

Chapter 1

Section 1.03

Ministry of Children and Youth Services

Child Protection Services Program—Ministry

Follow-Up on VFM Section 3.03, 2015 Annual Report

RECOMMENDATION STATUS OVERVIEW						
	# of Actions Recommended	Status of Actions Recommended				
		Fully Implemented	In Process of Being Implemented	Little or No Progress	Will Not Be Implemented	No Longer Applicable
Recommendation 1	3	1	2			
Recommendation 2	1		1			
Recommendation 3	1		1			
Recommendation 4	1			1		
Recommendation 5	1		1			
Recommendation 6	1		1			
Recommendation 7	1		1			
Recommendation 8	1		1			
Recommendation 9	3	1	1	1		
Total	13	2	9	2	0	0
%	100	15	70	15	0	0

Overall Conclusion

According to the information that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Ministry) provided, as of July 17, 2017, two (15%) of the actions we recommended in our 2015 Annual Report have been fully implemented. For example, since our last audit, the Ministry has assessed the proposed performance indicators it intended to roll out to ensure they will adequately evaluate the current and long-term outcomes of the Child Protection Services Program and of children receiving protection.

The Ministry has made progress in implementing another nine (70%) of our recommended actions. For instance, the Ministry hired a consultant who expects to set up effective data gathering and reporting systems at each Children’s Aid Society (Society) by 2020, and who set up a process for reporting complete and accurate data on the new updated performance indicators. The Legislature also passed the *Child, Youth and Families Services Act, 2017*, which will extend the age of protection to include all children under the age of 18 years. In July 2017, the Ministry also released a blueprint of actions that will help ensure that all instances of non-compliance by residential licensees (such as

group homes and foster care agencies) are documented, reported to, and addressed by the residential service providers on a timely basis. The Ministry also will soon initiate an information tracking tool that will help to ensure that Societies promptly act on all recommendations directed to them from reviews of child deaths.

The Ministry has made little to no progress in implementing the remaining two (15%) of our recommendations. For example, it has not created mechanisms to confirm that directives and recommendations issued to a Society as a result of non-compliance with legislative and program requirements are acted upon and corrected. The Ministry also has not estimated the overall implementation costs of the Child Protection Information Network and the impact this system will have on the Societies' ability to deliver mandated child protection services within their budget allocations and how such costs should be funded.

Background

Child protection services in Ontario are governed by the *Child and Family Services Act* (Act), the purpose of which is to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Ministry) administers the Child Protection Services Program and contracts with 48 (47 at the time of our 2015 audit) local not-for-profit Children's Aid Societies (Societies) that deliver child protection services throughout Ontario. Some of the children receiving Society services, including Crown wards, live in group homes, foster homes, with next of kin, or live independently.

Services provided under most other programs administered by ministries are subject to the availability of funding; however, by the law that governs the Child Protection Services Program, each Society is required to provide all mandatory child protection services to all eligible children.

This means that wait lists are not an option for child protection services.

The Ministry transferred payments of \$1.48 billion in the 2016/17 fiscal year (\$1.47 billion in 2014/15) to fund Societies' expenditures. Until 2012/13, transfers to specific Societies were based on historical funding. As of 2013/14, however, Ministry funding has been calculated using a formula based on the socio-economic needs of the community in which a Society is located and on its volume of cases. Societies are not allowed to spend more than they receive in funding, and the new funding model still does not provide funding based on Societies' service needs.

Ontarians expect that the child protection services will ensure that children and their families receive the care and support they need. The Ministry must have sufficient oversight and accountability processes in place to help Societies meet their mandated service delivery requirements, so that children and families receive suitable protection services when they need them.

We found in our 2015 audit that the Ministry could not provide effective oversight of Societies because it did not have enough information about the protection services the Societies were providing to most children they serve. The Ministry also had not established targets to allow it to measure the progress of Societies in meeting the performance indicators the Ministry had recently put in place in March 2015.

The Ministry also needed to better ensure that the pressures Societies faced to not exceed their funding allocation, as well as problems associated with implementing the new, centralized Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) system, were not adversely affecting their ability to deliver child protection services.

Additional significant issues included the following:

- The Ministry needed to act on data that showed that young people who had received protection services faced significant challenges when transitioning to independent

living. For example, a survey by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies found that, in 2013, only 46% of eligible youth in the care of Societies earned high school diplomas, compared to the Ontario average of 83%. As well, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth identified that an estimated 43% of homeless youth had previous child protection services involvement, and that youth leaving the care of Societies were over-represented in youth justice, mental health and shelter systems.

