



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES RESPONSE TO SUPPORTED LIVING REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS



The Department of Health and Social Services (Department) conducted a review of Supported Living (SL) services for persons with disabilities. The principal goals were to review currently available SL services to identify strengths and gaps in current service delivery and to develop a renewed person and family-centered, culturally safe, and inclusive model for delivering SL services in the NWT. The renewed model will assist the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) in meeting strategic objectives of the *NWT Disability Strategic Framework: 2017-2027*.

The SL Review Report (Report) was finalized in September 2022, and highlights the range of supported living needs of adults with disabilities and the gaps and challenges with how the current system is meeting these needs. The Report describes the current SL services system as complex to access, lacking community based service options, and under resourced to meet the range of needs in-territory. The Report includes 33 recommendations related to scope of services, projected resource requirements, standards and oversight, access and equity, workforce development, client focussed services and interdepartmental collaboration. Addressing these recommendations will position the SL program to provide a person and family-centered, culturally safe, and inclusive model for delivering SL services in the NWT, and will assist the Department with decisions related to program scope, structure and oversight, future investments, and allocation of resources in SL.

The Department has accepted **12** recommendations where work can begin with existing resources. The remaining **21** recommendations will require additional resources and have been accepted in principle. Due to the variety of approaches to delivering SL services across the Health and Social Services Authorities (HSSAs), it is anticipated the first phase of work will be to develop a clear and detailed plan to advance the recommendations. A high-level work plan with timelines has been developed; it outlines the Department's plans to initiate work on accepted recommendations, and to develop more detailed work plans and scope out what resources are needed to advance the recommendations accepted in principle. Planning will be led by a Working Group composed of staff from the Department and HSSAs.

The Working Group will support the Department in determining the additional resources that will be required to advance the recommendations and implement effective client focussed SL services. Projects arising from the recommendations will be advanced as resources are available, and the Department is committed to engaging people with lived experience and other key stakeholders in projects arising from these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION	ACCEPTANCE OF RECOMMENDATIONS	TIMELINE to COMPLETE NEXT STEPS	NEXT STEPS AND LEAD
Scope of Services			
<p>1. Adopt the updated definition of supported living to guide SL services in the NWT that reflects eligibility for individuals with all types of disabilities and that provides a variety of flexible services.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Develop Supported Living Standards that reflect the updated definition. Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)</p> <p>Communication plan will be developed and implemented. Working Group composed of DHSS/Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) /Tlicho Community Services Agency (TCSA)/ Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA)</p>
<p>2. Clearly define SL service scope to better serve the full range of needs for persons with disabilities of all age groups who require SL services.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Define the scope and incorporate into Supported Living Standards. DHSS</p> <p>Communication plan will be developed and implemented. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>3. Adopt the proposed new person and family-centred, culturally safe, and inclusive model for delivering Supported Living services in the NWT.</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementing the new model will require additional resources.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Determine resources required for a phased implementation. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
Projected Resource Requirements			
<p>4. Adequately resource the HSSAs to provide SL assessment, service planning, case management and service user monitoring.</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementation will require additional resources.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Determine resources required. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>5. Expand in-territory SL services to include more communities and more service options so that more persons with disabilities can</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementation will require additional resources.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Determine communities to expand and/or begin SL services, and determine resources required. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>

receive SL services within the NWT.			
6. Do not plan to expand or build new designated SL settings in the NWT and consider phasing out designated SL settings once significant additional accessible housing options and SL service capacity has been developed within the territory, and as existing infrastructure ages.	Accept in principle Accept to not build new designated SL settings. Defer response on phasing out designated SL settings pending further monitoring and analysis.	2023-24 and ongoing.	Monitoring and analysis to determine if phasing out designated SL settings is possible. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA
7. Develop enhanced behaviour supports in-territory to support service users with high risk, complex and aggressive behaviours.	Accept in principle Implementation will require additional resources.	2022-23 to 2023-24	Determine the training, staffing requirements and associated resources to provide support to service users with high risk, complex and aggressive behaviours. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA
8. Increase caregiver supports including expansion of respite services to communities outside of Yellowknife, and overnight respite options.	Accept in principle Implementation will require additional resources.	2022-23 to 2023-24	Determine required resources to expand caregiver supports and respite services for caregivers of adults with disabilities across the NWT. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA
9. Establish a process and resources to plan for the phased repatriation of out-of-territory SL service users, based on their desire to return to the NWT and the ability of in-territory SL services to meet service users' needs.	Accept in principle Requires additional resources and advancing work on Recommendations 4, 5 and 7.	2022-23 to 2023-24	Determine required resources and develop a phased implementation plan of repatriation where possible. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA
Standards and Oversight			
10. Establish a mechanism and resources to support collaboration across and within	Accept in principle Implementation will require additional resources.	2022-23 to 2023-24	Determine required resources and mechanism to establish common policies, processes and tools across and within HSSAs.

