support, in particular the health, safety and well-being of children and youth, continue to be paramount;

    o programs and services are responsive to the individual needs of children, youth, adults and their families;

    o children, youth and adults and their families have the opportunity and are supported to participate in decisions that affect their lives;

    o culturally competent service delivery is managed at the local level;

    o our partners in the community play a major role in planning and delivering services;

    o the Ministry is accountable for the effective, efficient and economic delivery of services provided by the sector;

    o everyone will be treated with respect and dignity at all times;

    o staff, the service sector and other stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting the activities of the organization and should be fully informed about those activities and the clients it serves; and,

    o the Ministry strives to create a sector that represents the diversity of the people of British Columbia and the clients it serves.

- In our interviews with staff in the North Region, we found numerous indications where staff attitudes and behaviours are appropriately aligned with the Ministry's stated principles and values. Staff clearly exhibit a strong interest in supporting their clients and being a member of an effective team.

    Unfortunately, our review also encountered a number of areas where attitudes and behaviours are not effectively aligned. These areas included:

    o some staff feeling that they are not treated with respect and dignity by their supervisors and managers;

    o some staff indicating that they feel intimidated by some supervisors and managers;

    o some staff feeling that they are not treated with respect and dignity by foster parents;

    o some staff concerns that managers are not accessible or approachable;

    o some management, staff and service providers that don't feel they are involved in decisions affecting the activities of the North Region;

- o some clients, service providers and foster parents feeling that they are not consistently treated with respect and dignity by staff;

- o some foster parents expressed concerns that Ministry staff intimidate them into not speaking out;

- o some clients and service providers reporting that staff do not deal with them honestly; and,

- o some parents and foster parents feeling that they are not appropriately involved in decisions that affect their lives and the lives of the children in their care.

- The need for the North Region to adopt effective workload strategies (i.e., documentation standards not followed, procedures not performed to standard, increased delegation to junior staff, reduced supervision, etc.) to deal with inadequate levels of experienced social workers is perceived to demonstrate a lack of commitment to the Ministry's stated principles and values.

- Many participants in the review process expressed a concern that there is a lack of accountability in the North Region. Based upon our review work, we would concur with this conclusion.

- Some staff expressed a concern that headquarters does not acknowledge the staffing problems faced in the North Region.

- Some concerns have been expressed by staff that there is discrimination evident in the relationship between certain staff and aboriginal clients.

- Foster parents and North Region staff have expressed concerns that gossiping within Ministry offices results in confidential or otherwise inappropriate information being shared between social workers and other Ministry staff. Some foster parents and North Region staff have indicated they find such comments to be hurtful and a form of harassment.

B.2 Working environment and mutual trust

An appropriate working environment should be established for the Ministry's employees that provides appropriate opportunities for development and achievement, and promotes, commitment, initiative and safety. An atmosphere of mutual trust should be fostered to support the flow of information between people and their effective performance toward achieving the organization's objectives.

- The scope of our review did not allow us the opportunity to address all aspects of the working environment. In touring a number of the Ministry offices in Prince George, we found that the offices appeared to provide a comfortable and safe environment for staff and visiting clients.

- We did receive some comments concerning overcrowding in Ministry offices in the North Region.

- Some staff in remote offices expressed concerns about their personal safety when attending to intakes or client visits as a result of inadequate support or communications.

- During our review, a significant level of concern was expressed about an environment of fear and intimidation. Concerns expressed included the following:

    o some staff and former employees reported that they could not safely express concerns about processes, decisions or actions of the Ministry without fear of retribution from their supervisors and managers;

    o some staff expressed concerns about participating in our review because of fear of retribution from supervisors and managers. Some staff requested that we not include their name in the participants list appended to this report for this reason;

    o some staff expressed concerns about favoritism displayed by supervisors and managers to certain staff and service providers;

    o constant media attention on the performance of the organization contributes to an atmosphere of fear. While staff recognize the role of media in holding the system accountable, they are frustrated by the system's apparent inability to protect its staff from unfair criticism and personal attacks and to support them through the scrutiny;

    o some service providers expressed concern about having mid-year budget reductions imposed upon them without due consultation;

    o some foster parents and some service providers expressed concerns of fear of retribution if they spoke out about standards of care or other issues; and,

    o some foster parents and service providers declined to allow their name to be included in the participants lists due to fears of retribution.

- Our review found that there is some lack of trust at all levels in the organization. Many staff indicated they will not share their concerns with supervisors and managers, fearing the possibility of retribution and favoritism.

- A few high-profile cases in the past several years in the North Region have resulted in individual staff being disciplined. In an environment that is perceived as "fault-based", staff are afraid to raise concerns and push for change.

- Investigations and reviews initiated by headquarters are seen by staff as a forum for attributing blame rather than on improving the system to prevent future tragedies.

B.3   Human resource policies and procedures

Human resource policies and practices should be established, communicated and practiced throughout the organization.

- Human resource policies and procedures are primarily derived from government-wide policies established by the Public Service Employee Relations Commission (PSERC) which acts as the employer for all provincial government employees.

- We found that the North Region does not have an effective personnel performance management system that would support the ongoing development of its human resource capability. Staff appraisals are routinely performed for staff in their first two years so that promotions and pay increases can be applied. The quality and consistency of these appraisals appears to be limited. Longer term employees are not systematically appraised and we found no evidence of personal development plans. Some staff are able to obtain supervisor appraisals if they request them but no system is in place to enforce them. Subordinates and peers are not invited to routinely contribute to the appraisal of their supervisors and managers.

- Some staff indicated to us that they did not have an effective mechanism for bringing complaints forward concerning the actions, decisions or performance of supervisors and managers. Article 32.15 of the BCGEU Master Collective Agreement provides a process to bring forward complaints when a supervisor or manager exercises their authority in a manner which serves no legitimate work purpose and which ought reasonably be known to be inappropriate. In this process, the employee can bring their concern to the first level of excluded manager or a supervisor not involved in the matter for resolution. If not resolved, the complainant may refer the matter through the union to the Deputy Minister. We understand that this process has been used ten times in the past year across the Ministry. Staff may also file union grievances in these situations, but as supervisors/team leaders are members of the same union, this process is not perceived to be effective or appropriate.

- We did not note any linkage between the Region's complaint process and the personnel appraisal system. Complaints about the performance of personnel, validated through the complaint process, are not routinely documented in personnel files. The Ministry has deliberately not established a link between the complaints processes and personnel performance appraisal process to ensure that possible disciplinary processes do not interfere with the timely response to complaints. In a brief review of personnel files, we noted some evidence of disciplinary actions being documented, including written reprimands. We were informed that, through the collective agreement, unionized staff are able to have reprimand letters removed from their files after eighteen months. We noted that practice in the North Region has permitted exempt staff from having written reprimands removed after six months.

  It is our conclusion that effective staff assessment should be based on detailed information about employee performance. Information from the complaints process, while not necessarily resulting in disciplinary action, would be an additional source of performance information. Without linking personnel performance to the complaints process, there may be a lost opportunity to make useful information available to support effective personnel appraisals and the development of performance plans.

B.4 Authority, responsibility and accountability

Authority, responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined and consistent with an organization's objectives so that decisions and actions are taken by the appropriate people.

- Job descriptions exist for management positions in the North Region, providing definitions of responsibilities and accountabilities. In reviewing these job descriptions, we noted the following:
  - Job descriptions appear to be generic in nature and do not appear to have been tailored to the specific responsibilities assigned to managers in the North Region;
  - Job descriptions were last updated in March 1999 and may not accurately reflect current responsibilities and accountabilities;
  - Job descriptions have not been completed to identify the budget and FTE accountabilities of specific managers; and,
  - Job descriptions have not been signed off by managers and the persons to whom they report.

- We did not review the job descriptions for supervisors and staff. However, during our review some staff reported that they either did not have a job description or, if they did, it was not being updated on a regular basis.

- Clear financial authorities are defined as a component of the expenditure control system. Our review identified that supervisors and social workers have limited spending authority for incidental expenditures (social workers have a maximum spending limit of $25 and supervisors a maximum of $100) which appears inconsistent with the responsibilities for supporting children in care. In many cases, these workers are in remote communities without prompt access to management who must approve routine expenditures in excess of these limits.

- Until recently, regional managers have not been involved in the financial management function within the region.

- As indicated elsewhere, there is a perceived lack of accountability in the management system in the North Region and this is also perceived to relate to accountability of individual managers, supervisor and staff.

C. Organizational Capacity

C.1 Knowledge, skills and tools

People should have the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to support the achievement of the organization's objectives.

- In response to the 1996 D.E. Allen Review on *Contract and Program Restructuring*, the Ministry Executive began work on developing a framework for managing the Ministry's priorities and developing project plans for each priority.

  One of the priorities identified in this report was Resource Management, one component of which centered on issues related to employee recruitment and retention. With respect to recruitment and retention, the Ministry has initiated a number of working groups and training programs to address initial training needs and ongoing professional development issues.

- The Ministry has an operating budget of $1.5 billion for the 2000/01 fiscal year and approved staffing of 4,996 FTEs. The following charts highlight the historical funding and staffing levels for the Ministry over the past four years.

Exhibit II-1
Ministry Expenditures – 1997/98 – 2000/01
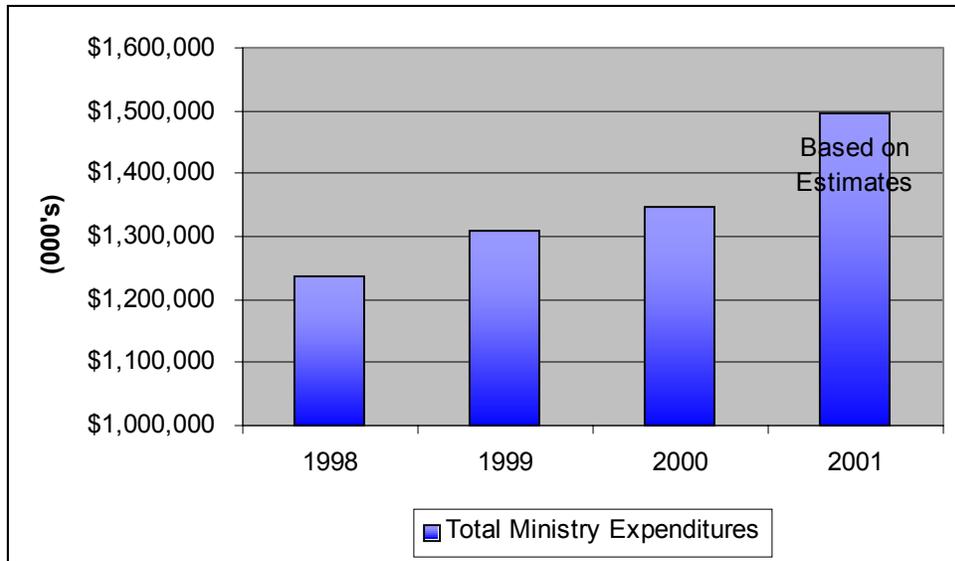
Exhibit II-2
Ministry Full Time Equivalents – 1997/98 – 2000/01
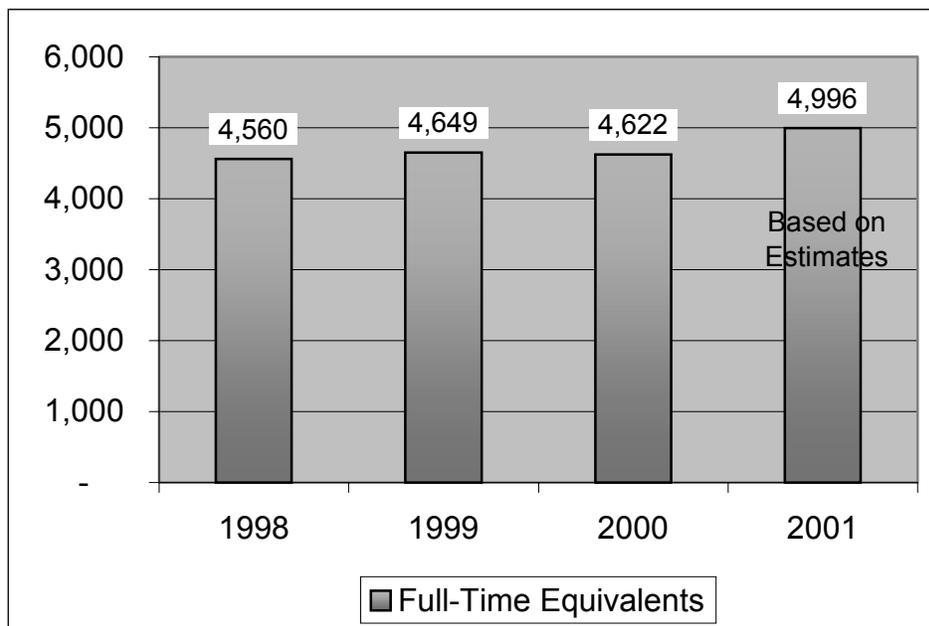
- The North Region has a net operational budget of approximately $133 million for the 2000/01 fiscal year and approved staffing of 450 FTEs.

The following chart shows the Region's budgeted and actual expenditures for the past three years.

Exhibit II-3
North Region Budget and Actual Expenditures – 1998/99 – 2000/01
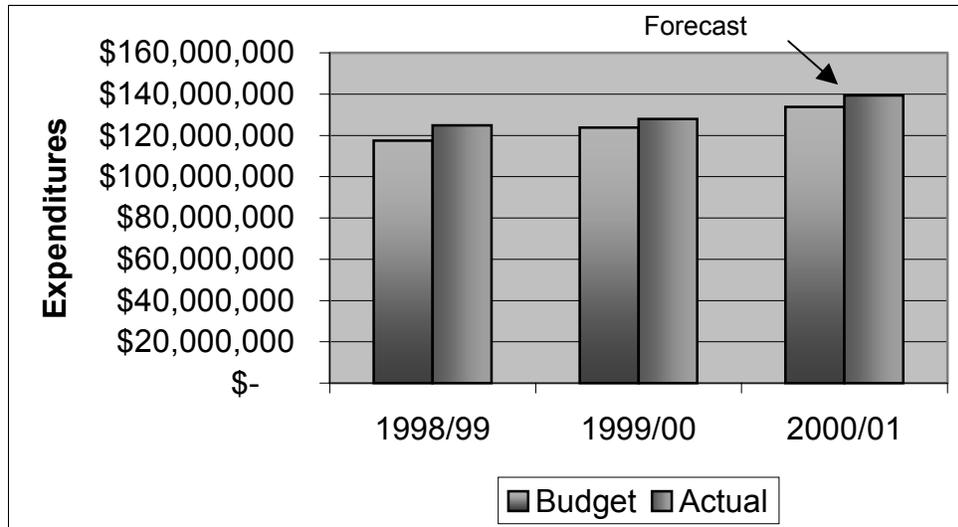
- One of the most critical issues identified in our review of the North Region was the issue of adequate staff resources. Recruitment and retention of staff in the north is a great challenge for many organizations but is near the crisis level for the North Region, specifically in the area of child protection. We understand that the issue of staffing levels is less of an issue in other programs in the region.

The staffing problem is not new and has existed for many years. In a December, 1999 briefing note to the Minister, the Northern Interior Region reported the following:

  o In 1996, the newly formed Ministry had inherited a legacy of poorly trained staff and high staff turnover rates;

  o Between February 1, 1997 and August 31, 1998, the Northern Interior Region lost 28 child protection social workers;

  o Of 21 child protection, resource and guardianship social workers hired in the last half of 1998, 10 had subsequently resigned.

  o 52 social workers were absent from work for various reasons;

o 161 of 222 child protection, resource and guardianship positions were currently occupied; 35 of whom had less than 6 months experience, and an additional 30 had less than 2 years experience;

o eight offices had less than 50% of their permanent staff complement.

Since December, 1999, trends have not been positive. In a recent report, regional managers identified the following composition of child protection worker positions:

Exhibit II-4
Composition of Child Protection Worker Positions
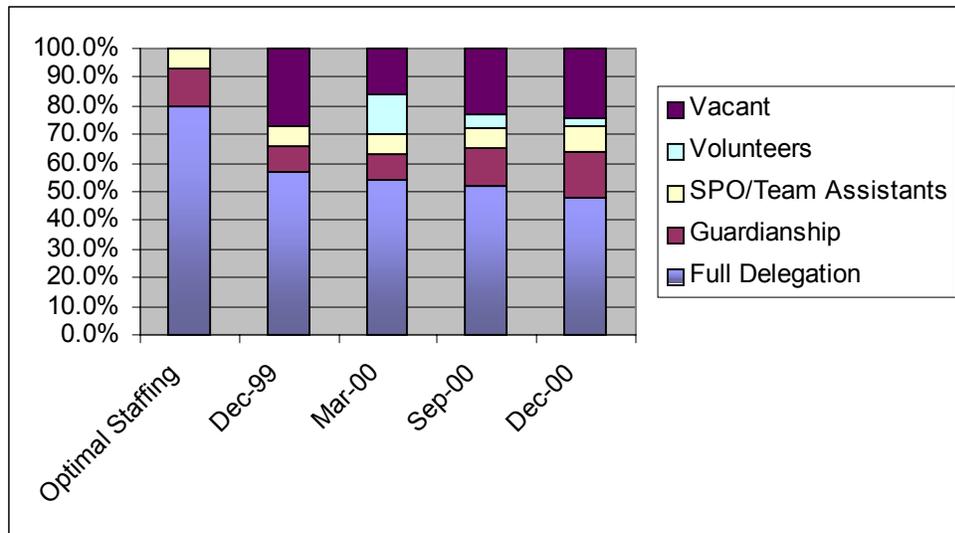
At December 2000 the North Region had 74% of its necessary staff complement of child protection workers, as compared to the Ministry's optimum staffing model. Of this existing staff complement only 48% of the staff were fully delegated when the staffing model suggests that the delegation level should optimally be at 80% in order to meet protection standards. Furthermore, 44% of the region's team leader positions in the protection and guardianship functions are vacant.

- Until recently the North Region assigned a regional manager to focus on recruitment and retention. The management of recruitment is now shared between the regional and headquarters staff. By centralizing the design of the recruitment process, the Ministry benefits by being able to address the recruitment needs of the entire Ministry. The North Region has responsibility for recruitment timelines, advertising, panels, applications and reference checks.

The Ministry's ability to recruit child protection workers has been hampered by the requirements for candidates to have a specified degree (a recommendation of the Gove Inquiry), either a Bachelor of Social Work, a Bachelor of Child and Youth Care, a Master of Social Work, a Masters in Education Counseling or a Masters of Clinical Psychology. In addition, new child protection workers must have completed pre-employment training (the Ministry announced on February 6, 2001 that this requirement was being discontinued) before becoming eligible to be hired as a child protection worker. Once recruited, child protection workers often join offices where there is limited supervision, a backlog of cases and demoralized staff. This has contributed to a situation where the North Region has been losing child protection staff at a rate that exceeds the intake of new child protection workers.

- Recruitment and retention in the North Region is further hindered by the negative media attention which the North Region has received over the past few years and the high cost of living in remote communities.

- Some staff indicated that the staffing shortage has led to a "crisis management approach" where newly recruited workers do not always receive an appropriate orientation which can leave them feeling isolated and not part of a cohesive team. Adding to this, our review found that employee performance evaluations were not consistently performed and, when they were, they are not orientated toward establishing future growth and career plans.

- Issues related to training, and indirectly retention, include:

    o training programs are centralized and driven out of Victoria with many employees having the view that much of the available training is not effective as it does not deal with topics specific to issues which they face in their location;

    o workload commitments and lack of backfill resulted in many employees indicating they were unable to attend scheduled training; and,

    o northern employees have limited training opportunities as compared to those in the south which was a factor in retention of employees in the North.

- The high turnover of child protection workers, and the inability to recruit employees experienced in this area, has resulted in many of the new recruits being recent graduates with relatively little experience, who work under less than ideal supervision. This has been expressed as a significant area of concern by employees as professional judgment required in this area of practice tends to involve more complex issues and have potentially more severe consequences if the wrong decision is made.

- Specific responses to meeting employee recruitment and retention deficiencies in the North Region have included the following:

  o **Workload Management Strategies**

    Recognizing that many of the issues surrounding successful employee recruitment and retention center around having a manageable workload, in addition to appropriate supervision and mentoring, the North Region has implemented short-term workload management strategies for specific areas of the North Region. These strategies are focused on:

    - clearing case backlogs through the short-term introduction of additional field (i.e., volunteers from other regions) and administrative staff;

    - creation of temporary supervisory positions in an attempt to increase job satisfaction for line workers through increased mentoring;

    - screening and prioritizing intake calls;

    - providing more professional development opportunities within the region; and,

    - providing temporary travel and promotion opportunities for experienced social workers.

