

In the Best Interests of the Child

Report on the North Region Community Consultations

Communities of:

- **Chetwynd/Tumbler Ridge**
 - **Fort St. James**
 - **Fort St. John**
 - **Vanderhoof**
 - **Dawson Creek**

January 2003

In the best interests of the child ...

This report is dedicated to children living in northern communities and to families, service providers and community members who are working hard to make a difference in the lives of children.

Communities told us the best interests of the child must remain at the centre of all change. They told us that their greatest strength is working together and that the system must strengthen communities, not divide them.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the consultation forums – for sharing your stories, your feelings, your opinions and your ideas.

The challenge is to create a uniquely northern service delivery system that builds on the strengths of the communities, to put resources where they will do the most good and to support communities to work together to build a positive future for all children.

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1. CHILDREN, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES: OUR STRENGTH/OUR FUTURE...

The natural resiliency of children, youth and their families must be complemented by a responsive, supportive and flexible community service that can ensure that health and well being are equally accessible to all citizens in Northern British Columbia.

We have been told that things are different in the North and that this difference is a source of strength and should be honored, not feared. Diversity and tolerance of difference are inherent strengths that historically have been the foundation on which our northern communities have thrived. In this climate, taking on and accomplishing difficult tasks is not new.

The goal of creating a responsive and culturally sensitive child, family and community service delivery system will not be easy. We have been told by communities in the north that it can and will be done. The potential for success in this task is enhanced by the initiative of a new northern authority to deliver and support necessary services. If this initiative is successful, we will see healthier children and families and a new awareness of the health issues that are unique to these communities. This ideal will not be achieved overnight, but is nonetheless worth striving for.

*“We value the family as the most appropriate place to raise children.”
(Vanderhoof)*

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the planning process to devolve services to geographical authorities, the Ministry of Children and Family Development committed to extensive consultation throughout northern BC. This report represents the results of those consultations in Chetwynd/Tumbler Ridge, Fort St. James, Fort St. John, Vanderhoof and Dawson Creek. Both evening and daytime meetings were held; the level of interest varied from community to community.

Frank and open dialogue occurred throughout the consultation, and reflected optimism, concerns, fears and lack of understanding. The key to resolving the issues that are of ongoing concern is clearly a strong and open communications component in the draft business plan to be submitted in February 2003.

The consultation process involved service providers, contractors and employees of the Ministry, youth, and members of the community at large. Over 200 individuals participated in the consultation. Table 1 on page 5 identifies participation in each community. The material in the appendices summarizes the differing responses in each community. The differences are driven by population size, specific programs and activities already in place, and, to some extent, the economic status of each population centre.

Common themes emerged throughout the consultation process. The most positive of these being a desire and a will to make the new structure an effective and positive influence in the community. Concerns centre on financial viability, job security, local input and autonomy and the equity and viability of parallel aboriginal and non-aboriginal systems.

The following pages summarize the process, principles and common themes involved in the consultation and are common to all communities. The specifics regarding each community are articulated in the appendix.

There is throughout, a will to work to improve services, an acceptance of the necessity of budget constraints, although not their degree, and a commitment to local involvement.

“Too many of our youth have to leave our community to get help. This is traumatic for them and their families, and then they return to a community that may not have the services to support them”

(Fort St James)

3. BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Children and Family Development, as part of a government wide review and rationalization of core services, has decided to devolve protection, guardianship, youth justice, child and youth mental health, youth services and early childhood development services to ten regional authorities. Services to support children, youth and families will go to five aboriginal and five non-aboriginal authorities established on a regional basis. A provincial authority will govern community living services, provided to children and adults with disabilities. The ministry has outlined six strategic service shifts that will guide this transfer. Service will shift to:

- Open, accountable and transparent relationships
- Enable communities to develop and deliver services within a consolidated, coherent, community-based service delivery system
- Make strategic investments in capacity and resiliency building and providing funding for programs and services known to work
- Promoting family and community capacity to protect children and to support child and family development
- Community based service delivery systems that promotes choice, innovation and shared responsibility
- Building capacity within Aboriginal communities to deliver a full range of services with emphasis on early childhood and family development

The ministry has appointed representative planning committees in each of the regions and asked them to provide interim business plans to the Minister by February 2003. The business plans must include information gained through community consultation in each region.

4. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The North Region Child and Family Community Planning Committee is responsible for planning the transfer of non-aboriginal child, youth and family services from the Ministry of Children and Family Development to the North Region Authority by April 1, 2004. The Committee is to provide the minister with an interim business plan by March 2003. The Planning Committee conducted care provider, youth and community consultations to obtain feedback on this new structure, determine what stakeholders felt was working well and what needed improvement and what strengths they felt their communities had. This report presents the information from consultations in Vanderhoof, Fort St John, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd/Tumbler Ridge and Fort St James.

5. PROFILE OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Table 1. Attendance

Community	Date	Service Providers	Youth	Community	Total
Vanderhoof Pop: 7000	December 5/6, 2002	20	0	0	20
Fort St. John Pop: 17,000	December 10, 2002	28	22	27	77
Dawson Creek Pop: 12,000	December 11, 2002	25	4	15	44
Chetwynd/ Tumbler Ridge Pop: 5700	December 12, 2002	18	16	12	46
Fort St James Pop: 2200	December 16, 2002	20	6	10	36
Total Pop:43,900		111	48	64	223

In total 223 people attended the consultations in Vanderhoof, Fort St. James and the Peace communities of Fort St. John, Dawson Creek and Chetwynd/Tumbler Ridge. Open community forums attracted 64 persons, care giver forums had 111 participants and 48 youth attended specifically arranged youth forums.

Service provider forums had Ministry staff, Health Authority representatives, School District staff, foster parents, advocates, contracted service providers and aboriginal community representatives participating. Detailed participation is outlined in Appendix 1.

The consultation team was comprised of an interim planning team representative, local ministry representation, a transition team manager and a facilitator. The team was responsible for up to three forums in each community. Membership of these teams is detailed in Appendix 2.

6. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

The importance of community input and participation in the development of services, and the direct participation of families is a primary value that was expressed throughout the consultation, and is seen as critical to the north in particular, because of the diversity of communities and the distances between them.

The increase in the use of volunteer services and recognition of the value of volunteerism combined with prevention/early intervention strategies is seen as a viable way of improving the health of families and communities.

This was reinforced by a consistent recognition that core services must be provided either in or close to the user communities and families.

Available and more culturally sensitive service for the aboriginal population in the north is critical.

Acknowledgement and respect for the opinions of youth must be part of the planning process. The specific comments from each community are presented in Appendix 3.

“I love my parents, it’s just that sometimes they have a lot of problems that they need help with” (Dawson Creek)

Important Messages

- Community consultation and involvement in service development is important.
- Volunteers must be recognized and supported.
- Core service must be provided locally.
- Culturally sensitive services must be provided.
- Youth must be recognized and involved.

7. COMMUNITY/GOVERNANCE STRENGTHS

People in the northern communities know each other and, more importantly know what is needed. They want to work together to provide service and supports to their children, youth and families. The North is viewed as a great place to live with wonderful outdoor opportunities and a strong sense of community. A northern authority will offer an opportunity to make decisions on service delivery closer to home and will be guided by people who know first hand the needs of children and families in their communities. Communities will be able to work with the aboriginal population to provide a broad range of services while maximizing community-based opportunities to work with local governments and business to provide effective and efficient services and support. Northern communities have competent and dedicated ministry staff. Together all can create stronger, healthier communities. Each community's specific comments are incorporated in appendix 4.

Important Messages

- We understand what we need.
- We know each other and can work together-often do now.
- Wonderful part of BC.
- Closer to home allows for better solutions and better communication.
- Will allow better and more sensitive aboriginal services.
- Partnership opportunities.
- Maximize Northern spirit – we have a problem let's work together to solve it.
- We are committed to healthy communities.
- We have good MCFD staff and they are part of our community.

“A Regional Board will be able to understand the service delivery needs of northern communities.” (Fort St John)

8. KEY ISSUES

People in northern communities are worried about the coming changes. They are concerned that their sub-regional representation will not be fair and that a disproportionate allocation of resources will go to some of the larger northern centres. They are concerned that the constant change of the last decade will simply continue and that the services will not be allowed to mature and develop. They are unsure if the changes are being made to actually provide better care, to balance the budget or both. Noting these concerns they are prepared to make the changes work.