the HSSAs to develop common policies, processes, and tools for administering in-territory and out-of-territory SL services.			Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA
11. Develop a standardized approach for SL room and board fees for NWT SL service users.	Accept	2023-24	Develop a standardized approach for room and board fees. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA
12. Explore an income testing model for SL room and board fees.	Accept	2023-24	Explore an income testing model for SL room and board fees. DHSS
13. Develop stand-alone NWT Supported Living Standards and implement a regular auditing process to monitor adherence to the Standards.	Accept	2022-23 to 2023-24	Develop and implement NWT SL Standards. Develop and implement an auditing process. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA
14. Develop a SL performance monitoring framework including indicators for service user satisfaction and data reporting requirements for monitoring SL program outcomes, efficiency, and effectiveness.	Accept	2022-23 to 2023-24	Establish and implement a SL Performance Monitoring Framework. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA
15. Implement a central database that supports administration of SL services and reporting to meet DHSS performance monitoring and program standards requirements.	Accept in principle Implementation will require additional resources.	2022-23 to 2023-24	Determine the requirements and required resources to establish a central database. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA
16. Ensure consistent accountability and oversight for SL Service delivery across all HSSAs.	Accept in principle Implementation may require additional resources.	2022-23 to 2023-24	Determine an approach and potential required resources to standardize accountability for SL Services in the HSSAs. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA
Access and Equity			

<p>17. Establish and implement a unified application form and assessment tool which evaluates applicants' strengths, resources, supports and service needs.</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementation of a new tool may require additional resources.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Determine an approach and whether resources are required to standardize application forms and an assessment tool. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>18. Develop territorial policies and guidelines to guide the delivery of assessment, service planning, case management and service user monitoring.</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementation is dependent on advancing work on Recommendation 10.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Determine the approach to develop territorial policies and guidelines. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>19. When out-of-territory SL services are needed, ensure access is available to persons with all types of disabilities.</p>	<p>Accept in Principle The Department will focus on advancing recommendations to improve in-territory SL services and to ensure SL services are equitably available to all persons with disabilities. Additionally, the Department will work towards Out of Territory services being available in exceptional circumstances.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Develop SL standards and policies to ensure that steps are taken to provide in-territory services and that Out-of-Territory SL services are available in exceptional circumstances. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>20. Ensure that all future admissions to designated SL settings require the level of support and services provided by the settings.</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementation is dependent on advancing work on Recommendations 10 and 18.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Develop policies to support allocation of resources to meet service user needs. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>21. Develop policies for family/community reunification visits to ensure equity of access for SL service users living outside of their home community.</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementation will require additional resources.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Determine resources required to establish an in-territory policy, similar to the SL out-of-territory reunification policy. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>22. Develop and implement ongoing communication for the public about SL services and how to access services.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Develop and implement a communications plan. NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>SL Workforce Development</p>			

<p>23. Establish a training program for SL support staff through an education body such as Aurora College.</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementation will require additional resources.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Determine the competencies required of SL support staff. Work with Aurora College to determine the resources required to deliver the program. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA and Aurora College</p>
<p>24. Establish a standardized on-boarding training for all SL support staff in the NWT, with additional on-going professional development to ensure skills are up to date and best practices are being shared.</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementation will require additional resources.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Planning and determine resources required to develop standardized on-boarding training. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>Client Focused Services</p>			
<p>25. Ensure all SL service providers have a flexible staffing ratio model to ensure that service users receive the appropriate amount of support.</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementation may require additional resources.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Determine if resources are required to implement a flexible staffing ratio model. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>26. Ensure that all service users have options to participate in activities that relate to their culture, and that these are integrated into support plans.</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementation may require additional resources.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Incorporate into SL Standards. Determine resource impact of implementing cultural activities in support plans, and ensure all future support plans include this element. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>27. Ensure that SL service providers, including contracted service providers, complete the GNWT cultural awareness training as part of their mandatory staff training.</p>	<p>Accept in principle Implementation is dependent on advancing work on Recommendations 3.</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2024-25</p>	<p>Develop implementation plan and identify if additional resources are required. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>
<p>28. Increase awareness on the process to address SL service user complaints and concerns, through the HSSAs and the</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>2022-23 to 2023-24</p>	<p>Develop and implement communication plan. NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA</p>

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Interdepartmental Collaboration			
29. Work with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to explore opportunities to enable out-of-territory SL service users to access income assistance.	Accept	2022-23 to 2023-24	DHSS to engage with ECE. DHSS
30. Collaborate with other GNWT Departments to determine the best approach to achieving integration of services for NWT residents with disabilities.	Accept	2022-23 to 2023-24	DHSS to engage with other GNWT departments that provide support to NWT residents with disabilities. DHSS
31. Work with other GNWT Departments to create an integrated transitional support service for NWT youth transitioning to adulthood who require SL services.	Accept in Principle Implementation may require additional resources.	2022-23 to 2023-24	Planning and determine if resources required. Working group with DHSS/NTHSSA/TCSA/HRHSSA
32. Work with Housing NWT to determine where there is need for accessible housing options in communities to enable persons with disabilities to remain living in their community.	Accept	2022-23 to 2023-24	DHSS to work with Housing NWT. DHSS
33. Work with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to review options to strengthen vocational supports available and accessible by in-territory SL service users, including availability in communities outside of Yellowknife and Hay River.	Accept	2022-23 to 2023-24	DHSS to work with ECE. DHSS