    While this approach may provide short term relief, the core underlying impediments relating to staffing shortages remain. The approach does not provide sufficient resources to conduct quality comprehensive risk assessments and plans of care for all situations that require them which can result in non-compliance with established Ministry child protection standards.

    This approach to addressing staffing shortages in specific areas has been ongoing since early 1999 when some of the outlying areas of the region started to experience critical staffing shortages. This approach has resulted in a significant amount of time and energy being focused on developing and implementing temporary staffing solutions rather than focusing on core business activities.

    Having insufficient staff in remote areas has also led to health and safety concerns as some child protection staff have indicated that they are having to carry out their duties with limited or no support.

    The British Columbia Employees Union (BCGEU) was initially involved in the development of these workload management strategies but withdrew from the process.

o **Northern Recruitment and Retention Incentives**

While the ability to recruit and retain employees by way of offering specific incentives is limited, in part due to the requirement to comply with negotiated BCGEU and Public Service Employee Relations Commission (PSERC) agreements, there have been a few temporary initiatives which were jointly developed.

For example, in August 2000, the Northern Recruitment and Retention Bonus was introduced as a temporary measure wherein child protection workers/consultants/team leaders who committed to two years of service in specified northern communities would be eligible for a payment of $12,000 over two years. The payments were staggered at $4,000 in the first year and $8,000 in the second year. These initiatives have met with some success in encouraging staff to remain in the north but the full effect cannot be measured until the end of the required commitment period.

Some employees interviewed indicated they would not be staying with the Ministry in the North Region if workload and supervision did not significantly improve. These staff indicated that money was not enough of a motivator to overcome the "toxic" working environment which is currently perceived to exist.

Additional incentive programs specifically targeted to the North Region employees include:

- an educational leave program for team leaders who committed to four years continuous service in specified northern communities;

- lateral transfers without competition to other regions upon completion of two years of continuous service;

- preferential consideration and paid relocation on transfers to preferred locations for child protection workers and team leaders upon completion of four years of continuous service in specified northern communities;

- annual isolation allowances ranging from $858 to $2,106 if employed at any of the twelve specified northern communities;

- annual vacation subsidies ranging from $200 to $400 if employed at any of the three specified remote northern communities;

- paid relocation at time of retirement to a non-isolated community in British Columbia if an employee has served a

minimum of three years at any of twelve specified northern communities prior to retirement.

The incentives specifically focused on child protection workers in specified areas of the North had a negative impact on many North Region staff who were outside the child protection stream or specified areas and who felt that gearing these incentives only to child protection workers ignored the commitment and value of other staff in the north.

o **Pre-employment Training Requirement**

In April, 1999, the Ministry changed its child protection hiring model, moving from a post-employment training requirement to a requirement for pre-employment training. This requirement limited regional recruitment as employment offers could not be made until pre-employment training was successfully completed. (Note: on February 6, 2001, the Ministry announced the discontinuation of the requirement for pre-employment training).

The location of pre-employment training was geared to the areas of greatest demand which usually resulted in courses being held outside the north. This increased the difficulty of attracting recruits to rural areas as many recruits did not have ties to these areas. Recruiters from the north found they were competing against recruiters from larger urban centers which could offer more amenities.

o **Developmental Guardianship Program**

In response to the inability to obtain sufficient child protection recruits from the pre-employment training program, the North Region implemented an innovative recruitment plan for child protection workers. Under this plan, the North Region hired new recruits as guardianship workers and once they were in the employ of the Ministry they were provided with the training to become fully delegated child protection workers. While this program did result in the recruitment of additional child protection workers, it was not sufficient in itself to address the staffing shortage in this area.

A drawback of the developmental guardianship program has been that some individuals initially hired as guardianship workers have indicated that they felt pressured into pursuing the child protection training even though this was not their area of interest.

C.2   Communication processes

Communication processes should support the organization's values and the achievement of its objectives.

- The North Region has a number of communication processes in place to support the organization's values and achievement of its objectives, including:

  o regular team meetings involving supervisors and staff are an important vehicle for sharing information and discussing issues;

  o the Regional Management Team meets periodically to coordinate activities and to discuss priorities and objectives; and,

  o extensive use is made of the government's email system to communicate across the large geographic region.

- In requesting the RED to inform all regional staff about our review, we observed that the communication was first issued to managers, who were in turn asked to distribute the message to staff. In some cases, managers added their own comments which resulted in varied messages to staff. We understand that this process was required because a regional email distribution list does not exist. We were advised that a distribution list did not exist due to high staff turnover rates which make the maintenance of a regional email distribution list difficult.

- Many service providers expressed concerns about Ministry staff's ability to attend regular meetings to address service delivery concerns.

- Our review of the Ministry's most recently published reports to the public concluded that there is little qualitative information provided to determine whether the Ministry is making substantive progress in achieving its stated goals and priorities.

C.3   Information

Sufficient and relevant information should be identified and communicated in a timely manner to enable people to perform their assigned responsibilities.

- The historical focus of the Ministry, and government in general, has been on the management of inputs, as opposed to outputs and outcomes. While this is gradually changing, there remains a strong focus on the management of inputs.

- In the North Region, the flow of financial information has been very limited until recently. Budgets and expenditures have been centrally managed by the Regional Finance Manager and the RED. Historically, managers and supervisors have not been assigned budget responsibilities and did not routinely receive financial information. In September, 2000, this situation changed with budget allocations being assigned to the manager level. Since that time, managers have received monthly financial reports.

Currently, the managers are still not responsible for input to the financial forecasting process. If managers are to be held accountable for the management of their budgets, they must become full participants in the financial management process.

- Information concerning outputs and outcomes appears to be centrally managed at headquarters. Data from a number of management information systems are consolidated into a data warehouse from which a variety of management reports are made available on the Ministry's Intranet site. Our review of this system indicated a number of reports available at a Ministry, Region and office level, including the following:

  o Intake and Investigations
    - Requests over time
    - Protection intake requests by region
  o Children in Care
    - Caseload over time
    - After care plans
    - Legal categories
    - Placement types
    - Caseload by age
    - Caseload by region
    - Admissions and discharges
    - Admissions by legal category
    - Admissions by After Care Plan
    - Admissions by region
    - Discharges by legal category
    - Discharges by After Care Plan
    - Discharges by Region
  o Supervision Orders
    - Caseload over time
    - Legal Categories
  o Youth Services
    - Caseload over time

- From our review work, it was not clear what, if any, use of these reports is made by staff in the North Region. At present, the information is simply available to the North Region and is not linked to performance outcomes. We did note that the Ministry uses the available data to produce a Monthly Tracking Report which is provided to each region. In addition, the data is

used to produce a Monthly Children-in-Care Utilization Management Report which is available to all regions.

- We understand from the Data Analysis Branch that the extent of data and information available from the data warehouse will continue to grow over time.

- We did not identify any specific information on outputs or outcomes produced directly by the North Region that is shared with staff.

- Much of the flow of information from managers to staff is shared through personal contact and team meetings. As there are 18 managers in the region, most of whom are physically located in Prince George, there is a concern that outlying offices do not receive the same level of information and direction.

C.4   Coordination

The decisions and actions of different parts of the organization should be coordinated.

- We understand that coordination of services was a significant consideration in the formation of the Ministry. The coordination of services is intended to be achieved through interaction between service teams and through the development of integrated service plans.

- Some staff expressed concerns about the region's lack of progress in the development of integrated services plans.

C.5   Control activities

Control activities should be designed as an integral part of the organization, taking into consideration its objectives, the risks to their achievement, the inter-relatedness of control elements.

- The North Region is subject to a number of control mechanisms that provide assurance that policies and procedures are being followed and objectives are being achieved. These mechanisms include operational quality assurance mechanisms as well as financial management control mechanisms.

- Quality assurance mechanisms for the Ministry consist primarily of setting standards and monitoring conformance with those standards through audit and/or review processes that include:

   o standards and "Best Practices" development and maintenance to set the requirements for organizational behaviour and service delivery. It includes both management, administrative and service specific program standards.

- o ongoing monitoring and analysis of inputs (resources), outputs, and measures of outcomes (in particular, the outcomes of persons served).

- o periodic assessment of compliance with standards through accreditation surveys, internal and external audits or reviews.

- o periodic evaluation, which involves a systematic assessment of the implementation, results, and/or impacts of strategies employed or under consideration by the ministry.

- o special audits to address specific unanticipated and unusual concerns (e.g., major complaints, suspicion of illegal activities, etc.).

- o program reviews to determine if ministry programs and services are an appropriate fit with the ministry's mandate, strategic objectives and priorities. There are also a number of other external bodies that contribute to the assessment of performance management of ministry programs and services, including:

    - Children's Commissioner

    - Child, Youth and Family Advocate

    - Ombudsman

- Financial control mechanisms are established in accordance with the Financial Administration Act. Financial management policies and procedures are implemented through the Management Services Division. Local implementation is managed by the Regional Manager, Finance and Administration.

- The Ministry and its regions are subject to periodic compliance audits conducted by the Office of the Auditor General and the Internal Audit Branch, Office of the Comptroller General.

- The North Region also has a number of quality assurance programs in place that contribute to the control framework. These include:

    - o case audits conducted by the Regional Managers, Child Protection;

    - o the Quality Assurance Manager (currently vacant) is responsible for quality assurance initiatives, both proactive and reactive, concerning direct Ministry operations and funded agencies. The position is also responsible for the evaluation of the organization as a whole and of its various service providers; and,

    - o the Complaints Process, including acknowledging, tracking, investigating and responding to all formal complaints.

C.6 Inputs and outputs

The relationships among costs, inputs and outputs should be clearly understood.

- The Ministry utilizes a socio-economic model that provides a basis for understanding the relationship between costs, inputs and outputs.

- Our review has identified concerns that there is an imbalance between the Ministry's broad mandate and the resources available to address this mandate. We have identified concerns with the adequacy of funding and the capacity of staff resources in the North Region to successfully address the needs of the communities served.

- In reviewing business plans, performance management plans and budgetary documents, we were concerned that the management system does not always acknowledge the relationships between inputs and outputs. For example, in setting the 2000/2001 preliminary regional budget allocations, we found the following direction: "Funding for salaries is based on base FTEs for 1999/2000. The government has directed ministries to pay for the 2% salary increase from existing budgets without a reduction in program services or layoffs. Hence, there is no additional funding available for the 2% salary increase." A reasonable manager might conclude that this direction from government displays a lack of understanding between inputs and outputs.

C.7   Adaptation

The Ministry should have the ability to adapt to changes in such factors as service demand, available funding or technology.

- The Ministry has typical capabilities to adjust the allocation of resources within its overall Ministry budget. It is not clear, however, that the Ministry has the ability to adapt to situations where service demand varies from forecasts. For example, the initial Ministry budget was based upon an objective to reduce the number of children-in-care by 300 during the fiscal year. This objective was to be achieved using utilization management strategies, consistent with the needs of the child. We understand that the number of children-in-care has in fact increased during the year, placing further strain on available resources.

- The North Region has exceeded its budget allocations in each of the past three years and is forecasting a significant overrun again this year. To address this issue, the Ministry has implemented a utilization management strategy for the children-in-care budget. The North Region has been provided with six FTEs dedicated to utilization management in the areas of: placement reviews; foster home recruitment; and, research.

It is not yet clear whether these strategies will be successful in avoiding a budget overrun in the North Region.

- Some participants in the review process expressed a concern that changing resource needs are not effectively planned for or responded to.

- Throughout our review, participants consistently described the management style in the Ministry as being "reactive" as opposed to "pro-active". While reactive management suggests a degree of adaptation, the reactions appear to more directed to managing individual issues than in responding to the more fundamental systemic problems.

D. Management Accountability

D.1 Environmental scan

External and internal environments should be monitored to obtain information that may signal a need to re-evaluate the organization's objectives or control.

- The Ministry's 2000/2001 Performance Plan documents the results of an environmental scan which can provide a basis for re-evaluating the organization's objectives.

- It was our observation that the environment scan was substantially unchanged from the scan documented in June, 1999. We did not determine to what extent the environmental scan is actually used to adjust the Ministry's objectives or performance plans.

- As the environmental scan is conducted at the provincial level, there is no indication that the specific economic, demographic or social trends in the North Region are considered in the planning process.

- While we recognize that some internal and external scans are performed by the Ministry, we observed that many of the problems currently being experienced by the North Region have been documented in the past but remain unresolved.

D.2 Performance monitoring

Performance and organizational strength should be monitored against the targets and indicators identified in the organization's objectives and plans.

- The Ministry has published two annual reports since its inception: a report covering the period from September 23, 1996 to March 31, 1998; and, a report for the 1998/99 fiscal year.

- The annual reports published to date provide information on expenditures and outputs by program.

- The annual report for 1998/99 provided information on the number of formal complaints made to the Ministry by program area and the disposition of those complaints.

- The Region is responsible for providing monthly forecasts of expenditures and FTE (full-time equivalents) use to the Management Services Division.

- Based upon the information provided by the Ministry, we have found little evidence to assess whether the Ministry is succeeding or failing. The Ministry clearly defined its priorities in 1999, but to date we have found limited information that would allow a full assessment against these priorities.

An example may assist in clarifying this conclusion. In March 1999, the Ministry set as a priority the establishment of a Consultation Framework to provide "direction on the way people who are involved in the delivery or affected by the delivery of services will be informed or provided advice." An outcome associated with this priority was "strengthened relationships between government, community and service providers."

Foster parents are a significant group of service providers and the relationship with the Ministry has been widely recognized as strained. To strengthen the relationship, the Ministry and the BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA) established a teambuilding protocol in December, 1999. Under this protocol, the Ministry initiated a process to formalize the liaisons with the BCFFPA. The objective of the initiative was to establish liaison processes at a regional level that would support enhanced communication and issue resolution.

The result of this initiative was the development of a "Teambuilding Protocol" that establishes regular meetings between the Ministry's regional staff and representatives of the BCFFPA. In addition, "teambuilding agreements" were also formally established between each region and the local BCFFPA organization. The template for these agreements was agreed to between the Ministry and the BCFFPA.

The teambuilding agreements document a number of key values in support of the protocol. As indicated in the template, the objective of the protocol is "to ensure that foster parents and ministry staff relate to each other with dignity, consideration, trust, honesty, respect, acceptance and fairness." The expected outcomes of the protocol include the following:

- Annually, the majority of foster parents report that:

  o They are being respected and treated as valued professional members of each child's guardianship team by Ministry staff;

- o Their input into the assessment and planning for each child is given serious consideration by Ministry staff;

- o Important regional, local and individual issues related to the safety and quality of care of children/youth in care living with foster families are being addressed at the regional and local level in a satisfactory and timely manner;

- o Important regional, local and individual issues related to the working relationship between foster parents (including the BCFFPA) and Ministry staff are being addressed and resolved at the regional and local level in a satisfactory and timely manner; and,

- o They are treated with dignity, consideration, trust, honesty, respect and acceptance by Ministry staff.

- Annually, the majority of Ministry staff report that:

  - o They are respected and treated as valued legal and professional leaders of each child's guardianship team by foster parents;

  - o Their decisions regarding the assessment and planning for each child is upheld by foster parents;

  - o Important regional, local and individual issues related to the safety and quality of care of children/youth in care living with foster families are being addressed at the regional and local level in a satisfactory and timely manner;

  - o Important regional, local and individual issues related to the working relationship between foster parents (including the BCFFPA) and Ministry staff are being addressed and resolved at the regional and local level in a satisfactory and timely manner; and,

  - o They are treated with dignity, consideration, trust, honesty, respect and acceptance by foster parents.

The template set the number of regional level meetings at a minimum of three per year with additional meetings as mutually agreed.

The North Region established a teambuilding agreement with the following organizations:

- BCFFPA Regional Council – Region H

- BCFFPA Regional Council – Region J East

- BCFFPA Area Council – Region J West

The agreement recognized that the extensive size of the region and the number of communities served would require each sub-region within the North Region to develop a partnership agreement which would identify local meeting processes, participants and problem solving approaches.

In assessing whether the Ministry has established an appropriate accountability framework related to this very specific process, we had the following questions:

- o Have meetings occurred as planned?

- o What was the baseline status of the relationships between social workers and foster parents?

- o What performance management plan is in place to annually assess whether improvements are being realized?

- o What resources have been allocated to the performance management plan?

- o Has the teambuilding protocol strengthened relationships between the Ministry and foster parents?

Accountability requires honest and timely answers to these questions. While some progress in establishing agreements and organizing meetings has taken place, our review was unable to find answers to all of these questions. It is our conclusion that there has not been full implementation of this teambuilding protocol in the North Region.

D.3   Assumptions

The assumptions behind an organization's objectives should be periodically challenged.

- • The Ministry's assumptions contained in its socio-economic model are challenged on an annual basis by performing an environmental scan of internal and external factors.

D.4   Information

Information needs and related information systems should be reassessed as objectives change or as reporting deficiencies are identified.

- • The Ministry has been continuously re-evaluating its performance management system and information requirements since the Ministry was established. Information sources such as the Ministry's data warehouse and Intranet environment are enhancing the access to information on an ongoing basis.

- • Our review has concluded that the Ministry's performance management system is still in the development stage and does not provide a stable definition of performance measures and performance targets.

It is our observation that progress was made in this area in 1998/99 but that this progress was partially lost in an environment of periodic reorganizations and changing priorities. We understand that initiatives are underway in the Ministry that will allow it to fulfill its obligations under the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act.

D.5   Follow-up

Follow-up procedures should be established and performed to ensure appropriate change or action occurs.

- A consistent message that we received during our review is that the Ministry has been generally poor in following through on agreed upon change and action. This can be seen both at the macro level and the micro level. Staff and service providers have expressed frustration with the Ministry's ability to acknowledge problems and effect change.

- Appropriate disciplinary action does not appear to have been taken on a consistent basis, when warranted. Disciplinary action is a necessary component of an effective personnel management system as it serves to reinforce the organization's principles and values and strengthens the alignment between those principles/values and actual performance.

- Our review noted that a common way for the North Region to address staff skill or performance deficiencies is to move that staff to different positions. This approach tends to transfer problems rather than to effectively deal with them.

- The Region's complaint process is perceived to be unresponsive to the concerns of stakeholders and this perception was supported by our limited review of the process.

D.6   Effectiveness of controls

Management should periodically assess the effectiveness of control in its organization and communicate the results to whom it is accountable.

- Our review found a number of areas where controls have been effective in strengthening the performance of the Ministry and the North Region.

- Within the Ministry, audits conducted by the Director of Child Protection are performed on a three-year rotational basis, ensuring that all offices in the Ministry are reviewed on a regular basis. In the North Region, audits have been conducted in eight different offices in the past 18 months.

  We observed that the scope of the audits appears to have expanded over time, not only assessing compliance with child protection standards of

practice, but also looking at causal issues such as staffing levels and protocols with community stakeholders. We also observed that the scope of recommendations contained in the audit reports expanded over time to provide more effective direction to regional staff.

Regional Child Protection Managers are responsible for developing written responses to the Director's audit reports and identifying what measures will be taken. Audit results are then verbally discussed between the Regional Child Protection Manager and the supervisor(s) responsible for the office involved. The Regional Child Protection Manager reviews the audit results with their staff and discusses necessary changes to practice.

Where the Director's audit report identifies problems with individual case files, regional staff review the file and take appropriate action. Supervisors are responsible for confirming to the Regional Child Protection Manager that follow-up action has occurred.

Audit staff monitor the required follow-up action to ensure the appropriate responses are performed.

- The Children's Commission, an independent body, also performs periodic performance reviews in the area of child protection practice. A key focus over the past three years has been the review of care plans against Ministry standards. These audits are based on a premise that more effective planning will result in improved service delivery. The Children's Commission staff randomly select 40 care plans each month for qualitative review, from across all regions. The review looks at a number of key elements in the plan and arrives at an overall compliance rate. Since commencing the process, the Children's Commissioner has noted a dramatic increase in the compliance rate. Provincial compliance rates were 8% in 1998, 20% in 1999 and 47% in 2000. The North Region was rated 47% compliant in 2000, equivalent to the provincial average. While the Children's Commissioner has been encouraged by these improvements, he remains concerned with the overall level of compliance.

We interpret the improving review results as evidence that an effective accountability framework that measures and reports on key performance indicators actually results in improved performance

D.7   Financial results

Financial results—the matching of, and the accounting for, revenues and costs and the accounting for and valuation of assets, liabilities and equity.