There are many implications for Ministry of Children and Family Development staff. First and most important will they continue to have a job? Will that job be with the aboriginal or non-aboriginal authority? Will seniority and benefits remain the same? Will they continue to be represented by a union and will their seniority be portable to the new governance authority? Ministry staff are well respected for their skills and commitment to children and families in the north.

There must be an identification of what constitutes 'core service' and a commitment that these services will be available in all communities. Prevention and early intervention support are crucial additions to the service spectrum if a new regionally based community focused model is to work. Extensive individual concerns are itemized in Appendix 5; they reflect the bulk of the negative response from the focus groups and reinforce the need for early, clear, and direct communication as planning moves forward

Important Messages

- There must be fair board representation and equality of funding for each community.
- Youth must have a voice.
- Concern about segregation and separation of aboriginal and non-aboriginal services.
- Concerns encapsulated by the phrases "we have heard it before", "there has been too much change", "let one structure grow and mature".
- Human resource issues must be sorted out.
- Core services in each community must be protected.
- Preventative/early intervention services and family support have to be available if this is going to work.

*"We are concerned that two authorities will lead to further cultural segregation"
(Dawson Creek)*

9. STRATEGIES / ADVICE

Northern communities feel the two authority model is going to be problematic and stated they would prefer one northern authority for all services. Recognizing that that is not going to happen they recommend early and constant communication and planning between the two authorities and where advisable the development of a blended service model. It is suggested that someone from each authority actually sit on the other authorities board, even as an ex-officio member, to facilitate joint communication and service planning.

Northern allowances and other incentives should be used to attract and keep professional staff. Perhaps strategies that involve other partners could be helpful

Decentralization of authority within the Northern region, similar to the Health Authority, should be considered. Communication within and between these sub-authorities would have to be better than the experience with the Health Authority. Core community services, sub-regional, regional and provincial services need to be identified and access ensured.

An emphasis on prevention and early intervention services is strongly supported. It is recommended that the authority consider the development of a generalist case worker position. This position would have a decreased caseload and support and develop service for the most difficult and problematic cases. This model has been implemented very successfully in other service fields

The communities want to stay involved in the development of the new northern authority. They agree that their participation is critical to accomplishing the paradigm shift from centralized government to local authority.

Communities recommend that the ministry review how other provinces and countries have implemented local governance of social service programs. Further it is recommend that the new authority learn from the experience of others. Specific comments by community are contained in appendix 6.

Important Messages

- Two authorities with Community Living potentially represented by a third authority is problematic.
- Communication between authorities must be facilitated.
- Sub regional decentralization of authority should be considered; the North West, Central and North East often have different needs.
- As many services (core services) should be provided in the 'home' community and a fair share of specialized service ensured.
- Prevention/early intervention must be supported.
- Northern communities want to stay involved with the development of their authority.

“The family / community support model with the Ministry as one of a number of supports is a good model if it is properly funded” (Vanderhoof)

10. FINANCIAL ISSUES/SUGGESTIONS

The funds available to the new non-aboriginal authority must be identified as soon as possible. Decisions must be made about how much will go to each (aboriginal and non-aboriginal) authority.

It must be recognized that social services generally will cost more in the north especially in remote areas. This must not be a reason to centralize service. Each community has a right to an acceptable level of core services.

Although it may be impossible to change, it is strongly and consistently stated that a 23 per cent cut by April 2004 is too much. The challenge to cut spending and maintain and develop service will be difficult. It is important that the new authority allow as much funding as possible to go to front line work. Supervision and management is important but it is important to minimize “head office” positions.

Assurance is sought that once the 23 per cent is made up that there will not be further cuts and that those services not being cut will begin to see enhanced funds at a similar rate to other services after April 2004. Specific issues and suggestions surrounding each community are contained in appendix 7.

Important Messages

- How will the current budget (less 23 per cent) be divided between the two authorities?
- It must be understood that it costs more to deliver services in the north and this should not be a reason for people in the north getting less service.
- A 23 per cent cut in budget is too much.
- Assurances are needed that once the budget is balanced that there will not be other cuts.