- Annual reviews of Crown ward files to assess whether their needs had been addressed identified concerns that had not been addressed from one year to the next. Issues included failing to develop a plan of care that identified the child's strengths, needs and goals and that was updated to reflect the child's progress to ensure that timely response to their needs was monitored.
- The Ministry's oversight of non-Crown wards who receive protection services was limited because it did not review the files of non-Crown wards.
- Ministry licensing inspections found repeated concerns that were not addressed, such as Plans of Care (tracking the child's developmental progress) that were not completed in the required time frame.
- CPIN was not delivering on its promised benefits despite significant investments in time and money. The Ministry expected to have CPIN in use by all Societies by the end of the 2014/15 fiscal year at a total cost of \$150 million. But as of the end of 2014/15, CPIN had been deployed in just five of the province's 47 Societies. The Ministry's revised plan outlines deploying CPIN to the remaining Societies by the end of the 2019/20 fiscal year. The new plan now pegs the rollout at an estimated total cost of \$200 million.

In our 2015 audit report, we recommended that the Ministry take the following steps:

- appropriately monitor and assess the performance of Societies and identify opportunities to improve protection services;
- consider the feedback the Ministry is receiving to extend child protection services to all children under the age of 18;
- review Societies' files for non-Crown wards in receipt of child protection services;
- ensure that funding provided to Societies was commensurate with each Society's child protection needs;
- work with Societies to identify opportunities for improving their service delivery; and
- determine the cost of CPIN's implementation to the remaining Societies, the impact of such costs on Societies' ability to deliver mandated child protection services within their budget allocations, and how such costs should be funded.

Our 2015 report contained nine recommendations, consisting of 13 actions, to address our audit findings. We received commitments from the Ministry that it would take action to address our recommendations.

Status of Actions Taken on Recommendations

We conducted assurance work between April 1, 2017 and July 20, 2017. We obtained written representation from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Ministry) that, effective September 1, 2017, it has provided us with a complete update of the status of the recommendations we made in the original audit two years ago.

The status of actions taken on each of our recommendations and the related actions are described in the following sections.

Ministry Does Not Have Sufficient Information to Monitor the Performance of the Child Protection Services Program

Recommendation 1

To appropriately monitor and assess the performance of the Child Protection Services Program and the Children’s Aid Societies that deliver child protection services, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services should:

- *Assess the proposed performance indicators it intends to roll out to ensure they target the necessary areas that will adequately evaluate the current and long-term outcomes of the Child Protection Services Program and of children receiving protection;*

Status: Fully implemented.

Details

During our 2015 audit, we found that the Ministry did not have sufficient information to monitor and assess the performance of the Child Protection Services Program as a whole, or the performance of individual Societies in their delivery of child protection services. We found that before the end of the 2014/15 fiscal year, in an attempt to improve its monitoring of Society performance, the Ministry was collecting and reporting results from five new performance indicators. By the end of 2016/17, it planned to roll out 21 additional performance indicators. However, according to the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies (OACAS), many Societies faced significant issues with extracting data to report on performance indicators. These issues included technical limitations, such as data that was never entered into existing Society case management systems, and data that was available but difficult to extract because it was in a text field. As a result, many Societies had not yet reported on the existing five indicators. Therefore, we questioned the Ministry’s ability to effectively collect and analyze data from each Society on

the additional 21 indicators by the end of the 2016/17 fiscal year.

Since our audit, in February 2017, OACAS published a report with recommendations for the Ministry based on a review of the 26 provincial indicators: the five established in 2014/15 and the additional 21 that, at the time of our 2015 audit, were expected by 2016/17. OACAS evaluated their relevance and effectiveness in measuring outcomes for children and youth and the practicability of Societies collecting and reporting the necessary data. The review was supported by the Ministry and was conducted between 2013 and 2016 in collaboration with a number of stakeholders, including universities and information technology consultants. As part of the review, OACAS signed data sharing agreements with 46 out of 47 Societies that existed at that time (since then another Society has been established for a total of 48 at the time of our follow-up). The original 26 provincial indicators were revised into 21 new proposed indicators that OACAS believes should better evaluate the current and long-term outcomes of the Child Protection Services Program and of children receiving protection.