- The North Region is held accountable for the management of its financial resources. The region is responsible for managing its gross program expenditures as well as managing the recovery of child care expenses from other programs and levels of government. The North Region appears to have limited say in the allocation of resources.

- As identified in Section II.C.1, the Region has overspent its budget over the past two fiscal years and is forecasting that this will occur again this year. Given the nature of its service mandate, it is unclear to what extent this result is a reflection on the effectiveness of management as opposed to the adequacy of the funding provided.

D.8 Achievement of results

Achievement of intended results—the extent to which goals and objectives have been realized.

- The achievement of Ministry goals is measured primarily at the provincial level.

- The Ministry produces a bi-annual report entitled "Measuring Our Success – A Framework For Evaluation Population Outcomes". The most recent report, dated December, 1999 (second edition), outlines the Ministry's goals, translated objectives, and performance indicators.

- The Ministry recognizes that it is not the sole influence on, nor stakeholder of, the goals upon which the Population Outcomes Framework rests. Individuals, families, communities, service providing agencies, other levels and departments of government, and others are recognized as being equally significant players in achieving the defined goals.

- The Ministry also recognizes that the Population Outcomes Framework is not a vehicle to directly assess Ministry performance. Other vehicles are used to monitor, report and assess the Ministry's performance with regard to its resource utilization, service quality and effectiveness, legislated responsibilities, and desired organizational outcomes.

- The *Measuring Our Success* report provides outcome measures related to the Ministry's four primary service goals. Approximately 100 performance indicators are used to measure changes in the population outcomes of 16 objectives associated with the four primary service goals. Performance indicators have been identified for 14 of the 16 objectives.

- Using the service goal of *"Protect Children and Youth From Abuse, Neglect, and Harm"*, the following table summarizes the related objectives, performance indicators, and the information source for each performance indicator.

Outcome Objective	Performance Indicator	Source of Performance Indicator

Outcome Objective	Performance Indicator	Source of Performance Indicator
2.1 To Reduce Abuse, Neglect, and Harm of Children & Youth	1. Rate of domestic child abuse/neglect	SWS/MIS statistical extract files, Ministry for Children and Families
	2. Percentage of students who have been physically and/or sexually abused (male and female)	McCreary Centre Society, Adolescent Health Survey (AHS).
	3. Rate of children/youth charged with prostitution-type offenses.	Police Services Division, Ministry of Attorney General; BC Stats.
2.2 To Reduce The Occurrences and Spread of Vaccine Preventable Diseases.	1. Percentage of 2 year olds that are immunized.	Ministry of Health, Public Health Nursing, BC.
	2. Percentage of kindergarten children immunized.	Ministry of Health, Public Health Nursing, BC.
	3. Percentage of grade 6 students immunized for Hep B.	Ministry of Health, Public Health Nursing, BC.
	4. Rate of vaccine-preventable diseases.	BC Centre for Disease control Society, Ministry of Heath.
2.3 To Reduce Unintentional Injury And Premature Death of Children And Youth.	1. Rate of death or hospitalization due to unintentional injuries.	Office of Injury Prevention, Ministry of Health, BC Vital Statistics, Statistics Canada.
	2. Rate of death or hospitalization due to transportational injuries.	Office of Injury Prevention, Ministry of Health, BC Vital Statistics, Statistics Canada.
	3. Rate of death or hospitalization due to fire related injuries.	Office of Injury Prevention, Ministry of Health, BC Vital Statistics, Statistics Canada.

Outcome Objective	Performance Indicator	Source of Performance Indicator
	4. Rate of death or hospitalization due to water related injuries.	No source identified.
	5. Rate of death or hospitalization due to home/residential injuries.	Office of Injury Prevention, Ministry of Health, BC Vital Statistics, Statistics Canada.

- In comparing the performance indicators at December 1999 against the values at October 1997, the Ministry reported improvements in 64% of the objectives for population outcomes.

- The Ministry advises us the third edition of the Measuring Our Success report is being finalized.

- For the North Region, we were provided with a draft copy of the Annual Regional Report for the North Region prepared by the Program Management and Audit Branch of the Management Services Division. This draft report, dated June 2, 2000, provides a statistical overview of the well-being and health status of children, youth and families in the Region. The stated purpose of the report is to assist executives, regional directors, Ministry staff, health care practitioners and the public to identify areas where they can make continued improvements in health of children, youth and families. The report consists of six major parts:
    -
    - Regional profile;
    - Health status;
    - Growth and development;
    - Injuries and prevention;
    - Health services; and,
    - Aboriginal.

- As the copy of the Annual Regional Report for the North Region was a draft copy and was not found on the Ministry's website, it is not clear whether this document was ever finalized and released to the report's stakeholders.

D.9   Secondary impacts

Secondary impacts—the extent to which other significant consequences, either intended or unintended and either positive or negative, have occurred.

- Our review work has found that the Ministry and its staff have the best intentions for the communities they serve but that the stresses and strains in the system are clearly resulting in some unintended secondary impacts.

Many parents, foster parents and other community stakeholders indicated to us that they are not convinced the Ministry always operates in the best interests of children and families, and they don't believe that the Ministry is prepared to acknowledge its vulnerabilities and work towards improving the system.

Many participants in the review, staff included, indicated that the Ministry operates in a highly defensive way, threatening retribution to those that speak out. When the system does fail, as it will from time-to-time, it typically occurs in a highly public forum fed by strong media attention. Staff expressed the concern that, in these highly publicized cases, the system protects itself by laying blame upon individuals within the system, some of which may not be fully warranted.

Some staff and service providers indicated that they are unable to effectively defend themselves against public criticism and they don't see the Ministry protecting their interests. The tragic Amanda Simpson case is a daily reminder for staff of the consequences of failure. While the Minister acknowledged in the Legislature that the Ministry had failed Amanda, it was four staff members that faced direct consequences. Without commenting on the appropriateness of the disciplinary action taken, it was the public airing of individual blame that impacted staff morale. Our review noted that the actual number of disciplinary actions and removals of delegated authority appear disproportionately lower than the perceptions of staff would otherwise suggest.

It appears inevitable that our society will periodically fail to protect children from abuse. The Ministry cannot realistically protect every child from abusive situations but must strive to protect those children when abuse is identified. By not acknowledging that failure is a part of the system, the Ministry contributes to an environment where there is fear of retribution.

III
"To Be" Management Structure

In this section, we outline a management vision for the future of the North Region that provides an opportunity for the region to recognize and acknowledge its strengths and to address its vulnerabilities on an ongoing basis. The vision is documented without regard to whether the management requirements are currently in place. The following Gap Analysis section will address the opportunities to strengthen the current management system.

The strength of any management system is in its ability to adapt to changing conditions and to achieve its goals and objectives. As the current management model of the Ministry is highly centralized, it must be recognized that this vision cannot be implemented in isolation. In many areas, the Ministry must make fundamental changes in the way it is managed before substantive changes can occur within each individual region. In some areas, it is clear that these changes are already in formation within the Ministry.

We recognize that the management structure and processes within the Ministry are dynamic and continue to evolve as the organization matures and adapts. In this dynamic environment, there is no perfect management system to be sought. Rather, the Ministry and its partners must work together to build relationships and processes that continuously improve the outcomes for children, youth and families.

The Ministry's mandate is as much about the quality of the journey as it is about any particular destination. Encouraging and supporting the development of healthy children, families and communities requires effective collaboration and cooperation with the communities and clients served. We encourage all partners in the system to work together for the benefit of our children, youth and families.

A recurring theme throughout this section will be accountability. In June 1995, the Auditor General of British Columbia and Deputy Ministers Council issued a joint report entitled *Enhancing Accountability for Performance in the British Columbia Public Sector*. This report has formed the foundation for an accountability model for the government and its ministries. The recently enacted Budget Transparency and Accountability Act reinforces the direction towards greater accountability for government and we would expect that this will increasingly be reflected in the management of the Ministry.

The key components of the accountability framework are reflected in the following exhibit:
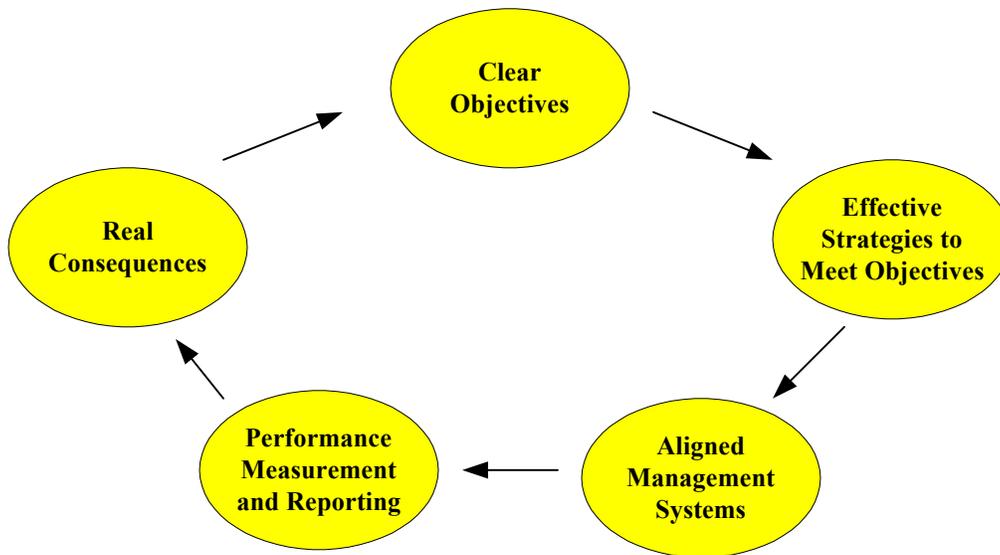
A. Management Purpose

A.1 Clear Objectives

Criteria

Objectives should be established and communicated. The Ministry's programs should be well-integrated and understood and be appropriately reflected in the organization's plans, structure, delegations of authority and decision-making processes.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- A clearly defined vision and mission statement for the Ministry.

- Clearly defined objectives and priorities at the Ministry level.

- Clearly defined objectives and priorities at the regional level.

- Clearly defined objectives and priorities at the program level.

- Strong alignment between objectives and priorities at all levels.

- Appropriate delegation of authority to regional staff to allow them to effectively implement regional plans.

A.2   Risk Assessments

Criteria

The significant internal and external risks faced by an organization in the achievement of its objectives should be identified and assessed.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- Significant internal and external risks to be considered in developing performance plans at the Ministry level.

- Significant internal and external risks to be considered in developing performance plans at the regional level.

- Significant internal and external risks to be considered in developing performance plans at the program level.

- Linkages between risk assessments at all levels to be established.

- Acceptable risks to be documented by senior management and communicated to staff.

A.3   Relevance

Criteria

Programs should be periodically assessed to ensure they make sense in regard to the problems or conditions to which they are intended to respond.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The periodic planning process to address the ongoing relevancy of all programs and consider the need to modify programs to meet changing requirements.

A.4   Acceptance

Criteria

Programs should be accepted by the stakeholders in the communities to which they serve.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- Processes in place to systematically collect stakeholder feedback on the acceptability of Ministry programs.

- Processes in place to systematically collect stakeholder feedback on the design and delivery of programs at a regional level.

- Stakeholder feedback that is formally recognized as an input to the annual

performance planning process.

A.5　Policies and Procedures

Criteria

Policies designed to support the achievement of an organization's objectives and the management of its risks should be established, communicated and practiced so that people understand what is expected of them and the scope of their freedom to act.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- Effective policies, procedures, practices and standards established at the Ministry level.

- Policies, procedures, practices and standards that are maintained and enhanced by the Ministry as required.

- Sufficient resources to be allocated to the maintenance of Ministry policies, procedures, practices and standards.

- All policies, procedures, practices and standards to be accessible to all staff and effective staff training in such policies.

- A process to be in place to communicate all changes in Ministry policy to staff and stakeholders.

- A mechanism for obtaining staff feedback on the effectiveness of Ministry policy and the ability to provide this feedback to headquarters.

- Any approved variations from standard Ministry policy to be documented and communicated and appropriate training provided.

- Processes to ensure consistent interpretation of Ministry policy and appropriate direction to staff.

A.6　Plans

Criteria

Plans to guide efforts in achieving the organization's objectives should be established and communicated.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to have an annual performance plan that addresses operating goals, priorities and corporate capability.

- The corporate capability to address issues of management purpose, organizational commitment, organization capacity and management accountability.

- The region to have an annual performance plan that addresses regional operating goals, objectives and regional capability.
- The regional capability to address issues of management purpose, organizational commitment, organization capacity and management accountability.
- The Region to prepare annual performance plans at a program, initiative or office level as a component of the regional performance plan.
- The Region to ensure that its performance plans are properly aligned with the Ministry's performance plan.

A.7 Performance Targets and Indicators

Criteria

Objectives and related plans should include measurable performance targets and indicators.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- Ministry's performance plans that document performance indicators and performance targets in support of its goals and objectives.
- Regional performance plans that document performance indicators and performance targets in support of its goals and objectives.
- The Region's program level performance plans to document performance indicators in support of its goals and objectives.

B. Organizational Commitment

B.1 Shared Values

Criteria

Shared ethical values, including integrity, should be established, communicated and practiced throughout the organization.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that ethical values are established, communicated and practiced throughout the organization.
- The Region to ensure that the Ministry's ethical values are established, communicated and practiced by regional staff.

B.2　Working environment and mutual trust

Criteria

An appropriate working environment should be established for the Ministry's employees that provides appropriate opportunities for development and achievement, and promotes commitment, initiative and safety. An atmosphere of mutual trust should be fostered to support the flow of information between people and their effective performance toward achieving the organization's objectives.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that an appropriate working environment is established for Ministry employees that will foster appropriate opportunities for development and achievement, promote commitment, initiative and safety, foster an atmosphere of mutual trust and support the flow of information between people - all of which should facilitate the achievement of the organization's objectives.

- The Region to ensure that its operating culture reflects and supports the Ministry's positive working environment.

- The Region to ensure that its positive working environment extends to include and accommodate community partners to promote an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

B.3　Human resource policies and procedures

Criteria

Human resource policies and procedures should be established, communicated and practiced throughout the organization.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- Human resource policies and procedures to be established, communicated, and practiced as part of the overall Ministry's policies and procedures.

- Human resource policy and procedures in the North Region that are aligned with the specific challenges and priorities in the north.

- The Region to ensure that human resource policies and procedures are accessible to and followed by Regional staff.

B.4   Authority, responsibility and accountability

Criteria
Authority, responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined and consistent with an organization's objectives so that decisions and actions are taken by the appropriate people.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that clearly defined authority, responsibility, and accountability models are in place and are consistent with the Ministry's objectives.

- The Region to ensure that the authority, responsibility, and accountability models are communicated to and are understood by Regional staff.

- The Region to ensure that the authority, responsibility and accountability models are complied with by Regional staff.

C.   Organizational Capacity

C.1   Knowledge, skills and tools

Criteria
People should have the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to support the achievement of the organization's objectives.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that its employees have the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to support the achievement of the Ministry's objectives.

- The Region to ensure that:

    o it becomes a attractive career destination choice where employees, team leaders and managers are seen to operate in a supportive and proactive team environment and enjoy non-confrontational working relationships with service providers;

    o employee workloads must be established and maintained at a manageable level with new recruits being gradually mentored into the system;

    o a stronger recruiting focus needs to be on employees that have ties to the community or area in which they are working;

    o ongoing administrative support is provided for social workers which will allow them to focus more time on addressing the needs of children;

- o employees are encouraged to make long term commitments to the Region;

- o training and career development is provided on a relevant and proactive basis; and,

- o employees are hired and compensated based on their skills and the demand for those skills.

C.2   Communication processes

Criteria

Communication processes should support the organization's values and the achievement of its objectives.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that the required communication capabilities and processes are in place to facilitate open, reciprocal communication between the Ministry and its employees, service providers and clients.

- The Ministry to ensure that its communication processes are flexible and responsive and can accommodate different capacities.

- The Ministry to ensure that communication processes exist to convey feedback about operating performance and about the environment within and outside the organization.

- The Region to ensure that its communication processes support and compliment the Ministry's communication processes.

C.3   Information

Criteria

Sufficient and relevant information should be identified and communicated in a timely manner to enable people to perform their assigned responsibilities.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that an open and reciprocal flow of information is facilitated from both inside and outside the organization.

- The Ministry to ensure that the information communicated is current, relevant, and reliable and made available to both those who have the authority to act on it and those who may be impacted by it.

- The Region to ensure that the open and reciprocal exchange of current, relevant, and reliable information is facilitated between its programs, staff, and community partners.

C.4   Coordination

<table>
<tr><td align="center">Criteria</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">The decisions and actions of different parts of the organization should be coordinated.</td></tr>
</table>

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that the decisions and actions of its employees work together to achieve the objectives of the Ministry and facilitate integration, consistency and accountability throughout the Ministry.

- The Region to ensure that its decisions and actions are coordinated within the Region and with those of the Ministry.

C.5   Control activities

<table>
<tr><td align="center">Criteria</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">Control activities should be designed as an integral part of the organization, taking into consideration its objectives, the risks to their achievement and the inter-relatedness of control elements.</td></tr>
</table>

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that control activities are established to provide assurance that policies and processes operate as designed and meet the requirements of the Ministry's objectives.

- The Region to incorporate control activities into its programs and operations that compliment the Ministry's control activities and serve to meet the Region's objectives.

C.6   Inputs and outputs

<table>
<tr><td align="center">Criteria</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">The relationships among costs, inputs and outputs should be clearly understood.</td></tr>
</table>

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that there is a clearly defined relationship between the costs of inputs and outputs and that this relationship is understood.

- The Region to ensure that there is a balance between its operational and program objectives and the resources available to meet these objectives.

C.7   Adaptation

Criteria
The Ministry should have the ability to adapt to changes in such factors as service demand, available funding or technology.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to be aware of current demands for service delivery and be capable of forecasting changes in service delivery requirements with the flexibility to address these changing demands.

- The Region to be aware of current operational and program demands for service delivery and be capable of forecasting changes in service delivery requirements with the flexibility to address these changing demands

D.   Management Accountability

D.1   Environmental scan

Criteria
External and internal environments should be monitored to obtain information that may signal a need to re-evaluate the organization's objectives or control.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that it has the capability to monitor, forecast and respond to internal and external changes that may impact on achieving its objectives and/or require that those objectives be modified.

- The Region to ensure that it has the capability to monitor, forecast and respond to internal and external changes that may impact on achieving its operational and program objectives and/or require that those objectives be modified.

D.2   Performance monitoring

Criteria
Performance and organizational strength should be monitored against the targets and indicators identified in the organization's objectives and plans.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that its performance is monitored and evaluated in a timely manner using the targets and indicators identified in the Ministry's objectives and plans.

- The Region to ensure that its performance is monitored and evaluated in a

timely manner using the targets and indicators identified in the Region's operational and programs objectives and plans.

- The Ministry and the Region to ensure their performance measurement systems can accommodate changing objectives.

D.3   Assumptions

Criteria
The assumptions behind an organization's objectives should be periodically challenged.
To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry and the Region to ensure that the assumptions behind their objectives are periodically evaluated to confirm the relevancy of their objectives.

D.4   Information

Criteria
Information needs and related information systems should be reassessed as objectives change or as reporting deficiencies are identified.
To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry and the Region to ensure that their information capabilities, processes and information systems remain relevant, current and effective.

D.5   Follow-up

Criteria
Follow-up procedures should be established and performed to ensure appropriate change or action occurs.
To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that where required changes have been identified and approved, they are monitored to confirm that they are carried out.

- The Region to ensure that where operational and program changes have been agreed to that they are followed through to implementation.

D.6   Effectiveness of controls

Criteria

Management should periodically assess the effectiveness of control in its organization and communicate the results to whom it is accountable.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that the internal control mechanisms within the Ministry are current, relevant and effective.

- The Region to ensure that the control mechanisms are in place within its operations and programs and are current, relevant and effective.

D.7   Financial results

Criteria

Financial results—the matching of, and the accounting for, revenues and costs and the accounting for and valuation of assets, liabilities and equity.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that an appropriate accounting system is in place that reports financial results in a timely and accurate fashion and that these results include the correct matching of and accounting for Ministry revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities, and equity.

- The Region to ensure that relevant information is gathered and compiled in an accurate and timely fashion in order to facilitate proper reporting of financial results.

D.8   Achievement of results

Criteria

Achievement of intended results—the extent to which goals and objectives have been realized.