“Smaller Communities may not have the economies of scale but we still have the right to services in our communities” (Chetwynd/Tumbler Ridge)

11. GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Communities want to ensure they have fair representation on the board of the regional authority. Without fair representation they are concerned that other, more populated areas of the region will have more influence on decision making to the detriment of their community. Further, they would like to have input into who represents their interests at the regional level. They want to ensure those representatives have a good knowledge of the community and its service needs. As well they want to be able to establish a mechanism for communicating with their representative to keep informed of current issues.

Communities do not like the split governance structure. They feel that it will lead to further isolation, segregation and even racism.

It will be important that the two authorities are able to communicate clearly and in turn find a way to communicate with the Community Living Authority. Community specific comments are incorporated in appendix 8.

Important Messages

- Communities want to have input into who represents them on the Authority.
- There is strong recognition for the importance of providing specific aboriginal services but equally strong opposition to do this from a model of two separate authorities.
- How will the two authorities work (fit) with Community Living Services?

“We may not have a non-aboriginal agency. How and where will services be provided” (Fort St James)

12. CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Vanderhoof, Fort St James and the Peace communities of Fort St John, Dawson Creek , Chetwynd and Tumbler Ridge all expressed a strong commitment to the development of strong, safe and healthy communities. They support the idea of the northern governance of service and support to children and families but are very worried about the magnitude of the proposed changes particularly in light of a 23 per cent cut to the north region budget. There remains some mistrust and skepticism of this process.

Strong concerns were expressed about the dual authority (aboriginal / non-aboriginal) approach. It is felt that this will add to segregation and stigmatization. Recognizing that regardless the two authorities will be developed communication between the two will be very important.

Northern communities recognize the importance of emergency / crisis services but feel that preventative /early intervention services are equally important and must be supported and developed.

Consideration of the economic issues facing the north must be integral to the planning process. These are very difficult times for many of these communities and even small changes in their economic structures are strongly felt (cuts to staffing in small communities will trickle through the rest of the local economy).

All communities should have a prescribed and ensured level of core services. When specialized service can't be provided locally sub regional capacity should be developed. Regional and provincial service for very specialized needs must be available in a timely and accessible way.

There is strong support for the job being done by current Ministry of Children and Family Development staff. Issues around their future employment should be dealt with quickly. It is felt that the north can't afford to lose professional staff.

All communities and youth in those communities expressed the importance of developing more service and supports for youth. There is a palpable concern about the future well being of youth in the north and a recognition that even with cut backs to service something needs to be done.

People want to stay involved in the development of their new Northern Authority for children, youth and family service. They are worried and concerned but most importantly want to work toward the goal of healthy children and families living in supportive communities.

"It takes northerners to understand the needs of northern communities" (Fort St John). " We have a strong seniors community that provide a lot of volunteer support" (Chetwynd/Tumbler Ridge)

APPENDIX 1 : PARTICIPANTS

Community	Service Providers	Community
Vanderhoof	Foster Parents Contractors: Nechako Valley Community Services, Group Homes MCFD staff Health Authority School District	
Fort St. John	Public Health Foster parents Child development center School District 60 MCFD staff Action BC	Action BC School District #60 MCFD staff Foster Parents Clients Youth Mayor, Taylor BC Local print media Citizens
Dawson Creek	Community Living Aboriginal representation Foster Parents MCFD staff School District #59 Contractors	MCFD staff Contracted agencies Media: Shaw Cable Channel 10 Foster Parents Citizens
Chetwynd/Tumbler Ridge	Foster parents MCFD staff Aboriginal Authority rep Contracted services	Mayor Counselors Care providers School District Native Friendship Centre Citizens
Fort St. James	<i>(Combined session)</i> -Village councillor -Youth counselor -Teacher's union rep. -Youth Centre Worker -Employment Counselor -Aboriginal Social Development Rep. -Foster parent -Sec. School Principal -Community Futures Chair -Victim Support -RCMP -Alcohol & Drug Counselor -Childcare/Daycare Licensing rep.	