- *Collect data from each Society on each of the confirmed performance indicators, and analyze this data to identify trends that require follow-up and/or corrective action on both program-wide and at an individual Society;*

Status: In the process of being implemented by March 2020.

Details

During our 2015 audit, we found that at the end of the 2014/15 fiscal year, the data published by the Ministry on its five performance indicators was not complete because not all Societies provided data on these indicators. In addition, because the Ministry collected data on these performance indicators through a third party in a combined form, instead of from each individual Society, it could not perform any meaningful Society comparisons or

analysis, or appropriately follow up, where necessary, at individual Societies.

Since our audit, in early 2017, the Ministry hired a consultant to collect data for the five publicly-reported performance indicators from all Societies and set up reporting systems at each Society for reporting complete and accurate data on the new 21 proposed performance indicators. At the time of our follow-up, the Ministry told us that the outside consultant is expected to complete this work by 2020. Until then, the current data on the five established indicators will continue to be incomplete and collected combined from all the Societies, which will not allow the Ministry to identify trends that could require follow-up and/or corrective action both on a program-wide and at an individual Society level.

- *Analyze the outcomes of children who received protection services to identify opportunities to improve protection services and ultimately the future of these children.*

Status: In the process of being implemented by March 2020.

Details

During our 2015 audit, we found that the Ministry needed to better analyze and assess Societies' performance, and the reasons for children's outcomes obtained from the Child Protection Services Program. Based on available information, we noted that many young people struggle after receiving protection services. In particular, high-school completion rates for youth in Societies' care were lower compared to the provincial average. Also, numerous reports going back to the mid-1980s recognized that youth leaving care were over-represented in the youth justice, mental health and shelter systems.

At the time of our follow-up, the Ministry told us that, in 2020, Societies are expected to begin to report complete and accurate data on the new proposed 21 performance indicators. The Ministry will then begin to use this data to analyze Societies' per-

formance and to identify opportunities for changes and improvements in the Child Protection Services Program. Until then, the Ministry will do its best to identify opportunities for changes and improvements using data that is currently being reported on the established five performance indicators.

Children 16 to 17 Years of Age Who Feel Unsafe Are Not Able to Access Protection Services

Recommendation 2

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services should consider the feedback they are receiving for extending child protection services to all children under the age of 18 to ensure that all children have access to protection from abuse and neglect.

Status: In the process of being implemented by fall 2017.

Details

During our 2015 audit, we noted that the *Child and Family Services Act*, under which child protection services are governed in Ontario, did not extend to children older than 15 years of age unless subject to a child protection court order. We found that, while several Canadian provinces provide protection services up to the age of 18, children in Ontario aged 16 and 17 who feel unsafe in their family living situations were not able to access child protection services.

Since our audit, on June 1, 2017, Bill 89, the *Supporting Children, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, was passed and received Royal Assent. The new Act extends child protection services to children under the age of 18. At the time of our follow-up, the Ministry told us that it anticipates that the extended age of protection provisions in the Act will be proclaimed by the end of 2017, with the remainder of the provisions anticipated to be proclaimed in spring 2018. The Ministry also told us that it was in the process of consulting with stakeholders to develop a policy directive for Societies on the service approach for 16- and 17-year-olds in need of protection.

Ministry's Oversight of Children Receiving Protection Services Is Limited

Recommendation 3

To better ensure that all children and youth in receipt of child protection services are safe and receive care that meets their needs and is in compliance with legislative and Ministry program requirements, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services should review Children's Aid Societies' files for non-Crown wards in receipt of child protection services.

Status: In the process of being implemented, estimated completion by 2030–2034.

Details

In response to findings in our 2006 audit of the Ministry's Child Welfare Services Program, the Ministry responded that it would re-establish its periodic file reviews of non-Crown wards. These reviews had been discontinued as of 2003, even though in its previous reviews the Ministry had identified numerous instances of Societies not complying with legislated and Ministry program requirements. In the 2008 follow-up to our 2006 report, the Ministry informed us that it had developed a file review process that would include regular reviews of non-Crown ward files beginning in 2008. However, during our 2015 audit, we were advised that the Ministry did not implement those reviews (or another review process aimed at these children) and that it had been more than 10 years since the Ministry had completed regular file reviews of non-Crown wards.