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry to ensure that the degree to which goals and objectives have been realized is measured through the performance measurement system.

- The Region to ensure that the degree to which operational and program goals and objectives have been realized is measured through the performance measurement system.

D.9   Secondary impacts

<table>
<tr><td align="center">**Criteria**</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">*Secondary impacts—the extent to which other significant consequences, either intended or unintended and either positive or negative, have occurred.*</td></tr>
</table>

To meet the criteria, the North Region requires:

- The Ministry and the Region to ensure that secondary impacts are identified and assessed when pursuing a course of action.

IV
Gap Analysis

In this section, we contrast the "As Is" management structure with the proposed "To Be" structure and present our recommendations for change. Our recommendations are directed towards establishing processes that can support continuous improvement in the areas of management purpose, organizational commitment and capacity and management accountability. Our recommendations are not intended to address all operational and program issues identified during our review as this was not within our terms of reference.

A major conclusion from our review work is that the North Region needs to dramatically improve its accountability mechanisms if it hopes to improve performance and strengthen relationships. Many of the region's problems are of a fundamental nature and cannot easily be addressed by quick fixes. A continuing focus on qualitative improvements in performance and accountability will lead to improved staff morale and enhanced relationships with service providers and community stakeholders.

The North Region has serious deficiencies in its ability to meet its existing mandate. As long as the region faces shortages of experienced, managers, team leaders and staff (particularly experienced child protection workers) it will be greatly challenged to make progress on improving its quality of service and accountability to its stakeholders.

A. Assessment Summary

The following table summarizes our conclusions about the strength of the existing management approach against each of the assessment criteria. The table indicates our assessment of the extent of the gap between the "As Is" and "To Be" structures, the relative criticality of the criteria and an overall assessment of the need for improvement.

Assessment Criteria	Extent of Gap	Criticality of Criteria	Need for Improvement
Management Purpose			
A.1 Clear Objectives	Moderate	High	Moderate
A.2 Risk Assessments	Low	Low	Low
A.3 Relevance	Low	Low	Low
A.4 Acceptance	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
A.5 Policies and Procedures	Low	Moderate	Low

Assessment Criteria		Extent of Gap	Criticality of Criteria	Need for Improvement
A.6	Plans	High	High	High
A.7	Performance Targets and Indicators	High	High	High
Organizational Commitment				
B.1	Shared Values	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
B.2	Working environment	High	High	High
B.3	Human resource policies and procedures	High	Moderate	Moderate
B.4	Authority, responsibility and accountability	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Organizational Capacity				
C.1	Knowledge, skills and tools	High	High	High
C.2	Communication processes	Low	Moderate	Moderate
C.3	Information	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
C.4	Coordination	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
C.5	Control activities	Low	Moderate	Low
C.6	Inputs and outputs	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
C.7	Adaptation	Low	Low	Low
Management Accountability				
D.1	Environmental scan	Moderate	Low	Moderate
D.2	Performance monitoring	High	High	High
D.3	Assumptions	Low	Low	Low
D.4	Information	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
D.5	Follow-up	High	Moderate	High
D.6	Effectiveness of controls	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
D.7	Financial results	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
D.8	Achievement of results	Low	Moderate	Low
D.9	Secondary impacts	High	Moderate	Moderate

B. Management Purpose

B.1   Regional Objectives and Performance Plans

To ensure that organizational goals and objectives are understood by all employees, they should be clearly defined in a business or management plan.   While the Ministry has developed a Performance Plan that clearly defined Ministry-wide goals, objectives and priorities, there is currently no requirement for regions to prepare performance plans. The requirement for regional performance plans existed in the first two years after the Ministry's creation, but this process was centralized beginning in the 1999/00 fiscal year.

Based upon our review, it was not clear that operations of the North Region were properly aligned with the goals and objectives of the Ministry, nor could we identify any specific regional goals or priorities that might exist.

We understand that the Ministry is considering the reintroduction of the requirement for regions to prepare annual performance plans.

Recommendation #1:

We recommend that the Ministry require all regions to prepare regional performance plans that clearly document the goals, objectives, priorities, strategies, plans and performance measures that ensure appropriate alignment between Ministry-wide goals and objectives and regional operations.

B.2   Program Acceptance

Our review has concluded that the Ministry's programs are very relevant to the needs of the communities they serve and that there is general acceptance of the need for those programs.   However, while the Ministry and its staff are generally committed to making a positive contribution to those communities, there is significant evidence that there is not universal acceptance of those programs.

The concerns raised by community stakeholders appear to relate more to the way in which the Ministry delivers its services than with the programs themselves However, there is clearly a need for the Ministry to focus on improving the acceptance of its programs within the communities it serves. It is our conclusion that improving program acceptance can only be achieved through the establishment of effective communications, increased involvement of community stakeholders in program design and the clear and visible implementation of accountability frameworks.

In 1997, the Ministry conducted a comprehensive client satisfaction survey which provided useful information on program design and acceptance. We are not aware that this type of approach to gathering stakeholder feedback has been used subsequently.

In proposing an accountability framework for government, the Auditor General of B.C. noted that an effective accountability framework can lead to performance improvements. Accountability includes having clear goals and objectives, establishing appropriate performance management systems and providing periodic accountability reports to stakeholders. Experience shows that the obligation to report on performance to stakeholders has the effect of encouraging organizations to perform better.

Obtaining stakeholder feedback can be accomplished in a number of ways. It can be obtained through periodic surveys as was done in 1997. Another way is to build feedback mechanisms into the standard business processes. For example, client opinions can be sought at the point of service through a survey mechanism or service provider feedback can be sought periodically such as at the time of contract renewal.

Recommendation #2:

We recommend that the North Region, working with the Ministry, establish an improved accountability framework with respect to stakeholder acceptance of the design and delivery of its programs.

B.3   Performance Indicators and Targets

Since the formation of the Ministry, there has been much consideration given to the development of appropriate performance indicators and this work continues. In reviewing the current and past business and performance management plans developed at both the Ministry and regional level, we noted the following:

- Performance indicators developed for the 1998/99 planning process appeared to provide an appropriate basis for performance management in the Ministry. When the process of preparing regional operating plans was discontinued, these performance indicators appeared to have also been dropped.

  The Performance Management Plan issued in January 2000 discusses the need for performance indicators but did not identify any specific performance indicators to be adopted.

- The Performance Management Plan envisioned the development of a multi-year plan that would include a set of performance indicators. This plan, which was anticipated to be prepared in 2000, remains outstanding.

- In the documentation we reviewed, we found no indication that specific performance targets have ever been defined for performance measures. It is our conclusion that in the absence of defined targets, organizational success cannot be effectively measured.

As our work was focused on the capabilities of the management system, we looked for performance indicators that were related to organizational capability. We identified the following performance indicators that should be considered for implementation:

- **Workload metrics**—the Ministry's data warehouse provides extensive information about the number of cases being managed, but we did not identify any tracking of workload per worker. Workload management has been identified by staff and service providers as a critical issue within the Ministry. Assigning excessive workload to staff is seen as problematic and adds significant stress on the system's effectiveness. There is significant literature available both to practitioners and the public related to workload capacity in Canada and other countries, which support the premise that the capacity to achieve positive outcomes is directly related to the ability and capacity to perform within an established system. Many jurisdictions, find that regular reporting on the system's (workload) capacity both internally and externally, is a positive action in communicating information to key stakeholders. Given the importance of workload management, it should be mandatory for workload information to be available at a Ministry, region, office and individual worker basis.

- **Resource inventory**—another critical concern for the North Region is having access to foster care and other residential resources to ensure that timely and appropriate placements of children-in-care can occur. Reports of children having to be temporarily sheltered in motels reflect the real shortage of such resources that occurs from time-to-time. Regional management is currently able to produce information on the extent of contracted resources, but does not have effective tracking systems for identifying the utilization of these resources. We feel that an important measure of management effectiveness in recruiting and developing these resources would be the extent of available inventory. Currently, staff indicate that they don't need a formal tracking system as almost all resources are fully utilized. However, if the objective is to develop an appropriate surplus capacity, a formal tracking system would be mandatory.

  The foster parent community expressed a concern that the North Region does not fully utilize approved foster care homes. Concerns were expressed that the region begrudgingly approves some homes but will limit the actual placements due to perceptions about the appropriateness of these homes. A

system that tracks both utilization and available inventory would assist in determining whether this perception is at all valid.

- **Effective Relationships**—throughout our review process concerns were expressed about the effectiveness of relationships between staff, supervisors and managers, and relationships between staff, foster parents and other service providers. These concerns were expressed through personal anecdotes of past situations. The Ministry has an exit interview process in place that solicits input from staff leaving the organization and this process provides some useful information on the effectiveness of relationships between staff and management. No such process currently exists for staff that remain. The Teambuilding Protocol established with foster parents is designed to annually improve the relationships between social workers and foster parents, but no measurement system is in place.

Recommendation #3:

We recommend that the Ministry establish an appropriate set of performance measures that support its goals, objectives and priorities. The Ministry should demonstrate long-term commitment to these performance measures so that effective management systems and reporting mechanisms can be established. A performance target should be defined for each performance measure within the Ministry and regional performance plans. Performance measures should address both internal measures of organizational capability as well as external measures of organizational performance.

Recommendation #4:

We recommend that the North Region set clear objectives for improving the relationship with foster parents, establish appropriate performance management systems to measure progress and provide periodic stakeholder reports on actual performance.

Recommendation #5:

We recommend that the performance management system include a standard practice of surveying staff and foster parents on a regular basis to measure progress in improving the relationship.

B.4 Policy Interpretations

Throughout our review, staff expressed general support for the existing policies, procedures, practices and standards. However, some staff and service providers expressed concerns about the consistency of direction provided by managers and supervisors in the interpretation and application of those policies. Concerns were also expressed about the lack of a means for organizing and accessing current policies.

It is our understanding that policy interpretations are often addressed verbally between staff and their supervisors and that different supervisors provide different interpretations and direction.

Recommendation #6:

We recommend that the North Region address the issue of consistent policy interpretations. We also recommend that the North Region consider the development of an Intranet site that contains a section on policy interpretations for application in the north. Policy interpretations should be subject to review and approval procedures prior to being added to the site.

C. Organizational Commitment

C.1   Shared Values and Working Environment

While the Ministry has defined a clear set of principles and values, our review has found significant gaps between those principles and values and actual performance. This finding was based primarily upon anecdotal information presented which did not allow us to determine the actual extent of the problem. Our focus, however, was not to attempt to validate the concerns raised, but to question how the management system is structured to deal with such problems when they arise. It is our overall conclusion that the current management system does not effectively ensure services are delivered consistently with the Ministry's stated principles and values.

Throughout our review we heard concerns about clients, staff and service providers being treated without appropriate dignity and respect. We heard about fear and intimidation in the system. We heard the work environment in some offices described as "toxic" and "poisoned". We heard about inappropriate gossiping, rumour mongering, racial discrimination, favoritism and harassment. We heard that some staff, foster parents and other service providers are reluctant to raise concerns about the service delivery systems and decisions taken because of the fear of retribution. As these concerns were widespread and recurring, we must conclude that the problems are real at some level.

There are numerous measures that the Ministry and the North Region can take to strengthen their shared values and to improve the working environment:

- an accountability framework could be applied to improving the work environment. As in the Teambuilding Agreement with the foster parents, clear objectives and outcomes should be defined. Those objectives and outcomes should be supported by a performance management system and periodic reporting to the stakeholders;

- the Quality Assurance function in the North Region could be clearly segregated from program operations (this is consistent with the approved organization structure but the position was temporarily filled by staff with line responsibilities). Staff and service providers could be provided with safe access to the Quality Assurance function to express any concerns about processes and decisions taken;

- feedback mechanisms could be established that allow staff to provide upward appraisals on their supervisors and managers;

- feedback mechanisms could be established that allow foster parents and other service providers to provide appraisals of the Ministry's processes and staff they come into contact with;

- the BC Employee and Family Assistance Program could be strengthened to recognize the high-stress environment in which many of the Ministry's employees work. The program currently provides employees up to 6 counseling sessions per year as defined in the BCGEU Master Collective Agreement, and also provides each family member up to 6 sessions per year. Some staff expressed a need for increased access to counseling services beyond that available to any government employee;

- a Communications Officer could be established in the North Region to develop strategies to improve relationships with service providers, professionally respond to concerns raised in the media forum and promote the achievements and contributions of the North Region to local communities; and,

- the Ministry's Mentorship Program could be strengthened in the North Region to ensure that managers, supervisors and staff working in remote communities have the ability to consult and confide in people with past experience in the north. We understand that a pilot project is underway to provide supervision and mentorship via video-conference in northern communities. While the Ministry has a program, we saw little evidence of its use in the North Region.

There are many possible measures that can be implemented to ensure services are delivered consistent with the Ministry's principles and values and to ensure an appropriate working environment for staff, clients and service providers. The first step is to acknowledge that serious problems exist and that solving them will require continuous effort and attention. A second step is to understand that an effective process of continuous improvement is a positive attribute for an organization rather than a negative reflection of past efforts.

Recommendation #7:

We recommend that the North Region, working with the Ministry, set as a goal and priority the strengthening of shared values and the improvement of the work environment. This goal should be supported by effective implementation measures and an accountability framework that will support improvements.

C.2 Performance Appraisals and Development Plans

Our review identified a number of significant concerns related to the skills, training and performance of Ministry employees. These concerns included:

- supervisors and managers are often promoted without the necessary skills to adequately perform their important functions;

- training provided is either not adequate or specific enough to address the skill gaps of staff, supervisors and managers;

- the strengths and weaknesses of staff are not identified and documented in human resource files;

- appraisals are not routinely performed for all staff and, when they are performed, they are too "checklist-driven" to be effective; and,

- development and training plans for staff are not routinely prepared to address the skills deficiency or performance gaps of staff.

Clearly, a number of participants in the review process expect our review to identify specific staff that are perceived to have skill and performance gaps and to recommend disciplinary actions or dismissal against these individuals. This expectation is not consistent with our terms of reference and, at best, would not result in the fundamental level of change that is required. It is our conclusion that it is the responsibility of the management system to address these personnel issues and that the current system is not adequately designed or resourced to address this responsibility. We also conclude that any evaluation of individual performance must be performed in a context that understands and acknowledges the system's underlying vulnerabilities.

Human resource policies, procedures and practices are developed at the Ministry level and generally flow from government-wide policy. Adherence to these policies may not ensure successful performance in the North Region. It is our conclusion that the North Region has a significant morale problem that requires localized management solutions.

Recommendation #8:

We recommend that the North Region, with the support of the Ministry, establish a more formal personnel performance management system that includes regular performance appraisals (including upward and peer reviews) and development plans. The system should effectively address skill and performance deficiencies and career goals.

C.3 Authority, Responsibility and Accountability

Our review encountered several concerns with the assignment of authority, responsibility and accountability. Some front-line workers and supervisors expressed concerns about an apparent imbalance between their responsibility and accountability for direct service to their clients and the actual authority provided within the current management system. Staff and service providers felt that some decisions that should be made in the field must be referred back to supervisors and managers before the client needs can be met. Some of these decisions are of a practice nature and some are of a financial nature.

One specific issue relates to the financial authorities delegated to social workers and supervisors. Social workers are responsible for working with foster parents in supporting the needs of the children-in-care. The spending authority provided to social workers for incidental items is $25 and this often prohibits them from making timely decisions with respect to the needs of children-in-care. In addition, social workers must then fill out request forms which must be authorized by their supervisor (who themselves only have a $100 spending limit for incidental items) or by their manager who is typically located in another office. For remote offices, this process further delays responding to the needs of the children.

Recommendation #9:

We recommend that the Ministry review the spending authority limits delegated to supervisors and front-line staff to ensure there is an appropriate balance between their authority, responsibility and accountability.

D. Organizational Capacity

D.1 Ministry Structure

In assessing the effectiveness of the management structure in the North Region, it quickly became apparent that this assessment could not be conducted in isolation. The current management structure of regional operations in the Ministry appears to be highly centralized. The organization's mandate, performance plans, budgets and policies and procedures are all developed centrally and passed to regions.

In this structure, it is difficult to determine the specific accountabilities of management within the North Region. In essence, the North Region is provided a set of resources, a set of mandated programs and a set of operating rules. The primary expectations from regional management is to effectively manage their resources and to comply with the centralized rules. Success or failure is often equated to compliance or non-compliance with the rules provided.

The initial organization of the Ministry in 1997 was much more de-centralized than the current management model. The Ministry acknowledged that its formation was based, in part, upon the recommendations contained in the *Gove Inquiry into Child Protection*. Judge Gove recommended (see Appendix E) a decentralized model for the new Ministry, including that:

- The province should devolve to communities the responsibilities for ensuring that a full spectrum of child welfare services are delivered in accordance with province-wide practice standards.

- The province should devolve to communities the responsibility for the day-to-day management of child welfare services.

- The province should establish approximately 20 Regional Child Welfare Boards, to govern and manage the Children's Centers.

The initial structure of the Ministry established 20 Regional Operating Agencies managed by a Regional Operating Officer reporting directly to the Deputy Minister. In this model, responsibility was not devolved to the local communities to the extent recommended by Judge Gove. In 1999, a change in direction occurred in the Ministry and the decentralized model was replaced with the current centralized model. The three northern regions (North West, Peace Liard and Northern Interior) were also consolidated into a single entity, now with a huge geographic service area.

It is our conclusion that the current centralized management model contributes to the problems faced in the North Region and that consideration needs to be given to returning to a more decentralized model. The problems identified include the following:

- the authority provided to the regional management team is not well aligned with their responsibility and accountability;

- there is limited flexibility for the North Region to develop unique management approaches and service delivery models that address the specific challenges of the north. One example is the inability of the North Region to develop its own recruiting program that can effectively address the recruitment challenges faced by many organizations in the north;

- the centralized management model is perceived to be a contributing factor to the over-politicization of the child protection system; and,

- the centralized management model is perceived to be unable to acknowledge the limitations and imperfections of the system. This can contribute to the perception that when the system fails, fault must be assigned to individual employees and service providers. This perception contributes to fear of retribution within the work environment.

It was not within our terms of reference to address the management model of the Ministry, nor was there sufficient time available for us to delve into the comparative strengths of a centralized versus decentralized management model. However, it is our conclusion that the management of the North Region cannot be assessed in isolation from this model and that the Ministry should consider the benefits associated with a devolution of authority to regions.

Recommendation #10:

We recommend that the Ministry review its management model to determine whether devolution of authority to regions could contribute to increased responsiveness and effectiveness of service delivery at a community level.

D.2   Funding Pressures

Our review encountered numerous indications that the underlying funding provided to the Ministry, and specifically to the North Region, is a contributing factor to the performance of the North Region. Since its inception, the funding of the Ministry has grown modestly and a portion of the increases have gone to increased input costs without significantly increasing organizational capacity.

The 2000/01 budget for the Ministry did provide for a planned increase in staffing levels, with a strong focus on increasing the number of front-line social workers, but the realization of this increase may be negatively impacted by recruitment problems.

For several years, the North Region has operated with a shortage of experienced child protection staff and a shortage of foster care and residential resources. Short-term solutions to these problems (such as bringing in volunteer workers from other regions and housing children-in-care in motels) alleviate some of the stress on the system, but at a higher cost than more appropriate longer-term solutions. As a result, the North Region faces both a resource shortage and budgetary overruns.

The Ministry has a huge service mandate and is greatly challenged to make the best use of its resources to address this mandate. It is our conclusion that the North Region does not know how much financial resources are needed to be fully successful and will not know until they complete a regional performance plan.

We anticipate that the funding pressure will continue to be an operating reality and this fact must also be considered contextually in assessing the management performance of any region.

Recommendation #11:

We recommend that the Ministry ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the service responsibilities of the North Region and the resources provided.

D.3   Role of Foster Parents

One of the reasons for this review was to seek opportunities to improve relationships with service providers and community stakeholders. Our review has found that the relationship between the Ministry and foster parents is highly strained and the most in need of improvement. Some foster parents have expressed concerns about their lack of authority, the failure of social workers to involve them in the care plans for children in their care, and about the behaviour and attitudes of Ministry staff in the North Region.

It is our observation that the child welfare system puts foster parents and social workers in a relationship that, by its very nature, involves intimidation and fear of retribution. Social workers are the legal guardian for children-in-care, while foster parents are service providers. In this environment, social workers have the authority and share with foster parents the responsibility and accountability for the care provided. In many cases, foster parents bond with the children in their care and develop parent-child relationships. However, they do not have the accompanying authority over the child that a natural parent has. The possibility that the child may be moved from the foster home is inherently intimidating to a foster parent, as it threatens the bond that has been developed with the child, as well as having financial implications for the foster parent as a service provider.