APPENDIX 2: CONSULTATION TEAM

Community	MCFD/Transition Team	Planning Board Members
Vanderhoof	Sheila Curl- Team Leader Scott Horvath – Transition Team Robert Wilson – CSM	Toni Friesen
Fort St. John	Darren Hedstrom Supervisor Marcia Wilson, CSM Scott Horvath – Transition Team	Mary Spoke
Dawson Creek	Sian Lewis MCFD Jane Harper SPCRC Marcia Wilson CSM Scott Horvath Transition Team	Mary Spoke
Chetwynd/Tumbler Ridge	Linda Wagar, team leader Marcia Wilson CSM Scott Horvath, Transition Team	Mary Spoke
Fort St. James	Scott Horvath, Cathie Summer	Toni Friesen

APPENDIX 3: WHAT IS IMPORTANT (VALUE)

Community	What is Important
Vanderhoof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every community must be adequately and fairly represented on the Board. • The money allocated for service must be allocated fairly. • Prevention and coordinated early intervention is very important. • We value the family as the most appropriate place to raise children. • Service is best provided in a community setting. • It is important to recognize, support and honor volunteerism.
Fort St. John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More appropriate and accessible services are very important to us. • We need to respect the opinions and needs of youth.
Dawson Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and service should be provided at home or as close to home as possible. • We must respect the opinions of youth.
Chetwynd/ Tumbler Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must have access to service delivered by professionals when it is needed. • Core service levels should be a community right even though it may be more expensive.
Fort St. James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific service for our aboriginal population must be provided. • Specific core service should be available in all Northern communities

APPENDIX 4: STRENGTHS

Community	Strengths
Vanderhoof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new governance structure can work in Vanderhoof and we are willing to make it work.
Fort St. John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Board will understand the service delivery needs in the north. • The community knows better than anyone else what it needs. • The new authority must have the ability to develop services for more specialized services closer to home. • We will have the opportunity to adapt policy and procedures to the northern reality. • There will be an opportunity for service providers to work more closely together. • Northern authorities will strengthen Aboriginal services. • There are probably many benefits to having the governance of service closer to home.
Dawson Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are developing a centralized intake process that will provide better coordination of services. • At the front line in Dawson Creek we work well together to provide the service that are needed. • More local governance will help us influence how the money is spent and allow service development based on needs in our community. • We have an opportunity to work with our aboriginal communities to build better services. • We will be able to build new partnerships with the city and other stakeholders. • There is an opportunity to tailor training for the North. • New northern authorities will allow for the development of new, culturally sensitive service for aboriginal people. • There should be better communication across service providers. • Local communities will be able to inform the planning and service development processes.
Chetwynd/ Tumbler Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in our area know each other and work well together. • We have a wonderful recreation center. • Our large businesses are very supportive. • We have a strong seniors community that provide a lot of volunteer support. • We have a very good location, lots of outdoor activities. • Our town is very committed to supporting a healthy community. • There are a lot of Albertans around. • We have very good MCFD social workers and do not want to lose them. • We have other good professional staff but we can't keep losing them or everyone will leave. • The aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities work well together now.

Community	Strengths
Fort St. James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a youth center that provides activity for some youth. • We have strong sports programs in our community. • Project Climate the high school is a positive start to involving youth in our community. • There is lots of part time and summer employment for youth. • We know each other in our community and are committed to making it a safe and healthy place. We are a community that cares. • We are realistic about what is possible. We can't provide everything but we deserve core services to be provided in Fort St James. • We want this to succeed and are prepared to work to make that happen. • These authorities will provide better services and support to aboriginal people.