Social workers are responsible for the safety and well-being of the children-in-care and must ensure the ongoing appropriateness of the foster care environment. If the social worker has any concerns, they must be investigated and resolved. In these situations, where the social worker is performing an appropriate function, foster parents will be intimidated and fear the possibility that the child may be moved.

From the input we received from foster parents, we must accept that, on occasion, some social workers use their authority to inappropriately threaten actions which intimidate foster parents. In these situations, it is important that management processes are in place to identify and correct these inappropriate behaviours. However, it is important to understand that the fear and intimidation in the relationship is inherent in the legal definition of the roles of social workers and foster parents. It was not within our terms of reference to comment on the appropriate roles for foster parents.

D.4   Management of the North Region

The effective management of the North Region involves a number of components, each of which affect the organization's overall performance.   Shortages of experienced, competent staff, particularly in the child protection programs, has been cited by staff, management and stakeholders as the primary reason for the problems experienced in the North Region.

While we are sympathetic to this argument, and recognize the underlying reality of the recruitment and retention issue, we must also not lose sight that staffing is only one component affecting the overall success of the organization.

In his 1996/97 Annual Report, the BC Children's Commissioner identified the supports that need to be in place for effective child protection work.   The Commissioner stated that "it is necessary for competent practitioners to have time to plan and deliver services with the support of competent leaders and adequate resources."   The Commissioner identified the following elements that must be considered when assessing the capacity of child protection workers to protect children include:

- the knowledge, skills and abilities they bring to child protection work;

- a common understanding of MCF vision and its mandate to protect children as expressed in legislation and policy;

- their access to skilled supervisors who will monitor the quality and quantity of work each staff member carries;

- their access to ongoing education and training opportunities;

- the adequacy of resources and clear management direction concerning prioritizing their work (few enterprises have all the resources they would like);

- administrative and logistical supports such as effective case management and tracking systems, case aide supports, cell phones, etc.;

- efficiencies in court and review systems; and,

- effective management planning, for example to enable accurate projection of the number and type of foster homes required.

Ultimately, effective management must overcome all obstacles that stand in the way of success, including fundamental issues such as staff recruitment and retention. For the North Region to be more successful, we believe that it needs to ensure the following:

- **Leadership**—Management must recognize and acknowledge its role as an agent of change. It is management's role to lead the drive for improvement. To do this, management must be open to receiving performance feedback from staff and external stakeholders. Our review found management in the North Region to be overly supportive of the status quo and did not appear to acknowledge the severity of the challenges it is facing.

- **Resources**—adequate resources must be available within the communities served. The service delivery model requires an effective partnership between the Ministry and contracted service providers. There needs to be management focus on ensuring an adequate supply of qualified resources are in place and removing any barriers that stand in the way of this being achieved;

- **Size of the Region**—the management model of the North Region must take into consideration the large geographic scope of the region. The North Region covers over half the land mass of the province and provides services in many remote communities. We understand that the size of the region presents numerous challenges for the region and presents management with an ongoing challenge. Most of the regional management team are located in Prince George, with a few managers in Terrace, Dawson Creek and Fort Nelson. Staff and service providers expressed concerns with the lack of manager presence in more remote offices. The decision to consolidate the three northern regions into a single region in 1999 has had some obvious impacts but we understand that there were also perceived problems with the three region model as well. To address the concern of manager presence in remote offices, the North Region could consider relocating some managers and/or increasing the delegation of authority to district supervisors and team leaders.

- **Management Skills**—we have heard a number of concerns about the inadequate skills of some members of the management team. Without attempting to validate these concerns specifically, we reviewed the management systems that should address and resolve these skill deficiencies. We found that the human resource practices in the North Region are not sufficiently strong to ensure that skill deficiencies are identified and that development and training plans are put in place to resolve these deficiencies.

It is not unusual in many organizations for employees to be promoted into roles where they do not possess all the skills required. In these situations, the organization and the employee must work together to close the gaps and move forward. It is not clear from our review, that the current human resource practices in the North Region have this ability.

- **Human Resource Responsibilities**—our review has found that all human resource and payroll responsibilities are not consolidated within the Personnel department in the North Region. For example, the critical area of Recruitment and Retention has been assigned to a manager outside the Personnel department (currently a vacant position). As well, headquarters plays a lead role in the development of the Ministry's recruitment process. As recruitment and retention issues in the North Region are critical components to improving service delivery, we feel that consideration should be given to consolidating responsibilities within the region's Personnel department.

- **Unionization of supervisors**—within the North Region, we identified three categories of personnel: regional managers (exempt); supervisors/team leaders (unionized); and, front-line workers (unionized). Supervisors/team leaders and front-line workers are all members of the same union.

  Supervisors/team leaders are often the most senior Ministry person in offices in the North Region and provide a degree of management control and direction. Supervisors may also become involved in disciplinary actions against front-line workers. Depending on who we spoke to during our review, there is variation in whether supervisors/team leaders are seen to be part of the management team.

  It was not in our terms of reference to evaluate the unionization of Ministry employees. However, we note that the fact that many of those perceived as being part of the "management team" are union members appears to cause some dysfunction in the management system.

Administrative support and paper burden—social workers consistently raised a concern about the extent of paper work imposed upon them by the Ministry's standards and practices. Staff indicated that this is one of the reasons why they are unable to spend as much time as they need working with clients and foster parents. The region reported that some progress has been made in moving some of this paper burden away from social workers to administrative staff. However, administrative resources are also limited and their ability to assume more responsibility is constrained. It is our conclusion that there is a need to review the paper burden on social workers and to look at ways to reduce this paper burden, including increasing the number of administrative workers.

Recommendation #12:

We recommend that the Ministry ensure that the regional management team possesses the leadership skills necessary to champion continuous improvement and support open and inclusive processes that engage staff, managers, service providers and other stakeholders in the change process.

Recommendation #13:

We recommend that the Ministry support the regional management team in its change initiatives and encourage stability and consistency in the operation of the North Region.

Recommendation #14:

We recommend that the Contracts and Resource Unit be tasked with quantifying and increasing the available inventory of foster care and residential resources and that an accountability framework be established in support of this objective.

Recommendation #15:

We recommend that the North Region consider opportunities for increasing manager presence in remote areas of the region or, alternatively, consider ways of increasing the delegation of management responsibilities.

Recommendation #16:

We recommend that the RED be assigned responsibility for assessing the skills of the management team with an objective of identifying and addressing any deficiencies in skills or performance.

Recommendation #17:

We recommend that the North Region, with the support of the Ministry, consolidate all human resources activities in the region within the Personnel department.

Recommendation #18:

We recommend that the North Region, with the support of the Ministry, review the extent of paper burden on its front-line workers and consider ways in which this burden can be reduced or transferred to administrative staff.

D.5   Recruitment and Retention

To be successful, the North Region must be an attractive career choice where employees, team leaders and managers are seen to operate in a supportive and proactive team environment and enjoy non-confrontational working relationships with service providers. Our review has concluded that there is a significant gap between this vision and the current reality. Retaining staff and enhancing recruitment initiatives will be critical for the North Region in the coming years. The current negative public image of the Ministry in the North Region needs to be addressed as it is affecting the North Region's ability to recruit and retain employees.

To address the region's recruitment and retention needs, we make the following recommendations:

Recommendation #19:

We recommend that the Ministry establish a North Region communications liaison who would be responsible for improving relationships with service providers, educating the public on the workings of the Ministry and respond, within the bounds of confidentiality restraints, to media reports related to the North Region.

While there is an office orientation process currently in place, we are told that it is not always consistently followed and does not address helping the new employee to integrate into the community.

Recommendation #20:

We recommend that the North Region consistently apply a comprehensive orientation process to assist in orientating new employees into their position and the community.

Recommendation #21:

We recommend that the North Region provide for team building retreats where issues raised in team meetings can be further discussed and consistent plans of delivery can be developed.

Recommendation #22:

We recommend that management and team leaders in the North Region make it part of their supervisory approach to provide visible and vocal recognition to those who are consistently performing their duties well and supportively deal with employees whose performance requires improvement.

Some staff and service providers expressed a concern that social workers and/or child protection workers are not required to have membership in any professional regulatory body.

Recommendation #23:

We recommend that the Ministry consider the merit of having its social workers and child protection workers join a professional association which could provide them with additional support, professional development opportunities and increased accountability.

The North Region currently has a number of vacant team leader positions which they should post and panel for as soon as possible.

Recommendation #24:

We recommend that once team leaders are in place, they should be provided with the ability to mentor and provide support to team members rather than assuming a caseload.

Employee workloads must be established and maintained at a manageable level with new recruits being gradually mentored into the system. Recommendations specifically related to this include:

Recommendation #25:

We recommend that the Ministry strengthen the support for the formalized mentoring system in the North Region to assist in transitioning new recruits into full case loads, particularly in the area of child protection.

Recommendation #26:

We recommend that the Ministry consider a system of competency-based hiring where those with the skills and aptitude to be competent child protection workers are not excluded from the hiring process because they do not have a prerequisite degree.

A stronger recruiting focus needs to be on individuals that have ties to the community or area in which they are working. Recommendations specifically related to this include:

Recommendation #27:

We recommend that the pre-employment training requirement for child protection be eliminated by the Ministry in order to improve the recruiting ability of the North Region (the Ministry announced on February 6, 2001 that this requirement was being discontinued).

The position of recruitment, retention and training manager is currently vacant in the North Region. This position should be filled as soon as possible in order for the North Region to develop a formalized recruitment and retention strategy that will provide focused action on addressing recommendations contained herein.

Recommendation #28:

We recommend that the Recruitment and Retention manager develop strategies which respond to issues raised during exit interviews of former employees.

Recommendation #29:

We recommend that the Ministry support the expansion of the number of seats currently available in the School of Social Work at the University of Northern British Columbia to address the demand for social workers in the north.

Recommendation #30:

We recommend that the Ministry support the expansion of the regional Bachelor of Social Work program being offered at various locations throughout the north so as to accommodate more students.

Recommendation #31:

We recommend that the North Region increase its ability to take on more practicum students. Those interested in practicum's in remote locations of the North Region must be encouraged by having the North Region pay for a portion of their expenses incurred as a result of relocating for their practicum.

Recommendation #32:

We recommend that the Ministry increase its efforts to provide scholarships and bursaries to those interested in pursuing a career in child protection in the north.

There should be additional ongoing administrative support provided for social workers as this will allow them to spend more time on addressing the needs of children and not on administrative work. Recommendations specifically related to this include:

Recommendation #33:

We recommend that the North Region assign additional permanent team assistants who are dedicated to providing administrative support to specific teams. In offices where teams are of a small size, the team assistant would be shared.

Rather than focusing on, and rewarding, short-term commitments from employees encourage long-term commitments. Recommendations specifically related to this include:

Recommendation #34:

We recommend that the Ministry consider a program whereby new recruits are eligible to have a portion of their student loans forgiven if they agree to commit to a remote northern location for a period of at least four years.

Recommendation #35:

We recommend that the Ministry consider provision of early retirement incentives for those individuals having committed a long term of service in the North Region.

Training and career development should be provided on a relevant and proactive basis. Recommendations specifically related to this include:

See Recommendation #8.

While we found that a significant amount of training has been provided to staff in the North Region, some staff expressed concerns with the appropriateness of and access to this training.

Recommendation #36:

We recommend that the North Region ensure that employees receive regular training and that sufficient coverage is provided for those employees away on training.

Recommendation #37:

We recommend that the Ministry allow the North Region to have high input into the development and local delivery of training that is relevant to specific areas of the North Region. In order to ensure that the training is relevant, employee input into training requirements should be considered and addressed once core Ministry training requirements are met.

Employees should be hired and compensated based on their skills and the demand for those skills. Recommendations specifically related to this include:

Recommendation #38:

We recommend that the Ministry evaluate and consider adjusting the compensation currently received by its employees in the North Region through comparison to what other jurisdictions are paying similarly skilled employees.

Recommendation #39:

We recommend that the Ministry consider making housing facilities available to employees located in remote areas where access to accommodation is limited.

The BCGEU Master Collective Agreement provides for standby payments to employees where they are required to stand by to be called for duty under conditions which restrict their normal off-duty activities.

In the North Region, the Ministry and the BCGEU agreed upon the communities where employees would be on standby. In other communities in the north, employees are on a call-out list instead of a stand-by system due to the infrequency of the calls. During our review, some staff expressed concern with the coverage provided by the current agreements.

> **Recommendation #40:**
>
> **We recommend that the Ministry review the continuing appropriateness of the current standby agreements for staff in the North Region.**

> **Recommendation #41:**
>
> **We recommend that the Ministry and North Region continue with the northern recruitment and retention incentives currently in place and consider changes to the following areas:**
>
> - **assess the adequacy of the annual isolation allowances provided in some of the more remote areas of the North Region to ensure they compensate the employees for the increased cost of living in those locations; and,**
>
> - **assess whether existing annual vacation subsidies of $200 to $400 are sufficient to encourage employees and their dependants to locate in highly remote areas.**

We recognize that some of our recommendations concerning recruitment and retention are addressed within the collective agreement and, as such, can only be changed through the collective bargaining process.

D.6   Communication Processes

Our review found a number of areas where communication processes in the region could be strengthened, including the following:

- At the outset of our review, we requested the Regional Executive Director (RED) to circulate an email to all staff in the region, informing them of the review, its terms of reference, and inviting all staff to participate in the process. Staff were to be given information that would allow them to directly contact the review team. The RED prepared the message to staff and distributed it to managers, asking that they forward the note on to their teams. In distributing the note to their teams, we noted that some managers added additional perspective to the communication, which in some cases changes the message. It was our conclusion that this distribution process was followed because a single distribution list for all regional staff did not exist.

During our review, we enquired about communication processes that are used to provide management direction to staff. We were informed that a common communication vehicle in the region is team meetings. Through these team meetings, managers and supervisors can provide direction and staff can raise issues. We would conclude that the practice of regular team meetings as a means of communication is very appropriate. However, many staff expressed concerns about the inconsistency of communications that can result from informal, oral communications. We did not note the existence of formal communication processes in the region such as periodic staff newsletters or an Intranet site. It is our conclusion that the North Region should ensure that both formal and informal communication processes exist to ensure that important communications are consistently presented to all staff.

- During our review, we were informed that the North Region has provided some direction to its staff where variances from standard Ministry practice has been approved. We understand that these variances have resulted from workload strategies that attempt to provide practical means for operating with high staff shortages. Staff and service providers affected by these regional decisions indicated that communication of the variances are not consistently performed.

Recommendation #42:

We recommend that the North Region review all its communication processes to ensure they are effectively aligned to support shared values and a common understanding of regional policy and practice direction. The establishment of a North Region Intranet or Extranet site should be considered as a possible forum for this type of communication.

We were also asked as part of our terms of reference to consider the possibility of establishing a community advisory council as a means of enhancing communications with community stakeholders. We explored this concept with staff, service providers and other stakeholders throughout our review. We received the following feedback:

- Some stakeholders indicated that they have provided significant input to the Ministry in the past and that their input was not acted upon.

- Many participants expressed concerns about the composition, funding and operation of a regional community advisory council. Participants were concerned about how the diverse interests of all communities in the north, covering all of the Ministry's program areas, could be reflected in a regional advisory council. Participants were not enthusiastic about committing their time or resources to a process that would be, at best, only advisory in nature.

- There are already a number of "building block" and "teambuilding" processes underway in the North Region that have the support and involvement of community stakeholders. Participants expressed an interest in strengthening these existing relationships as compared to the development of a regional community advisory council.

- Where support for community advisory councils was expressed, the following characteristics were identified:

  o advisory councils should be established at a community level, not at the regional level;

  o funding for the advisory councils must come from a body independent of the Ministry so that there can be no fear of funding being withheld if the Ministry does not like the advice of the council;

  o Ministry staff must be supported to participate in the advisory councils (and other collaborative processes);

  o Advice provided must be seriously considered and acted upon by the Ministry; and,

  o Participants would prefer a process that allows them to contribute to Ministry decisions, not just to provide advice.

It is our conclusion that there is limited interest in establishing a region-wide, community advisory council in the North Region. Participants expressed reluctance to participate in another advisory process that will not lead to real change. There is, however, strong support for local teambuilding processes where there is a shared context and domain of common interest. The teambuilding protocol established with foster parents associations is seen as a model that can be followed in building stronger relationships at the local level.

Recommendation #43:

Based upon the input received from participants in the review process, we do not recommend the establishment of a community advisory council at this time. We do recommend that the North Region support the continuing development of teambuilding relationships with individual communities and stakeholder groups.

D.7 Relationship between inputs and outputs

A component of an effective management system is having a solid understanding between inputs and outputs.

As indicated in Section II.C.6, we have some concerns about the Ministry's ability to establish an appropriate relationship between the inputs provided and the outputs expected. Funding of the North Region declined in the 2000/01 fiscal year and the region was asked to absorb a 2% salary increase for staff without any reduction in service or staff layoffs. Direction of this nature may cause some regional managers to wonder if the Ministry has a realistic understanding of the impact that funding decisions have on outputs and outcomes.

See Recommendation #11.

E. Management Accountability

E.1 Environmental Scan

In developing its performance plans, the Ministry conducts an environmental scan of internal and external factors that affect the demand for services and the resource requirement. While we understand that this environmental scan is linked to the setting of the Ministry's performance plan, we did not identify a similar process used in establishing the budget for the North Region.

Throughout our review, we were advised of the unique nature of the north and the specific challenges it faces. Clearly the demographics of the North Region are different than provincial averages and some consideration of these differences is warranted in developing performance plans.

Recommendation #44:

We recommend that the Ministry's planning process provide for an environment scan of the North Region and that this information be a component in the development of plans and budgets for the North Region.

E.2 Performance Monitoring

As noted in earlier sections, we did not find any clear performance measures or performance targets that would allow the North Region to evaluate its performance. In the absence of performance measures and targets, there is no need for performance monitoring. The North Region is required to manage its inputs (dollars and FTEs) and some processes are in place in this regard. However, we found little evidence of any other performance monitoring or reporting in place within the North Region.

Recommendation #45:

In connection with our other recommendations on the setting of regional goals and objectives, and the identification of performance measures and targets, we recommend that the North Region establish appropriate performance management and reporting systems. In addition, we recommend that the North Region produce an annual Accountability Report to its stakeholders, that addresses its accomplishments and its areas for improvement.

E.3 Complaints Process

During our review, we assessed the effectiveness of the region's complaint process. A flowchart of the Ministry's complaint process is provided in Appendix F. Our assessment identified the following concerns:

- responsibility for the complaints process has been assigned to three different regional managers in the past 18 months;

- the person assigned responsibility for the complaints process has been a member of the line management structure;

- the process requires complaints to be acknowledged and responded to within 30 days. From a small sample of 10 complaints, we found that on average it took 17 days to acknowledge the complaint and 127 days to respond to the complaint;

- our understanding of the complaint process is that the Complaint Manager is supposed to conduct an investigation and respond to the complainant. In the sample of complaints reviewed, we found that all complaints were assigned by the Complaint Manager to a manager in the part of the organization against whom the complaint was laid. In these cases, it is possible that the investigation is being conducted by a person involved in the complaint. In most cases sampled, the response to the complainant came from the manager assigned, not the Complaints Manager;

- in some cases, the response to the complaint was defensive and merely a justification of the actions taken;

- from our review, it did not appear that complainants were routinely contacted to clarify their complaint and to gather additional information;

- we found no indications that the complaint process attempts to determine the complainant's satisfaction with the process or outcome;

- we found no indication that the complaint process tracks how many complainant's pursue their complaint to an independent agency. We understand that the Complaint Tracking System has the capability to track

whether an external agency becomes involved but we did not find that this information is presently available to the public; and,

- the complaint process appears to treat a response as a successful outcome to the complaint. The Ministry provides information in its Annual Report on the results of the complaint process. The information provided appears to focus more on quantitative outputs rather than qualitative outcomes.

Many participants in the review process expressed dissatisfaction with the North Region's ability to properly respond to and resolve complaints through informal processes, the formal complaints process or the issues resolution protocol process with foster parents. From the review work performed, it is our conclusion that the complaint process in the North Region is not adequately designed or resourced to contribute to more effective relationships with clients, foster parents and other stakeholders. We believe that the complaint process can be an effective tool for demonstrating responsiveness to concerns, for strengthening systems and for improving relationships with community stakeholders.