APPENDIX 5: KEY ISSUES

Community	Key Issues
Vanderhoof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will happen to current staff? Will they have to go to an Aboriginal Authority? What about job security? • How do you protect children and support families with less money? • We have not heard very much about this change (communication). • Is there a target for the # of children in care? • At foster parent level aboriginal service providers do not want two authorities. • Aboriginal representatives should be part of these discussions. • If the service model is going to change why is the ministry continuing to insist on agency accreditation by 2004? • Will the standards for service and qualifications for workers be the same in both authorities? • Prevention is an important component. How is it to be funded? • We need to plan one system (new) and run another (old MCFD). Old system must maintain its utility during planning and transfer. • Current contracted services need to know how to lobby for the continuation of their program. • We hope that the aboriginal community is not being set up to fail.
Fort St. John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closer ties with the school system is needed. • We need more youth service that is responsive to how youth will accept service. • Recruitment and retention of professional staff is a problem. • How long will it take for the aboriginal authority to get up and running? • The division of funding between authorities is a critical issue. The sooner this is determined the better. • Currently, children with special needs and aboriginal children continue to fall through the service net. • Two authorities may increase racism. • We are concerned how the northern resources will be distributed. We do not want the larger centers to get a disproportionate amount of the funding. • How do you define aboriginal for the purpose of service? • Will aboriginal persons be able to access non-aboriginal services? • How will youth justice services be provided between authorities? • How are planning board members chosen? • There must be a north Peace representative on the board. • Service delivery is not the same in all areas of the north. • Youth want to receive services in a way that does not identify them as having a problem. Situate support where youth are (school, youth center) and have staff that understand and can relate well to youth. • A youth center is needed.

Community	Key Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe house for youth is needed. • More drug counseling is needed. • There is not enough to do for youth. • Jobs for youth and help getting a job are needed. • Communities in the north are not all the same. They have different needs. • Concern that services will be lost or disrupted during transition to new model. • At home (Peace Region) special services capacity is needed. • This appears to be more levels of bureaucracy to deal with. Communication could be more difficult. • Is the demand for community volunteerism out pacing the capacity for support? Other government services are going to be looking to this sector for additional support. • A focus on volunteers will need training and support. How will this be done? • Is decreasing the number of children in care the way to go? Maybe the needs in the north are different and don't 'fit' the national average. • Centralized authority in Prince George is still a problem. Their needs and ours are often different. • How do we provide similar levels of service throughout the north and throughout the province? • There is not just one northern community with similar needs. There are a variety of different communities with different needs. • The volatility of the resource sector economy has significant impact on the service that is needed. More single parent families and families where both parents are working will lead to pressure on services. • This sounds like the Health Authority restructuring and they do not properly inform us. Will this be any different? • Will the new authority put the needs of all children and families first? • Communication during this change is important. Not everyone has access to fast (email, fax) response mechanisms.
Dawson Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government cooperate view is interfering with the democratic process. • We are concerned that service cuts are a reality and no decision about the allocation of funding between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal authorities has been made. • When practice mistakes are made (a child dies) the issue becomes political rather than corrective. Will this change with more local governance? • How do you determine who is able to access aboriginal and non – aboriginal service?

Community	Key Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will competition for scarce funding between the two authorities be managed? • Access to jobs for Aboriginal youth is a big problem. • A lost (cut) position in Dawson Creek has more impact than a cut in service in a larger center. It may mean no service if one position is lost. • There are supports that are needed that may mean the development of new services. (mediation when school bullying is parent driven.) How do new, cross-jurisdictional service get developed? • Two authorities can lead to further segregation. • We have to have ‘real’ control of our budget and service deliver. • The North is very culturally and economically diversified. There is not a single ‘northern” approach. Many approaches will be needed. • We have to have adequate (numbers) informed and strong representation on the board. • How the Board will be supported and paid needs to be looked at. You can’t expect volunteers to do this. • There is nothing for youth to do in this community that is safe and inexpensive. • High Risk kids are doing all the wrong things (crime, drugs) because there is not enough support delivered in a way that is accepted by them. • Lots of youth need support but don’t want to be identified (stigma) when they look for help. • A youth center is needed in Dawson Creek. • A new authority could help youth by keeping them with their families or at least connected in some way.
Chetwynd/ Tumbler Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have fewer children in care more services to support families such as respite, in home care and extras (household supplies) will be necessary. This will also be very difficult. • Will fewer children in care mean less foster parents? We have homes now that have not had children placed for several years. • There have been many cut backs over the years to non in-care children. It will be difficult to move children out of care to a less responsive (cut backed) system. • We do not have enough adequately trained child and youth workers. • We need more trained in-home support workers and we need to be able to pay them appropriately. • We need generalist caseworkers that could support and coordinate services. • Preventative service such as family counseling is needed to help keep families together. • I am providing care for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal youth