We also observed a number of situations where complainants circumvented the regional complaints process, going directly to headquarters staff. In a number of instances, investigations were launched directly by headquarters. In reviewing the Ministry's defined complaint process, we did not identify any defined role for headquarters staff in the formal complaint process. By responding to complaints that have not gone through the regional complaints process, headquarters is perceived by some to be undermining the process.

Recommendation #46:

We recommend that the complaint process in the North Region be improved as follows:

- **the tracking of formal complaints and foster parent protocols be consolidated;**

- **the position of Complaints Manager be assigned to a manager without line authority, reporting directly to the RED;**

- **all complaints be acknowledged on a timely basis (a performance target should be set, monitored and reported upon);**

- **all investigations be conducted by the Complaints Manager;**

- **all investigations begin by contacting the complainant to clarify (and perhaps narrow the scope) the complaint and gather additional information;**

- **all responses to complaints be issued by the Complaints Manager;**

- **the satisfaction of the complainant with the process, the timeliness and the response be surveyed routinely (a survey form should be attached to all responses, to be sent to an appropriate person in headquarters).**

Recommendation #47:

We recommend that the Ministry address the appropriate role for headquarters staff in responding to complaints that have not gone through the regional complaints process.

Recommendation #48:

We recommend that the issue resolution protocol with foster parents be aligned with the North Region's complaint process and that these processes be strengthened to ensure the processes are fair and responsive. Linkages to the personnel performance system should be established.

E.4 Information

Information and information systems must be available and properly aligned with the Ministry's accountability framework to support effective management. As the Ministry's performance management system has been highly dynamic since the creation of the Ministry, we would anticipate that not all information needs can easily be met. To be useful, information must be provided to staff, managers and stakeholders. Throughout our review, we were concerned that much of the performance information on the North Region was negative and anecdotal in nature. It is our conclusion that the North Region must have at its disposal real information about its performance as a counter to the steady stream of anecdotes.

Recommendation #49:

We recommend that the North Region, working with the Ministry, establish effective information systems to support its accountability frameworks.

E.5 Follow-up

Many staff and stakeholders informed us that a key measure for them of the region's performance is follow-up. When a Ministry employee makes a commitment to a client, a foster parent, a service provider, or any other stakeholder, they create an expectation that can be easily monitored by that stakeholder. A recurring theme in our focus sessions was that the region does not follow through on its commitments. While the response will not always satisfy the stakeholder, they will be even more upset if the follow-up does not occur or is not timely.

Recommendation #50:

We recommend that the North Region address the issue of follow-up and incorporate specific action plans for staff as part of the region's performance plans.

E.6 Effectiveness of Controls

Our review found sufficient control processes exist within and outside the Ministry dealing with both administrative and operational practice. In the child protection areas, routine audits and reviews are performed by the Regional Child Protection Managers, the Director of Child Protection and by the Children's Commissioner. These audits and reviews provide important feedback to the organization that can support the ongoing improvement of processes and performance.

During our review, we enquired about the processes for following-up on recommendations arising from audits and reviews. We were informed that appropriate follow-up action is taken and that audit findings are routinely shared and discussed through team meetings. We were not provided with any documented action plans or directives that flowed from the audit results.

As the real effectiveness of controls is to influence organizational learning and improve performance, the linkage between audit results and practice is important. It is our conclusion that any action plans flowing from audits and reviews should be documented and communicated to all staff.

Recommendation #51:

We recommend that the RED ensure managers in the North Region formally acknowledge the results of audits and reviews and that appropriate action plans are documented and communicated to all affected staff.

E.7 Financial Results

The North Region operates with an annual budget in excess of $133 million. Until recently, responsibility for budget management, financial monitoring and reporting, and financial forecasting resided primarily with the Regional Manager, Finance and Administration and the RED. Since September 2000, all regional managers have been receiving financial reports in their areas of responsibility. Responsibility for financial forecasting continues to reside with the Regional Manager, Finance and Administration.

The North Region is currently forecasting that is will overspend its budget for the fourth consecutive year. As the management of inputs continues to be an important expectation of the region, this performance requires improvement. We support the region's move to extend the delegation of financial responsibility to the manager

level and encourage them to continue to move forward with this initiative. Ensuring that managers receive adequate financial training and support is critical for the success of this initiative. Once regional managers have adapted to this new responsibility, we believe that the organization should continue to push down financial responsibility to the supervisory level.

Recommendation #52:

We encourage the North Region to continue in its initiative to involve regional managers in the financial management process and we recommend that, in time, this process be pushed down to the supervisory level.

V
Implementation Plan

In this section, we provide a brief outline of an implementation plan in support of the recommendations contained in the Gap Analysis. As the specific requirements of the implementation plan will depend on the Ministry's response to our recommendations and the integration of the adopted recommendations into Ministry plans, our outline has been kept to a relatively high level.

There are few quick fixes that will strengthen the management system and improve organizational effectiveness. Rather, the North Region, with the support of the Ministry, must establish effective processes that contribute to ongoing improvements in capability, performance and accountability.

Finally, a number of participants in the review process expressed doubt about the Ministry's likelihood of acting on any recommendations that might be contained in our report. This attitude is rooted in stakeholder perceptions that the Ministry has not effectively followed through on recommendations contained in past reviews. We strongly recommend to the Ministry that to overcome this perception, acceptance of any or all of our recommendations must be accompanied by a clear assignment of responsibility for implementing the recommendations and reporting on the progress of implementation. The first step is to demonstrate the willingness to change, through "good faith" actions to implement the recommendations of this report.

A. Implementation Plan

The first step in moving towards implementation of our recommendations is for the Ministry to review and respond to those recommendations. KPMG recognizes that we were not fully able, within the review timeline, to analyze the practicality and implications of all our recommendations. It will be important for the Ministry's management to consider our recommendations and identify those that will be fully or partially acted upon. As well, the Ministry will need to determine how they will effect the intended change.

The Ministry should document a formal response to our report and an action plan to implement the accepted recommendations. The action plan should lead to the development of an implementation project that is documented in a project plan.

Our implementation plan is shown in the following exhibit:

Exhibit V-I
Implementation Plan Overview
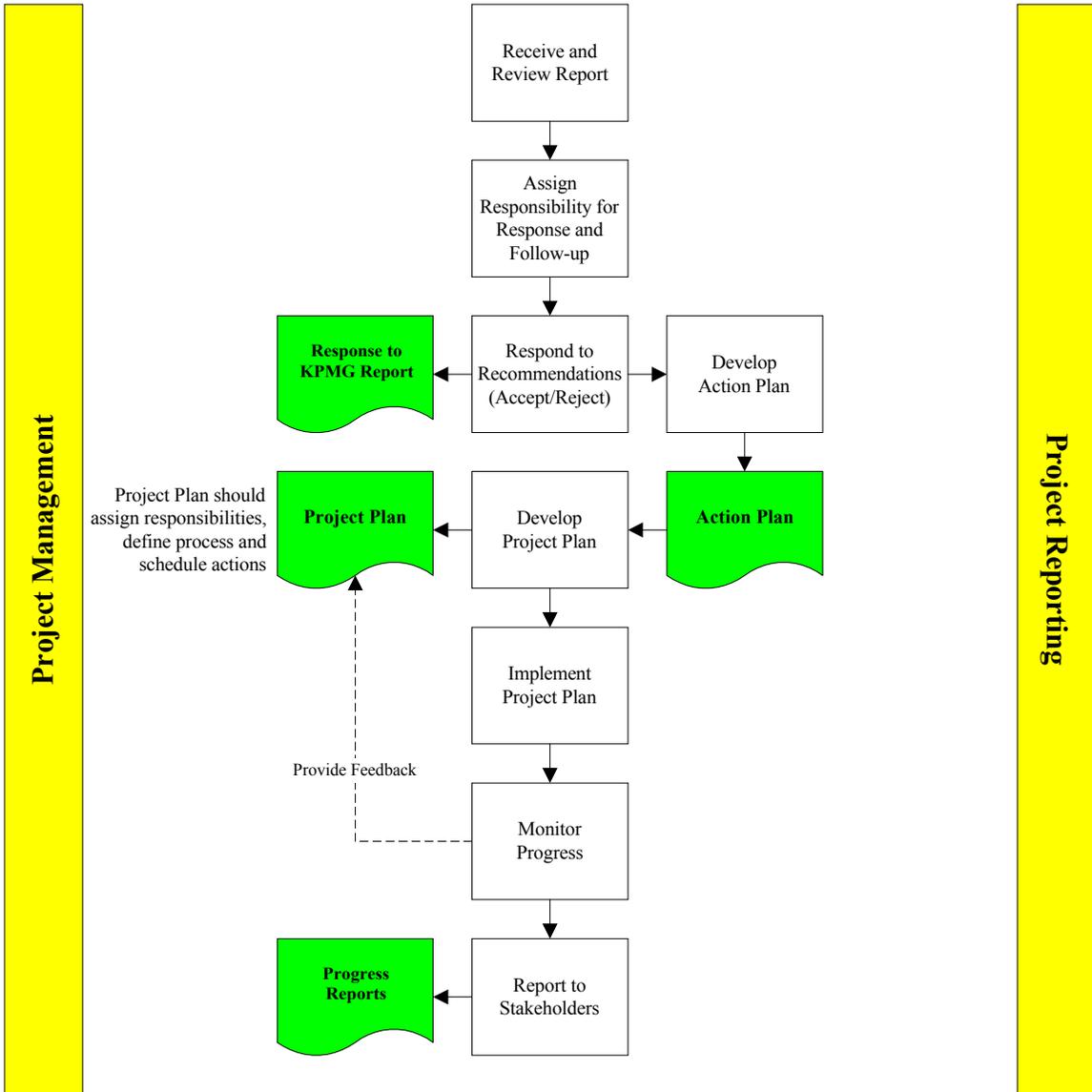
The project definition should address, at a minimum:

- Executive Sponsorship;
- Leadership (i.e., Steering Committee, Working Committee, Project Manager, Project Leads);
- Scope and objectives;
- Critical success factors;
- Risk management;
- Resources assigned;
- Schedule; and,
- Monitoring and Reporting.

Project management, monitoring, timelines and reporting processes should be clearly defined in the project plan. Project reporting will be a critical factor in determining project success. Stakeholders should receive periodic progress reports to demonstrate that progress is being made.

B. Priorities

In developing the implementation plan, consideration should be given to the comparative priority of our recommendations and the interdependencies between them. We suggest that our recommendations be addressed as follows:

- recommendations addressed to the Ministry should be addressed first, as many of these recommendations have Ministry-wide impact and need to addressed within the Ministry's overall planning processes;

- recommendations addressed to the North Region should be addressed second, ensuring they are appropriately aligned with the Ministry's overall direction; and,

- recommendations with respect to management purpose, organizational commitment, organization capability and management accountability should be addressed concurrently. While there are clearly numerous interdependencies that exist, we believe that each area can be addressed concurrently;

- recommendations with respect to recruitment and retention should receive priority as the adequacy of staffing has direct implications for performance and the quality of relationships between staff, foster parents, other service providers and other community stakeholders.

This approach to prioritizing the recommendations is shown in the following exhibit:

Exhibit V-II
Implementation Plan Overview
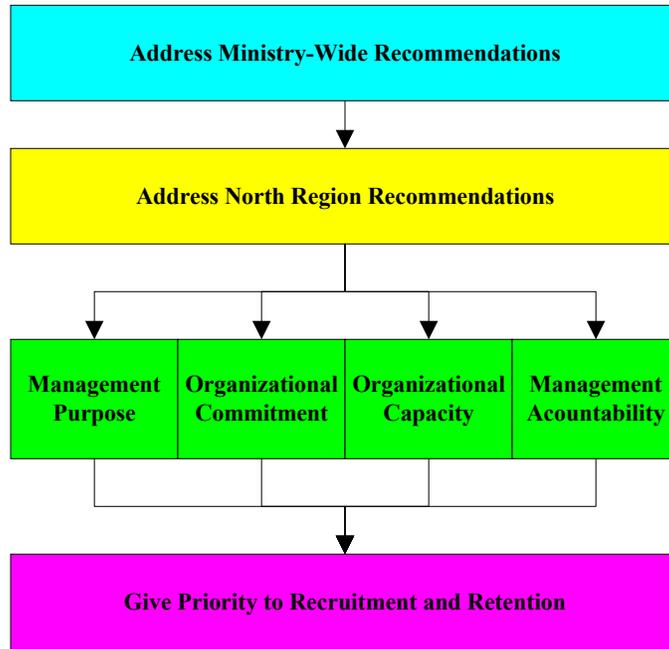
Appendix A
Ministry Vision and Priorities

A. PERFORMANCE PLAN 2000-01

The Ministry has set out a performance plan for the 2000-01 fiscal year with the following components:

A.1 Vision

Healthy children, adults and families living in secure and diverse communities.

A.2 Mission Statement

The primary purpose of the Ministry for Children and Families is reflected in the ministry's Mission Statement.

> *"The Ministry for Children and Families must ensure a child-centred, integrated approach that promotes and protects the healthy development of children and youth while recognizing their lifelong attachment to family and community. Communities and clients must be an integral part of the work of this ministry. Quality assurance, accountability and openness are fundamental to its success."*

A.3 Operating Principles/Values

The Ministry develops and delivers programs based on the following operating principles/values:

- the Ministry's responsibility to community safety and to the people we support, in particular the health, safety and well-being of children and youth, continue to be paramount

- programs and services are responsive to the individual needs of children, youth, adults and their families

- children, youth and adults and their families have the opportunity and are supported to participate in decisions that affect their lives

- culturally competent service delivery is managed at the local level

- our partners in the community play a major role in planning and delivering services

- the Ministry is accountable for the effective, efficient and economic delivery of services provided by the sector

- everyone will be treated with respect and dignity at all times

- staff, the service sector and other stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting the activities of the organization and should be fully informed about those activities and the clients it serves

- the Ministry strives to create a sector that represents the diversity of the people of British Columbia and the clients it serves

A.4   Legislation

The ministry has responsibility for the following legislation:

Adoption Act

Provides for new and permanent family ties through adoption, giving paramount consideration to the best interests of the child.

Child, Family and Community Service Act

Provides for policies, programs and services for the safety and well-being of children.

Corrections Act (limited sections only)

Youth Justice programs are intended for the protection and benefit of young persons and for the protection of the public, by assisting young persons to resolve their conflict with the law.

Human Resource Facility Act

Enables the Minister to provide a grant or other assistance to a person for the purposes of acquiring, developing or operating facilities for one or more of the following purposes:

- A residence or facility for the care of children
- A special home for the care of persons with disabilities
- An activity centre or workshop for persons with disabilities
- A special human resource facility or program designated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council

Social Worker Act

Provides for a Board of Registration for Social Workers that examines, qualifies and registers all Registered Social Workers in British Columbia.

A.5 Environmental Scan

The health and structure of the provincial economy and demographic and social changes affect the demand for the ministry's programs and services in BC.

A.6 Ministry Goals

All programming and service delivery by the Ministry is based on the following goals:

1. To promote the healthy development of children, youth, adults and families.

2. To protect children and youth from abuse, neglect, and harm.

3. To support adults with developmental disabilities to live successfully and participate in the community.

4. To ensure public safety.

5. To support the achievement of the Ministry's goals through innovative and responsive corporate programs.

For each goal, the Ministry has outlined its objectives, strategies and performance measures for outputs and outcomes.

In addition to the Ministry goals and objectives, there are "over-arching priorities and strategies" that are intended to support the goals and objectives. These priorities are listed in Section C of this Appendix.

B. Performance Management and Reporting

Part of the Ministry's 2000-01 Performance Plan is an approach for performance management and reporting. The Ministry's notes that its performance management system is continuing to be developed and implemented to improve the processes and outcomes of Ministry programs and services.

Performance management and reporting are broken down between quality assurance mechanisms and performance reporting.

Quality assurance mechanisms include:

- **standards and "Best Practices" development and maintenance** to set the requirements for organizational behaviour and service delivery. It includes management, administrative and service specific program standards.

- **ongoing monitoring and analysis** of inputs (resources), outputs, and measures of outcomes (in particular, the outcomes of persons served).

- **periodic assessment** of compliance with standards through accreditation surveys, internal and external audits or reviews.

- **periodic evaluation**, which involves a systematic assessment of the implementation, results, and/or impacts of strategies employed or under consideration by the ministry.

- **special audits** to address specific unanticipated and unusual concerns (E.g., major complaints, suspicion of illegal activities, etc.).

- **program reviews** to determine if Ministry programs and services are an appropriate fit with the Ministry's mandate, strategic objectives and priorities. There are also a number of other external bodies that contribute to the assessment of performance management of Ministry programs and services, including:

  - Children's Commissioner

  - Child, Youth and Family Advocate

  - Ombudsman

Performance reporting includes:

- **Strategic Priorities and Budget Management Plan Reporting** – The Ministry's strategic priorities and annual budget management plan outlines approaches and strategies to meet its organizational objectives within the resources provided to it by the legislature.

- **Framework For Reporting on Population Outcomes (Measuring our Success publication)** – This publication measures the success of the Ministry's service delivery goals.

- **Contract Reform and Performance Management** – A performance management approach to the Ministry's contracting practices is _currently being implemented_ through a multi-year plan for Contract Reform.

- **Complaints Tracking** – This is a formal complaints resolution process that tracks and monitors complaints.

C. Strategic Ministry Priorities

One of the key recommendations out of the D.E. Allen Review of Contract and Program Restructuring (CPR) was the need to develop an effective management regime and to have clear and well-understood strategic priorities. In July 1998, in response to this recommendation, the Ministry Executive began work on developing a framework for managing the Ministry's priorities and developing project plans for each priority.

This process involved compiling the lists of projects and activities from all Divisions of the Ministry and combining these items into one overall list. A review of all of the regional plans was also undertaken. The final result was a list in excess of 200 activities. To clarify the Ministry objectives and to formalize the management of these priorities, a planning session was held with the Executive members in September of 1998. During this session, the Executive members defined priorities in terms of three categories: core or must do, high priority, or should not do/not in our mandate. In this context, the Executive has now identified an over arching framework for the 15 "must do" key priorities. The first iteration of these priorities was released on March 2, 1999. As with the original commitment this document has been updated on a regular basis.

According to the Ministry's website, the following strategic priorities were set as at October 1, 1999:

1. **Consultation Framework.** This is where direction on the way people who are involved in the delivery or affected by the delivery of services will be informed or provided advice.

2. **Integrated Service Delivery System**. To provide direction on the definitions and organization of the components of a seamless service delivery system.

3. **Promotion, Prevention, and Early Support.** To provide direction and activities to build, maintain, or enhance the capacity of children, youth, families, and communities in order to avoid later, more expensive interventions.

4. **Children and Youth with Special Needs**. To develop sustainable services and supports for children and youth with special needs based on individual needs. These will be linked to Promotion, Prevention, and Early Support priorities.

5. **Youth Strategy**. To develop a policy framework which addresses urgent youth issues with linkages to Promotion, Prevention, and Early Support.

6. **Addictions**. To define a policy framework which will guide the Ministry's approach to prevention and treatment of substance abuse issues for adults, youth, and families.

7. **Child Protection.** To develop and support a child protection program which meets or exceeds national child protection standards and is responsive to community needs.

8. **Foster Care**. To develop and enhance the capacity and quality of the Foster Family Program.

9. **Children In Care.** To provide services within regions which ensures the Ministry's guardianship responsibilities are adequately fulfilled including the enhancing of adoption services.

10. **Aboriginal Strategy.** To develop and implement a plan which builds the capacity for aboriginal groups to assume responsibility for child, youth, and family services.

11. **Renewing and Sustaining Adult Community Living Services.** To work with people in the Community Living sector to ensure the provision of services can be sustained within current allocations.

12. **Resource Management**. To articulate the direction on how Ministry resources will be used.

13. **Contract Reform**. To provide direction and support on the implementation of consistent contracting practices throughout the province.

14. **Accountability**. To improve and ensure accountability for the processes and outcomes of the Ministry's programs, services, and operations to the public, clients, government, and other key stakeholders through planning, service delivery, monitoring, and evaluation approaches/activities.

15. **Information Management**. To articulate and implement a plan for managing the Ministry's information resources, including data and tools.

Appendix B
Ministry Program Descriptions

The Ministry provides the following definition of its key programs and services:

Aboriginal Child and Family Services

The Ministry is committed to returning responsibility for child and family services to Aboriginal nations and communities. Aboriginal Services Branch supports the development of child protection agreements with Aboriginal communities. The branch works with Aboriginal communities to help them build capacity to provide child protection services and to assist Aboriginal child welfare agencies to meet ministry requirements under the CF&CS Act. The Deputy Director of Aboriginal Services is responsible for developing and measuring compliance with child protection standards for delegated Aboriginal child welfare agencies assuming responsibility for their children's safety and well-being.