Community	Key Issues
	<p>now. Why should this change? Will this change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added federal funding for aboriginal service does not reach the entire community. • Not sure how adoption services will be done. Will we still have access to the entire province? • Vandalism is very high. • We have a very high rate of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome in our community and treatment and support is limited. We need help. • We need to know the funding breakdown by authority and what that means to us. • The new aboriginal authority is hearing a lot of the same concerns and they have many of the same questions. • Our children wait up to 12 months for diagnostic services. This has to change. • When families are not functioning well they need a lot of help to keep the family together and I am afraid that this intensive support will not be available. There is very little family counseling available in our community. • When services are provided somewhere else the travel can be very expensive and often it is those who can least afford this cost that are expected to travel. • Preventative services like Early Childhood Education must stay in our community. • With a splitting of authority we do not want apartheid. • We need programs for youth.
Fort St. James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation on the regional authority must be fair and equitable by sub region and the process to appoint should be rigorous and have local input. • Aboriginal and non-aboriginal attendees expressed significant concern about the split authority model. • With Fort St James large aboriginal population it is possible that the only local services will be provided by the aboriginal authority? How will this work? Where will the services be provided? What input and influence on service will the non-aboriginal authority have? • There is concern that the two-authority system will contribute to segregation and racism. Significant gains have been made on these issues over the years and these may be lost. • Federal funding for aboriginal services is usually narrowly targeted and this may lead to operational difficulties. • The community is very concerned about having cut 23 per cent of services. • Building alternative sources of community based funding will be difficult when everyone is being cut back. • Recruitment and retention of professional staff is very difficult.

Community	Key Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the local community the aboriginal needs are different between bands and this may complicate planning. • Will the professional training for aboriginal workers be the same as the non-aboriginal services? • More services and support for youth are needed (teen parents, mental health). • Life skills training for youth leaving the community to go to school after grade 12 is needed. Our youth don't manage well when they leave Fort St James. • Youth should be involved in the planning of their services. • Service for pre-teens is needed to support them in normal development rather than moving to quickly into adult activities (care giving, drugs and alcohol). • Many of our youth get high school leaving certificates rather than the Dogwood certificate. This does not allow them to go further with their education and indicates that the academic standards are low. This contributes to poor literacy and other problems. • Too many of our youth have to leave to get treatment, which is traumatic for them and their families, and then they return to a community that may not have the services needed for their continued support and treatment.

APPENDIX 6: ADVICE

Vanderhoof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two authorities will need to work together. • The family/community support model with MCFD as one of a number of services is a good model, if it works. • In small areas the only feasible model is a single agency delivering services. • We don't want to lose good workers due to the changes. • All efficiencies should be reinvested into services. • Prevention should be a main focus for redevelopment of services.
Fort St. John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the authority should not be in Prince George. Sub regional 'hubs' should be developed based on sub regional needs with sub regional authority (micro boards). • Incentives to attract professional staff are a fact of life in the north.
Dawson Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our board representative will need to be able to address macro (North) and micro (South Peace) issues. • The board needs to work closely with the Health Authority. • Consider having a member of each authority sitting on the other authorities board to facilitate communication and service development. • There needs to be more local service development for special needs so that people don't have to leave the South Peace to get service. Without this development the community becomes less supportive, people move and service diminishes even more. Service not available in South Peace should at least be provided in the north even if it is Prince George. • A central point of service intake would be very useful. • A generalist counselor position where one person would coordinate and ensure service across a variety of needs from a number of service providers would work in our community. • We must make sure that the changes being done now are for the long term and not to satisfy a political agenda tied to an election in 2004. • Now that you have engaged us you will need to keep us informed: email, local planning networks, open forums, draft reports etc. • If 'Kith and Kin' agreements are to work more