Aboriginal Relations

The Aboriginal Relations Branch provides policy advice and support for the Ministry so that services for Aboriginal children, youth, families, and communities are culturally appropriate.

The branch focuses on two areas; it assists Aboriginal communities to develop and deliver their own services to children and families and it helps facilitate better working relationships between the Ministry and Aboriginal communities. The branch also works with other ministries, federal departments, and external community and public service groups to implement the Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Services.

The branch priorities and goals are:

1. to strengthen the resources and authority of Aboriginal communities to deliver their own services for children and families.

2. to strengthen the ministry's resources to deliver culturally appropriate services.

3. to coordinate the federal government's responsibility to Aboriginal peoples within B.C.'s provincial jurisdiction.

4. to advocate for stronger Aboriginal economies across government so children, youth, and families maintain optimal health and well-being.

The Development of Agreements leads negotiations, consultations, and discussions with Aboriginal peoples for:

- **Delegation Enabling Agreement (DEA)** - the granting of legal authority for child welfare services to First Nations, Metis, and urban Aboriginal communities.

- **Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)** - the formal working relationships between the Ministry and provincial Aboriginal policy tables.

- **Protocol Agreements** - the daily working relationships between the Ministry's regions and Aboriginal communities.

- **Political Agreements** - the understandings between the Ministry and First Nations regarding child welfare and adoption. These understandings go beyond the administrative scope of the Director of Child Protection, and frame other agreements in a government-to-government context.

- **Treaty Mandates** - the instructions to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs regarding child and family services during treaty negotiations with First Nations.

Adoption

In B.C, adoption services are governed by the Adoption Act. The Ministry arranges about half of the adoptions that occur in the province - most Ministry adoptions are of children who come into its care under the Child, Family and Community Service Act. Other adoptions are completed by one of seven licensed adoption agencies in Prince George, Kelowna, Victoria, Vancouver and the Lower Mainland area. Adoption by relatives or step-parents and adult adoptions proceed directly through the courts.

Children become available for adoption in many ways, and each child's situation is unique. Some birth parents choose to make an adoption plan for their child and other children come into the care of the Ministry by court order. Every effort is made to find an adoptive family who best meets the specific needs of a child and can provide them with a secure and loving home.

Under the Adoption Act, any B.C. resident over age 19 is eligible to adopt. Prospective adoptive parents come from varied backgrounds, interests, education and income levels. They can be any age, single or married, gay or lesbian, live in rented accommodations or own their home.

Child and Youth Mental Health Services

The mandate and service framework for Child and Youth Mental Health Services is currently under review as part of the recently announced Ministry strategy to develop a Provincial Child and Youth Mental Health Plan.

The Ministry's mission is to ensure child and youth services are child-centred and promote and protect the healthy development of children and youth while recognizing their lifelong attachment to family and community.

Within this framework, Child and Youth Mental Health works with communities to promote the emotional health and well-being of children, youth and their families by providing a wide range of mental health services. Child and youth mental health service providers are guided by the belief that:

1. Children and youth have the right to be heard and have access to community resources to ensure their safety and well-being.

2. The family is central to children and youth for caring, nurturing and support.

3. The community has a responsibility to support children and youth in their growth and development and to strengthen and support families so they may provide the best care possible for their children.

Child Protection

The Child, Family and Community Service Act (the Act) is the legislative authority for the Ministry's Child Protection Services. Under the Act, the Minister designates the Director of Child Protection, who in turn delegates the provision of child protection services across the province to child protection social workers.

The Act requires that anyone who has reason to believe that a child may be abused, neglected, or is for any other reason in need of protection, must report it to the Director or a delegated social worker. These reports are investigated by social workers, who take the most appropriate action that is least disruptive for the child. These actions may include:

- providing or arranging the provision of support services to the family;

- supervising the child's care in the home; or,

- protecting the child through removal from the family and placement with relatives, a foster family or specialized residential resources.

Social workers also have the delegated authority of the Director to approve foster homes for children who come into the care of the Ministry. Resources such as group homes, specialized residential facilities, assessment resources, and respite resources are developed to serve children and youth in care.

Child protection services across the province are provided through over 400 Ministry offices in the 11 regions. The child protection staff are supported by the provincial office of the Child Protection Division.

Children and Youth with Special Needs and their Families

This branch supports children and youth with special needs and their families to live and participate fully in the community. Programs are based on a family-centred approach that supports parents with as much choice as possible, under the BC Benefits (Child Care) Act and the Child, Family and Community Service Act. Programs and services fall into two categories: developmental and support.

Developmental Services for Children and Youth with Special Needs

- **Infant Development** - provides home-based services to infants up to age three who are at risk of developmental delay or who have a developmental delay, and their families.

- **Supported Child Care -** finances the extra supports children with special needs require to participate in pre-school and child care settings.

- **Early Intervention** - provides a network of services for early intervention and support to children and youth with special needs and their families, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and family support.

- **Behavioural Support for Children with Autism** - provides special consultation on issues such as child-specific training, demonstrations of behavioural techniques, and development of behaviour management plans for children with autism and their families.

- **Summer Program for the Deaf/Blind** - provides individualized plans to ensure deaf/blind students maintain skills gained through the school year.

- **School-Aged Therapy Services** - provides school-based occupational therapy and physical therapy services to school-aged children with special needs.

Support Services for Children and Youth with Special Needs and their Families

- The **At Home Program** supports families caring for children with severe disabilities at home. Eligible families can receive respite and/or medical benefits.

- **Respite Services** offer families an interval of rest and relief from daily care of children with special needs. Services may include recruitment, training and/or monitoring of respite caregivers, matching families and caregivers, and the provision of respite services.

- **Associate Family Services** provide a trained family to work in partnership with birth parents to provide care in the trained-family home.

- **Nursing Support Services** provide qualified nursing services to support at-home care. This program combines the resources of the In School Support Program, the Nursing Respite Program, the assessment component of the At Home program, and nursing support for children with special health care needs in child care settings.

- **Children and Youth Care Workers** help improve families' child management and/or parenting skills by assisting children to develop identified social, life and other skills.

- **Homemaker/Home Support Workers** provide care and supervision for children, in the family home, while parents are temporarily absent.

- **Parent Support for Families** provides a range of community-based services including parent support groups, parent skills training, counseling life skills and organized activities.

- The **Professional Support for Children with Special Needs Program** enhances and supports community integration opportunities for children with special needs and their families.

Community Living for Adults

This branch provides a wide range of services to assist people with developmental disabilities to live as fully and independently as possible in the community. Developmental disability is defined as "measured intellectual functioning of 70 IQ or lower, with onset before age 18, and measured significant disabilities in two or more adaptive skill areas." Services include residential programs, training and support and professional support.

Residential Programs provide housing that promotes clients' independence while meeting their individual needs. Where possible, placements are arranged in the client's home community. A variety of options allow individuals and their families to select the one that best suits their needs. Options include the following:

- **Community residences** vary in size from small family homes to larger residential facilities. All provide care and support, as needed.

- **Semi-independent living** assists clients to live either alone or in small groups in homes or apartments. People live as independently as possible with the help of in-home support staff as required and services are tailored to the needs of the individual.

- **Respite/relief** provides emergency or short-term care for adults in community residences to give caregivers periodic relief from their responsibilities. Respite provides temporary care outside the home, while relief services provide alternative in-home care.

- **Intensive adult care** provides short-term community-based care for adults with challenging behaviours or unique needs that cannot be served by existing respite or temporary care facilities.

Training and Support Programs are offered in four areas:

- **Self-help skills** provide training in personal care, social integration and job readiness; individuals may receive one-to-one or group assistance and are encouraged to progress towards more demanding or challenging activities as they are able.

- **Home support programs** assist individuals to maintain independent or semi-independent living by offering direct homemaking or household management services, or by providing training in these skill sets.

- **Supported work programs** provide a combination of work experience, training and support to help individuals find and maintain work experience placements and employment.

- **Professional support services** provide assessment, support, consultation, and planning to individuals or those who support them, to ensure continued success in community placements. They also help service providers, ministry staff and families to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programs and services related to community living, including training for caregivers.

Foster Care

Caring for children is every society's most important job. Foster families provide an invaluable service to our community by providing homes for children whose own families are going through difficulties and cannot look after them. Legislation, Ministry policy and standards guide much of fostering, but caring, compassion and common sense also guide it.

There are different types of foster homes:

- **Regular homes** are for children who require the general level of care.

- **Restricted homes** are provided for children who know, or are related to the foster family, often on an urgent basis.

- **Specialized homes** are for children with special, physical, mental, emotional or behavioural needs. There are three levels of specialized homes based on the skills and experience required to care for the child.

- **Respite or relief homes** are for short-term placements when the regular caregiver needs a break or weekend off from their parenting duties.

Guardianship

Under the Child, Family and Community Service (CF&CS) Act, children may come into the care of the Director when they need protection, or on a voluntary basis when their families need support.

Guardianship services are provided when children are taken into the care of the Director due to child protection concerns, or when their families need support through voluntary care agreements. While most children are in care on a temporary basis, others remain on a longer term or continuing basis. Whenever it assumes guardianship of a child, whether temporarily or on a continuing basis, the Ministry is responsible for all of a child's needs. The child's needs are met through a range of out-of-home care services such as foster homes, group homes and specialized resources.

The Guardianship Policy and Standards Branch is responsible for developing policy and practice standards for:

- residential services provided under the CF&CS Act to children and youth in care, including foster homes and specialized resources, and

- practice by ministry staff delegated to carry out the Director's guardianship responsibilities for children and youth in care, including guardianship social workers and resource social workers.

Help for Addictions

The Addictions Branch develops prevention programs in consultation with communities, designed to fit each community. Prevention programs aim to:

- educate people about issues related to abuse of alcohol, other drugs and gambling

- participate in building healthy, supportive communities

- help people learn the skills they need to live without depending on addictive substances and activities

Management Services

Management division is responsible for facilities and capital programs, equity and diversity programs, personnel services, staff training and employee development. It develops and implements both the Ministry's Long Term Capital Plan, which addresses capital needs for institutions and special needs housing, and the Ministry's Asset Management Plan. This division is also responsible for the Ministry's emergency preparedness programs and for submission of the Ministry's annual budget request.

Promotion, Prevention and Early Support

The Ministry's long-term promotion, prevention and early support strategy goals are to:

- increase child, youth and family capacity and resiliency;

- engage communities in planning for and supporting children and families; and,

- define and create a family-supportive, child-centred service delivery system that includes identifying risks as early as possible and provides effective early supports.

This includes various supports to children and families, public health nursing, nutrition, dental, hearing, speech/language, mental health and school-based services, delivered by the Ministry's regions.

Family Support

Family support services are one of the most important ways the Ministry offers help to families. Families participate in a wide range of preventive and support services. These services help families become stronger and meet their children's needs through enhancing or acquiring skills, achieving specific goals and/or addressing factors that affect parenting.

Public Health and Family Support Services

Public Health programs and services maintain and enhance the health and well-being of children, youth and families and are delivered by regional health authorities on behalf of the ministry. Services are jointly funded by the Ministry for Children and Families and the Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors. Policy related to programs and services in these areas is provided by the Child and Family Section, Ministry for Children and Families.

- Public health nursing services focus on improving the health of the population and provide services for children and families to achieve and sustain optimal health and well-being where they live, work, learn, and play. This is different from other clinical or acute services where the main focus is on individuals who are sick or in crisis and who have presented themselves for health care. Services include prenatal, preschool and early school age screening and assessment, education and referral services related to growth and development, communicable disease management including immunization and health education and counseling support for parents. The programs and services are accessible at health units, homes, schools, child care centres and other community sites.

- Audiology services provide identification of hearing loss, assessment, education, screening and treatment for infants and children.

- Dental services improve the dental health of children and families through education, screenings and referrals.

- Nutrition programs help children and families reach and maintain optimal health and nutrition through access to appropriate food and nutrition information and services through public awareness of nutrition and food issues. The programs also support initiatives for pregnant women, breastfeeding, feeding babies and children, kindergarten nutrition screening, and nutrition education in child care and school settings and supermarkets. Other initiatives include promoting local and seasonal foods (BUY BC), costing the 'nutritious food basket', supporting community kitchens, community gardens, food buying clubs, good food bags, community-assisted agriculture, farmer's markets and food policy councils.

- Pregnancy Outreach Programs provide services to pregnant women at risk for having low birth weight infants or other health issues during or after pregnancy. The program promotes breastfeeding and provides professional and peer counseling on nutrition, smoking, alcohol and other drugs.

- Breastfeeding Initiatives are supported by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for Children and Families. The initiatives provide raised awareness around breastfeeding and the Baby Friendly Initiative. The Baby Friendly Initiative is an international program based on steps to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. The Ministry for Children and Families Nutritionist is the provincial contact for the Baby Friendly Initiative Canada.

- Speech and Language Services are given to preschool children at risk of, or with identified disabilities in the area of communication. Services are provided through public health units in co-operation with other non-profit community groups.

- Perinatal Programs offer prenatal education and counseling and support for parents, early maternity discharge planning and special protocols for babies with fetal alcohol syndrome/effects and neonatal abstinence syndrome. Parenting supports include after-birth home visiting and extra support for families for parenting and for concerns such as child growth and development. In some regions, hospital and community partnerships support new parents being discharged early from hospital to home. Teen perinatal programs focus on the prevention of unplanned pregnancy and offer counseling to pregnant teens.

- Screening and Referral - services include the Nursing Priority Screening Program primarily for newborns and their families, a Vision Screening Program, and Developmental Screening Programs. The public health nurses also work with public health audiologists on the High Priority Hearing Registry and School Aged Screening Program.

- Preschool Services provide toddler/preschool home visits when required by a public health nurse and are generally linked to developmental concerns, disabilities, disease control or parenting concerns.

- School Age/Youth Services provide programs on healthy growth and development including sexual health services, promotion of resiliency, health education, referrals, youth clinic services and injury prevention programs (see the Office of Injury Prevention, Ministry of Health).

Community Development

- Community assessments establish the needs of the community and help define public health priorities specific to a community. These services include community-based school health activities focusing on reducing health risks.

- Public health professionals are knowledgeable of the range of services available in the communities they serve and often help in the development

of focused services within their communities (e.g. infant development programs, community kitchens, drop-in centres, family resource centres).

School-based Services

- Community Schools are oriented towards the neighbourhood and provide opportunities for lifelong learning. The schools may be open beyond the traditional school day to provide academic, extracurricular, recreational, health, social services and work skills programs for people of all ages. Many community schools operate before and after school programs, summer day camps, preschool as well as holiday and lunchtime programs for students. They often include supervised, flexible, responsible drop-in service for youth. Programs such as parenting, and prenatal programs, baby clinics, adult education classes and community kitchens are offered for adults.

- School Meal, Inner City School and Early Academic Intervention Programs allow school districts to determine the needs and priorities in their schools and communities and to establish programs and funding to address these needs. The programs support the goals of the school system by providing at-risk students with social and intellectual supports to succeed academically and to build self-esteem.

- School Meal Program is based on the premise that hungry children are unable to learn and cannot concentrate on their schoolwork. It provides nutritious meals for children who may not be getting enough nourishment at home. A 1994 evaluation of the School Meal Program found students and teachers were extremely happy with the program. Teachers recorded improvements in student health, classroom behaviour, happiness, well-being and knowledge of nutrition as a result of participation in the program. The Vancouver/Richmond Health Board and the Vancouver School Board pilot project "School and Community Action on Nutrition" led to the development of a "Cooking Fun for Families Handbook" outlining nutrition education program model. The project goals were to strengthen family and community bonds, improve nutritional status and food security.

- Inner City School Program supports children at risk of leaving school or who are having difficulties participating at school due to poverty, hunger, dangerous urban environments or learning experiences which do not have relevance for them. Specific programs are tailored to communities and are designed to develop the social skills and confidence needed for children and youth to function successfully in society.

- Alcohol and Drug School Based Prevention initiative began in the Fall of 1992. This provides for the direct operating costs of provincial staff providing substance misuse services to students within the school setting, including policy development, prevention programming, teacher training,

early intervention including substance misuse counseling and information and referral for substance misuse issues. The Alcohol and Drug School Based Prevention services are provided to 37 school districts. These services are offered in partnership with community groups.

- Early Academic Intervention Program helps provide an early, proactive response to children with learning difficulties, primarily in the area of reading. It helps students to become effective learners before learning difficulties result in failure and low self-esteem.

- Provincial Resource Program provides summer educational programs for children in the care of the Ministry for Children and Families, to ensure continuity of educational goals.

- Healthy Schools involves school-age children and youth in identifying issues, planning and taking action to improve their health. Students, teachers, parents, administrators and community service providers work with students in creating a shared vision of what makes their school healthy, as well as developing and implementing action plans which focus on priority health issues for their schools.

- School Based Support Services provides school-based child and youth care workers for students aged 6-19 who are experiencing difficulty at school or who have dropped out of school for social or emotional reasons.

Supported Child Care

Physical challenges, like sight or hearing impairment, or other challenges, such as a delay in developing speech, language, motor or intellectual skills mean some children need extra support to take part in everyday activities.

Supported Child Care is a way of making sure children who need extra support are able to participate in "typical" community child care settings - the child care setting that a parent would naturally choose for their child if the child was a "typical" child with no special needs. This is referred to as inclusive child care.

Inclusive child care

Inclusive child care is for every child. It means all families have the same child care options, and parents are given choices in their decision as to where to send their children - whether it's the family child care offered by the neighbour down the street, or a preschool program at the community child care centre across town. Supported Child Care makes this possible by providing consultation and training to child care centres and, where necessary, extra staffing.

The Ministry continues to be responsible for Supported Child Care and for the delivery of Supported Child Care services at the local level, including the following:

- range payments (consultation, training, extra staffing)

- support payment for parents of children with special needs.

The Ministry has developed a Support Guide to help child care providers and parents determine the level of support a child care setting needs in order to include a child who requires extra support. The guide also helps parents and child care providers assess educational and training materials needed to help child care providers welcome children with special needs.

All other child care programs are now the responsibility of the Ministry for Social Development and Economic Security (MSDES), including child care policy direction and administration of the basic child care subsidy.

Extra support and Supported Child Care

Under Supported Child Care, parents pay the same basic child care space fee as parents whose children do not need extra support. Parents with low incomes may apply for a child care subsidy to help cover the basic space fee, through the local office of the Ministry for Social Development and Economic Security.

The parent of a child who needs extra support may also be eligible for the Support Payment of up to $107 a month, depending on income. Parents can apply for this extra support through the local Community Living Services office of the Ministry. This extra support payment must be used towards the cost of the space fee.

Youth Justice

The Ministry provides youth probation and youth custody services to youth aged 12 to 17. Services provided include:

- alternative measures (diversion);

- supervision and case management of youth who are subject to a bail or probation order;

- preparation of reports for court and Crown Counsel;

- community-based residential and non-residential programs; and,

- custody of youth awaiting trial or serving a custody disposition.

Youth Services

The Ministry provides a wide range of services to help young people and their families when they are having difficulties, when youth are sexually exploited, have an addiction to drugs or alcohol, are living on the street, have mental health problems, or a combination of issues.

Appendix C
Ministry Organization Structure

A. Ministry Organization Structure – Chart 1

Minister for Children and Families
Hon. Edward John

Deputy Minister
Sharon Manson Singer

- Sectoral Relations Branch
- Organizational Health
- Communications
- Office of the Advocate for Service Quality for Adults with Development Disabilities
- Community Services and Program Support Division
- Management Services Division
- Corporate Policy and Chief Information Officer
- Child Protection Division

To Chart 2

B. Community Services and Program Support Division Structure – Chart 2

```
                                    ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐
                                    │ Assistant Deputy │◄────│  Executive   │
                                    │     Minister     │     │  Assistant   │
                                    └──────────────────┘     └──────────────┘
```

Assistant Deputy Minister ← Executive Assistant

Reporting to Assistant Deputy Minister:

A/Executive Director — Aboriginal Strategy and Community Services
- Manager Aboriginal Services
- Manager Addictions
- Manager Secure Care Implementation
- Program Manager Implementation
- Manager Justice Services
- Manager Workload
- Program Manager Child Protection

A/Executive Director — Child, Youth and Community Living Services
- Manager Special Needs
- Mnager Public Health, School-Based and Family Support
- Program Manager Implementation
- Manager Community Living Services
- A/Director Resource Management Adults
- Manager Mental Health and Youth Services

A/Manager Operations
- Regional Services Manager

Director Contract Management

Director Utilization Management Children and Youth
- Manager Migrant Services

Manager Lower Mainland Planning

Regional Executive Directors (11) + POLM

C. North Region Organization - Chart 3

```
                          ┌─────────────────────┐
                          │ Assistant Deputy    │
                          │ Minister            │
                          │ Community Services  │
                          │ and Program         │
                          │ Support Division    │
                          └─────────────────────┘
                                   ▲
                          ┌─────────────────────┐
                          │ A/Regional          │
                          │ Executive Director  │
                          └─────────────────────┘
                                   ▲
```

| Associate Regional Executive Director Prince George | Associate Regional Executive Director Dawson Creek | Director Prince George Youth Custody Centre | Regional Finance Manager | Regional Manager Personnel | Recruitment, Retention and Training Manager | Professional Services Manager |

```
        │                    │
      ( To                 ( To
     Chart 3.1 )          Chart 3.2 )
```

| Quality Assurance Supervisor Prince George | Quality Assurance Supervisor Prince George | Regional Research Analyst |

D. Associate Regional Executive Director - Chart 3.1

```
                              Associate Regional
                              Executive Director
                                 Prince George
```

| Community Service Manager Prince George | Community Services Manager Prince George | Community Services Manager Dawson Creek | Community Services Manager Terrace | Regional Manager Child Protection Prince George | Regional Manager Child Protection Dawson Creek | Regional Manager Child Protection Terrace |

To Chart 3.1.1

To Chart 3.1.2

To Chart 3.1.3

E. Community Services Prince George – Chart 3.1.1

```
                              Community Services
                                   Manager
```

| Team Leader Family Services Prince George | Team Leader Adolescent Services Prince George | Team Leader Family Services Prince George | Team Leader Mackenzie | Utilization Services Leader | Mental Health Consultant |

F. Community Services Prince George – Chart 3.1.2

```
                          Community Services
                               Manager
                            Prince George
```

| Team Leader Integrated Burns Lake | Team Leader Integrated Vanderhoof | Team Leader Integrated Fort St. James | Team Leader Integrated Houston | Team Leader Integrated Smithers | Team Leader Integrated Hazelton | Team Leader UMP/Adoptions Prince George |

G. Child Protection Prince George – Chart 3.1.3

```
                          Regional Manager
                          Child Protection
                            Prince George
```

| Child Protection Consultant | Team Leader Intake and Investigation Team 1 | Team Leader Intake and Investigation Team 2 |

H. Associate Regional Executive Director – Chart 3.2

```
                          ┌──────────────────────┐
                          │ Associate Regional   │
                          │ Executive Director   │
                          │ Dawson Creek         │
                          └──────────────────────┘
                                     ▲
   ┌──────────┬──────────────┬───────┴───────┬──────────────┐
┌────────────┐┌────────────┐┌────────────┐┌────────────┐┌────────────┐
│ Community  ││ Contract   ││ Aboriginal ││ Aboriginal ││ Aboriginal │
│ Living     ││ and        ││ Services   ││ Services   ││ Services   │
│ Manager    ││ Resources  ││ Manager    ││ Manager    ││ Manager    │
│ Prince     ││ Manager    ││ Prince     ││ Terrace    ││ Fort Nelson│
│ George     ││ Prince     ││ George     ││            ││            │
│            ││ George     ││            ││            ││            │
└────────────┘└────────────┘└────────────┘└────────────┘└────────────┘
      ▲             ▲
   (  To  )      (  To  )
   ( Chart )     ( Chart )
   ( 3.2.1 )     ( 3.2.2 )
```

I. Community Living Services – Chart 3.2.1

```
                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │ Community Living │
                        │     Manager      │
                        └──────────────────┘
```

Team Leader CLS Prince George	Team Leader CLS Terrace	Team Leader CLS/ Resources Smithers	Team Leader CLS Dawson Creek	Team Leader CLS Prince George	Team Leader Resources/CLS Prince George

J. Contract and Resources Manager – Chart 3.2.2

```
                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │   Contract and   │
                        │ Resources Manager│
                        └──────────────────┘
```

Team Leader Resources Prince George	Team Leader Resources Dawson Creek	Team Leader Resources Terrace	Team Leader Resources and CLS Smithers	Team Leader Resources/CLS Vanderhoof	Utilization Services Leader

Appendix D
Management Assessment Criteria

In assessing the governance and management practices in the North Region of the Ministry, we needed to adopt or develop a set of criteria against which to compare. For this purpose, we adopted the "Guidance on Control"[1] standards developed by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants and the "attributes of effectiveness"[2] defined by the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation. The *Guidance on Control* standard, also known as the CoCo standard, is consistent with the "Internal Control – Integrated Framework" document produced by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) which is widely accepted as the US standard on organizational control. We also considered Ministry policies and procedures with respect to expectations from regional management, including planning, management structure, performance measurement, human resource management and reporting.

A. Guidance on Control

The key elements of the CoCo standard upon which our management assessment has been carried out include the following:

A.1   Control

Control comprises those elements of an organization (including its resources, systems, processes, culture, structure and tasks) that, taken together, support people in the achievement of the organization's objectives. These objectives may fall into one or more of the following general categories.

- **Effectiveness and efficiency of operations**—includes objectives related to an organization's goals, such as customer service, the safeguarding and efficient use of resources, profitability and meeting social obligations. This includes the safeguarding of the organization's resources from inappropriate use or loss and ensuring that liabilities are identified and managed.

---

[1] *Guidance on Control,* The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, November 1995.

[2] *Effectiveness Reporting and Auditing in the Public Sector,* Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation, 1987.

- **Reliability of internal and external reporting**—includes objectives related to matters such as the maintenance of proper accounting records, the reliability of information used within the organization and of information published for third parties. This includes the protection of records against two main types of fraud: the concealment of theft and the distortion of results.

- **Compliance with applicable laws and regulations and internal policies**—includes objectives related to ensuring that the organization's affairs are conducted in accordance with legal and regulatory obligations and internal policies.

Management is responsible for the stewardship of the organization, including the following control responsibilities:

- approving and monitoring mission, vision and strategy;

- approving and monitoring the organization's ethical values;

- monitoring management control;

- evaluating senior management;

- overseeing external communications; and,

- assessing management's effectiveness.

A.2   Criteria of Control

The criteria of control are the basis for understanding control in an organization and for making judgments about the effectiveness of control. The criteria are formulated to be broadly applicable. The effectiveness of control in any organization, regardless of the objective it serves, can be assessed using these criteria. The criteria are phrased as goals to be worked toward over time; they are not minimum requirements to be passed or failed. Considerable judgment is required in interpreting the criteria in the context of a particular organization and in assessing the effectiveness of control in the organization.

The effectiveness of control cannot be judged solely on the degree to which each criterion, taken separately, is met. The criteria are interrelated, as are the control elements in an organization. Control elements cannot be designed or evaluated in isolation from each other.

The criteria of control are as follows:

Purpose

1. Objectives should be established and communicated.

2. The significant internal and external risks faced by an organization in the achievement of its objectives should be identified and assessed.

3. Policies designed to support the achievement of an organization's objectives and the management of its risks should be established, communicated and practised so that people understand what is expected of them and the scope of their freedom to act.

4. Plans to guide efforts in achieving the organization's objectives should be established and communicated.

5. Objectives and related plans should include measurable performance targets and indicators.

Commitment

6. Shared ethical values, including integrity, should be established, communicated and practised throughout the organization.

7. Human resource policies and practices should be established, communicated and practiced throughout the organization.

8. Authority, responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined and consistent with an organization's objectives so that decisions and actions are taken by the appropriate people.

9. An atmosphere of mutual trust should be fostered to support the flow of information between people and their effective performance toward achieving the organization's objectives.

Capability

10. People should have the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to support the achievement of the organization's objectives.

11. Communication processes should support the organization's values and the achievement of its objectives.

12. Sufficient and relevant information should be identified and communicated in a timely manner to enable people to perform their assigned responsibilities.

13. The decisions and actions of different parts of the organization should be coordinated.

14. Control activities should be designed as an integral part of the organization, taking into consideration its objectives, the risks to their achievement, the inter-relatedness of control elements.

Monitoring and Learning

15. External and internal environments should be monitored to obtain information that may signal a need to re-evaluate the organization's objectives or control.

16. Performance should be monitored against the targets and indicators identified in the organization's objectives and plans.

17. The assumptions behind an organization's objectives should be periodically challenged.

18. Information needs and related information systems should be reassessed as objectives change or as reporting deficiencies are identified.

19. Follow-up procedures should be established and performed to ensure appropriate change or action occurs.

20. Management should periodically assess the effectiveness of control in its organization and communicate the results to whom it is accountable.

B.   Attributes of Effectiveness

The twelve attributes of effectiveness for public sector reporting as proposed by the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation are as follows:

1. **Management direction**—the extent to which the objectives of an organization, its component programs or lines of business, and its employees, are clear, well-integrated and understood, and appropriately reflected in the organization's plans, structure, delegations of authority and decision-making processes.

2. **Relevance**—the extent to which a program or line of business continues to make sense in regard to the problems or conditions to which it is intended to respond.

3. **Appropriateness**—the extent to which the design of a program or its major components, and the level of effort being made, are logical in light of the specific objectives to be achieved.

4. **Achievement of intended results**—the extent to which goals and objectives have been realized.

5. **Acceptance**—the extent to which the constituencies or customers for whom a program or line of business is designed judge it to be satisfactory.

6. **Secondary impacts**—the extent to which other significant consequences, either intended or unintended and either positive or negative, have occurred.

7. **Costs and productivity**—the relationships among costs, inputs and outputs.

8. **Responsiveness**—an organization's ability to adapt to changes in such factors as markets, competition, available funding or technology.

9. **Financial results**—the matching of, and the accounting for, revenues and costs and the accounting for and valuation of assets, liabilities and equity.

10. **Working environment**—the extent to which the organization provides an appropriate work atmosphere for its employees, provides appropriate opportunities for development and achievement, and promotes commitment, initiative and safety.

11. **Protection of assets**—the extent to which important assets – such as sources of supply, valuable property, key personnel, agreements and important records or information – are safeguarded so that the organization is protected from the danger of losses that could threaten its success, credibility, continuity and, perhaps, its very existence.

12. **Monitoring and reporting**—the extent to which key matters pertaining to performance and organizational strength are identified, reported and carefully monitored.

C.   Ministry Policies and Procedures

In reviewing Ministry policies and procedures relating to the management of regions, we identified the following key directives:

- Regions are required to manage their expenditures and staff resources to within limits set by the budget management process;

- Regions must update their expenditure forecasts on a monthly basis and submit this information to the Management Services Division;

- Regions must provide forecasts of anticipated FTE (full-time-equivalents) use by month to the Management Services Division;

- Regions are expected to comply with administrative and operational policies, practices and procedures;

D. Assessment Framework for the North Region

By combining the CoCo criteria, the twelve attributes of effectiveness and Ministry policies and procedures, we developed the following assessment framework for our review of the North Region:

Criteria of Control   **Attributes of Effectiveness**

Management Purpose

Criteria of Control	Criteria of Control	Attributes	Attributes of Effectiveness
Purpose Clear Objectives	**Purpose** Clear Objectives	**Management Direction**	**Management Direction**
Purpose Risk Assessment	**Purpose** Risk Assessment	**Relevance**	**Relevance**
Purpose Clear Policies	**Purpose** Clear Policies	**Appropriateness**	**Appropriateness**
Purpose Documented Plans	**Purpose** Documented Plans	**Acceptance**	**Acceptance**
Purpose Performance Targets	**Purpose** Performance Targets		

Organizational Commitment

Commitment Shared ethical values	**Commitment** Shared ethical values	**Working Environment**	**Working Environment**
Commitment HR Policies and Procedures	**Commitment** HR Policies and Procedures		
Commitment Authority, responsibility and accountability	**Commitment** Authority, responsibility and accountability		
Commitment Mutual Trust	**Commitment** Mutual Trust		

Organizational Capability

Capability Knowledge, skills and tools	**Capability** Knowledge, skills and tools	**Costs and Productivity**	**Costs and Productivity**
Capability Communication Processes	**Capability** Communication Processes		
Capability Information	**Capability** Information	**Responsiveness**	**Responsiveness**
Capability Coordination	**Capability** Coordination		
Capability Control activities	**Capability** Control activities		

Management Accountability

		Protection of Assets	
Monitoring External and Internal Scan	**Monitoring** External and Internal Scan	**Financial Results**	**Financial Results**
Monitoring Performance	**Monitoring** Performance	**Monitoring and Reporting**	**Monitoring and Reporting**
Monitoring Assumptions		**Achievement of Intended Results**	**Achievement of Intended Results**
Monitoring Information Systems		**Secondary Impacts**	**Secondary Impacts**
Monitoring Follow-up	**Monitoring** Follow-up		
Monitoring Control Effectiveness	**Monitoring** Control Effectiveness		

D.1   Management Purpose

The criteria for assessing management purpose are as follows:

- Objectives should be established and communicated. The Ministry's programs should be well-integrated and understood and be appropriately reflected in the organization's plans, structure, delegations of authority and decision-making processes.

- The significant internal and external risks faced by an organization in the achievement of its objectives should be identified and assessed.

- Programs should be periodically assessed to ensure they make sense in regard to the problems or conditions to which they are intended to respond.

- Programs should be accepted by the stakeholders in the communities to which they serve.

- Policies designed to support the achievement of an organization's objectives and the management of its risks should be established, communicated and practiced so that people understand what is expected of them and the scope of their freedom to act.

- Plans to guide efforts in achieving the organization's objectives should be established and communicated.

- Objectives and related plans should include measurable performance targets and indicators.

D.2   Organizational Commitment

The criteria for assessing organizational commitment are as follows:

- Shared ethical values, including integrity, should be established, communicated and practiced throughout the organization.

- An appropriate working environment should be established for the Ministry's employees that provides appropriate opportunities for development and achievement, and promotes, commitment, initiative and safety. An atmosphere of mutual trust should be fostered to support the flow of information between people and their effective performance toward achieving the organization's objectives.

- Human resource policies and practices should be established, communicated and practiced throughout the organization.

- Authority, responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined and consistent with an organization's objectives so that decisions and actions are taken by the appropriate people.

D.3 Organizational Capability

The criteria for assessing organizational capability are as follows:

- People should have the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to support the achievement of the organization's objectives.

- Communication processes should support the organization's values and the achievement of its objectives.

- Sufficient and relevant information should be identified and communicated in a timely manner to enable people to perform their assigned responsibilities.

- The decisions and actions of different parts of the organization should be coordinated.

- Control activities should be designed as an integral part of the organization, taking into consideration its objectives, the risks to their achievement, the inter-relatedness of control elements.

- The relationships among costs, inputs and outputs should be clearly understood.

- The Ministry should have the ability to adapt to changes in such factors as service demand, available funding or technology.

D.4 Management Accountability

The criteria for assessing management accountability are as follows:

- External and internal environments should be monitored to obtain information that may signal a need to re-evaluate the organization's objectives or control.

- Performance and organizational strength should be monitored against the targets and indicators identified in the organization's objectives and plans.

- The assumptions behind an organization's objectives should be periodically challenged.

- Information needs and related information systems should be reassessed as objectives change or as reporting deficiencies are identified.

- Follow-up procedures should be established and performed to ensure appropriate change or action occurs.

- Management should periodically assess the effectiveness of control in its organization and communicate the results to whom it is accountable.

- Financial results—the matching of, and the accounting for, revenues and costs and the accounting for and valuation of assets, liabilities and equity.

- Achievement of intended results—the extent to which goals and objectives have been realized.

- Secondary impacts—the extent to which other significant consequences, either intended or unintended and either positive or negative, have occurred.

Appendix E
Gove Report Recommendations

In establishing the Ministry, the government indicated that the formation was partially based upon the November, 1995 report of the *Gove Inquiry into Child Protection.* This report made numerous recommendations concerning the creation, structure and capacity of a new service delivery system. This appendix summarizes the key recommendations pertaining to management made in the Gove report and indicates our assessment of the extent to which the current management structure reflects the implementation of those recommendations. It is not our intent that this assessment represents our judgment on those recommendations or the implementation decisions made by the Ministry.

GOVE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS (Pertaining to Ministry Management)	*IMPLEMENTATION STATUS (Fully Implemented, Substantially Implemented, Partially Implemented, or Not Implemented)*
The Ministry should set up a task force to design and implement a computerized child protection information management system which will: a) allow social workers to record case information, retrieve information, track cases, and access information quickly and easily and b) reduce and simplify the number of documents social workers are required to fill out in the course of a protection investigation assessment.	Substantially Implemented.
The Ministry's policy should state clearly that the protection of the child is paramount, and should not be overshadowed by a desire to help parents improve their lives and abilities.	Fully Implemented.
The Ministry should systematically audit the manner in which child welfare services are delivered, to ensure that provincial standards are being met or surpassed. Each district office's case files should be audited according to a predetermined audit cycle on a random basis.	Fully Implemented.
Practice audits should be conducted, and reports should be prepared, in a manner that will lead to constructive improvements in the delivery of child welfare services. When the ministry receives practice audit findings, it must take action to improve service delivery and to reform provincial practice standards, qualifications,	Substantially Implemented.

GOVE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS (Pertaining to Ministry Management)	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS (Fully Implemented, Substantially Implemented, Partially Implemented, or Not Implemented)
training and service design.	
Annual performance assessments need to be an integral part of the delivery of child welfare services. For this to happen: a) supervisors need to receive training in conducting annual performance assessments, b) supervisors and social workers need clearly articulated expectations about what will be assessed, what criteria will be used, and what professional development opportunities will flow from the assessment process, and c) the annual review of a supervisor's own performance needs to include an examination of how conscientiously the supervisor has conducted annual performance assessments of social workers.	Partially Implemented.
The province should establish, by legislation, the office of an independent Children's Commissioner who would be appointed by Order in Council for a fixed term.	Fully Implemented.
Core child welfare service providers should be commonly employed and commonly funded, and should work together out of multi-disciplinary, community-based Children's Centers, which would deliver the following services: • Child protection, family support, guardianship and adoption, • Services to children with mental disabilities, • Child and youth mental health services, • Children's public health nursing programs, • Infant and child development programs, • Alcohol and drug treatment services for children and youth, • Youth forensic psychiatric services, • School-based child and youth care services, • Special education services, • Family court counseling services, • Youth probation and related community justice services, • Child care subsidies and funding for child care resources,	Substantially Implemented.

GOVE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS (Pertaining to Ministry Management)	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS (Fully Implemented, Substantially Implemented, Partially Implemented, or Not Implemented)
And possibly the following: • Income assistance for families with children and for youth, • Funding for transition houses, and • Community, child and residential care facilities licensing.	
The province should devolve to communities the responsibilities for ensuring that a full spectrum of child welfare services are delivered in accordance with province-wide practice standards.	Not Implemented.
The province should devolve to communities the responsibility for the day-to-day management of child welfare services.	Not Implemented.
The province should establish approximately 20 Regional Child Welfare Boards, to govern and manage the Children's Centers.	Not Implemented.
Provincial responsibility for all child welfare services, currently scattered through numerous ministries, should be brought together into a new Ministry for Children and Youth.	Fully Implemented.

Appendix F
Ministry Complaint Process

Stakeholders

"I don't agree with something the Ministry has done!"

Try and resolve the complaint with the worker and/or their supervisor

The complainant is encouraged to first attempt to resolve the problem through the informal complaint process - i.e., complainant, worker, supervisor and/or operational manager work to resolve the concerns

Was complaint resolved? — Yes → End

No

The complaintant has the right to involve an advocate

Make formal complaint to "Complaint Mgr" in the Region

Contact the MCF office by phone, letter, fax or in person

To identify the Complaint Mgr, contact the MCF Client Call Coordinator in Victoria at 387-7027

Confirmation Letter to Complaintant ← Complaint is documented in a letter to the complaintant

Complaint Mgr conducts an investigation

Complaint Mgr talks to the complainant, worker and others involved. The case file is reviewed.

Results Letter to Complaintant ← Complaint Mgr arrives at a conclusion and informs complaintant

Complaint Mgr has 30 days to reach a conclusion. Reasons for the conclusion are to be provided

Is complaintant satisfied? — Yes → End

Complaintant can discuss the result with the Complaint Mgr to gain an understanding for the decision

No

The Complaintant can make an External Complaint

The Children's Commissioner, Ombudsman and Child, Youth and Family Advocate offices will hear complaints about MCF after the internal process has been concluded