	<p>counseling (couples), in home support, outreach, alcohol and drug treatment, parent-teen mediation and supports to independence will be necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to become less crisis driven and far more preventative/ early intervention focused. • Issues around teen parents and supports to teen moms must be addressed. • The services need to be integrated and based on best practice examples from other areas. An example would be a co-parenting program based on the Associate Family Program.
Chetwynd/Tumbler Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services and supports to families before there is a crisis. • Chetwynd is losing faith in government services. All the services seem to be leaving town. • We need an after school program for children and increased service for youth. Have a children/youth centre where activities and help/support could be available. Provide service where children spend the most time. • Specialized programs like adventure-based training would benefit our children and youth. • Specialist services need to be more accessible. • Youth need opportunities to challenge themselves and to be successful. • Costs for programs and services are higher in Chetwynd. We have no public transit and have to now go out of town (Dawson Creek) for many services • We need access to experts. • More structure in the school system is needed. • Two governance systems looks like segregation all over again. • Intensive Case Management (ICM) is needed. We meet and talk about it but it needs to be implemented if this shift of governance is going to work. • Services will cost more in smaller centres but this is not a reason to not provide them. Each community has a right to standard 'core' services even if it costs more money. • It does not make sense to speak about prevention on one hand and to have the government selling Liquor outlet licenses on the other. More than one-third of our children are born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. • Prevention is the best money that can be spent. • BC BID is not the best way to get services for small

	<p>communities. Let us do our own tendering and contracts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in small communities are feeling very threatened. • Providing services and support to children only works if we are able to work with the whole family. • We need a youth center in Chetwynd. • When youth need help they will go to someone they know and trust. • Help to youth must be provided where they will not be labeled as sick or crazy • A youth peer support program would work well in the high school. • Youth feel that adults don't listen to them and don't understand how much pressure they are under (school, jobs, friends etc). • An adult world is not very often 'youth friendly'. • School counselors don't really help. They are doing other things. • A lot of youth have 'issues' but so do their parents. • When youth have nothing to do they can get in trouble with the law and drug abuse increases.
Fort St James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A youth mentorship program would work in our community. • Children, youth and families would benefit from having to go to a single agency for all services. • Fort St James needs sexual abuse counseling for children and adult survivors. • A youth forum would serve a number of purposes in our community. • A 23% cut in service is too much for our community to manage. • If the only authority providing service in Ft. St James is aboriginal the non-aboriginal authority must be involved in representation to the board and service development. • Our community provides a great deal of money to the provincial treasury. We should have services equal to this contribution. • Existing statistic, data and best practice examples should all inform service development. • The time line for all these changes is too fast. • You have asked for our input, we want to stay involved in the process. More open dialogue is needed.

APPENDIX 7: FINANCIAL

Community	Issues	Increase Budget Strategies	Budget Reduction Strategies
Vanderhoof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much federal funding will come to the Aboriginal Authority and will this be counted as part of the allocation of funding? • Remember that the economy is poor in many northern communities. • Assurance is needed that 23 per cent cut is the end of the cuts. • Travel costs must be considered in budget building. • Reinstatement of some cut to services (day care) is important. • Expansion of the Home Visitor program would help. • Respite care and supported childcare is important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If 70+% of Children in Care are Aboriginal it makes sense that the Aboriginal Authority gets more funding
Fort St. John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 per cent is too much money to take out of the system. 		
Dawson Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't put in too many managers at the expense of front line service. • Are protected services simply 'capped' and no additional funding will follow to those services. 		
Chetwynd/ Tumbler Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core services are a right and may cost more money but should still be provided to all communities 		
Fort St. James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the aboriginal/non-aboriginal funding be divided when most of our service now go to the aboriginal communities. 		

APPENDIX 8: GOVERNANCE

Community	Advice	Concern
Vanderhoof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to do this in conjunction with other service authorities (health, school). • It will be important to work with community charters and be part of other community-based changes. • Make services accessible. Do not lose sight of the best interest of children. • Review what has worked and not worked in other areas that have implemented community governance. • There must be a willingness to work to develop this new system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Foster Parents group has recommended one blended authority. • How the two authorities will work with the third authority (community living) is a concern. • Concern that the dollars will not flow equitably to the region and within the region. • Equal and adequate representation for sub regions and communities is necessary.
Fort St. John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With three authorities (including CLS), we have the potential to provide more effective and efficient service if we can organize it properly and communicate effectively between authorities. 	
Dawson Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like to have a public meeting with proposed Board member for the purpose of discussing their vision and letting them know our thoughts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Peace needs to have input into choosing of Board representative.
Chetwynd/Tumbler Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With all the responsibility and time expected, the board members should be paid. 	
Fort St. James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that there is good representation from our community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we don't have a non-aboriginal agency, how will we get services?