Since our 2015 audit, as part of its new approach to accountability based on recommendations of the former Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare, the Ministry successfully piloted a new comprehensive review process at two Societies. Under the new process, end-to-end reviews are comprehensive reviews conducted of individual Societies, identifying opportunities and priorities for improvement in the domains of governance, operations management and service delivery, financial management and controllership, client

outcomes, and performance management. As part of this process, the Ministry reviews whether Societies have appropriate processes in place to monitor their compliance with legislative and program requirements, including for non-Crown wards, and whether Societies are also carrying out internal reviews to monitor their compliance with legislative and program requirements. Subsequently, after incorporating lessons learned from the pilots, the Ministry launched the new review process in August 2016. Since then, at the time of our follow-up, the Ministry completed an end-to-end review at one more Society and was in the process of reviewing a fourth one. The Ministry estimated that, based on its current resources, complete comprehensive reviews of all 48 Societies will take between 13 and 17 years. In addition, the Ministry established the Standards Quality Improvement Plans as a mechanism to assess ongoing compliance results for a number of child protection standards and other Ministry requirements, with the expectation of Societies achieving 100% compliance.

Recommendation 4

In order for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' review of Crown ward files to be effective in ensuring children are receiving protection services in accordance with legislation and Ministry policies, the Ministry should put mechanisms in place to confirm that directives and recommendations issued to a Children's Aid Society as a result of non-compliance with legislative and program requirements are acted upon and corrected.

Status: Little to no progress.

Details

During our 2015 audit, we found that in about 40% of the Crown ward review files we reviewed for the regions we visited, the Ministry identified non-compliance issues that were recurring from one year to the next. For example, these included:

- Plans of Care, which track a child's developmental progress, that were not completed in the required time frame;

- foster parents not being aware of the reporting requirements for serious occurrences, such as a serious injury, alleged abuse or a missing child; and
- residences unable to demonstrate that annual medical exams were being completed as required.

At two of the three regions we visited, we also noted that it was not the practice of Ministry staff to verify that corrective actions were taken to address instances of non-compliance that they identified. Instead, they relied on information from the Children's Aid Society that issues of non-compliance had been addressed, even though the Ministry had identified recurring issues at a Society year after year.

Since our audit, the Ministry has made little progress in response to our recommendation. In January 2017, the Ministry asked Ontario's Internal Audit Division (Internal Audit) to look at its Crown Ward Review Process. As part of its work, Internal Audit will provide the Ministry with specific recommendations on how this process can be improved. At the time of our follow-up, the Ministry told us it expects Internal Audit to provide its final report in fall 2017. The Ministry will then use the report and the recommendations to consider whether to update its current mechanisms that address non-compliance with legislative and program requirements.

Ministry Licensing Inspections of Children's Residences Found Repeated Concerns That Were Not Addressed, Potentially Affecting Children's Safety

Recommendation 5

To ensure that children in the care of Children's Aid Societies are placed with residential care providers (group homes and foster care agencies) that provide appropriate care to children, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services should ensure that all instances of non-compliance with requirements are documented,

brought to the attention of residential care providers, and addressed by the residential care providers on a timely basis.

Status: In the process of being implemented by the end of 2018.

Details

During our 2015 audit, we reviewed a sample of licensing inspections by the Ministry of residential licensees, such as group homes operators and foster care agencies. The inspections assess whether or not a basic level of care and safety is being provided. We found that some non-compliance issues were recurring year after year. We also found that non-compliance issues were identified but not brought to the attention of the licensee by Ministry staff from their review and therefore were not addressed by the licensee.

Since our audit, the Residential Services Panel, in May 2016, submitted a report to the Government from a review of the Province's child and youth residential services system. The review included foster and group care, children and youth mental health residential treatment, and youth justice facilities. Based on this report, in September 2016, the Government released a mandate letter for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. The letter includes reference to developing a blueprint for reform of residential services that would improve quality of care, enhance oversight of licensed residential settings and use data to inform decision-making at all levels.

The blueprint is also tied to the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, which includes new residential licensing provisions that are intended to:

- strengthen and modernize the licensing, compliance and enforcement framework for child and youth residential services to better support high-quality services for children and youth; and
- provide new and enhanced authorities for the Minister and Ministry to improve the accountability and transparency of licensed residential services and to enhance the quality of care provided in licensed residential settings.

In July 2017, the Ministry publicly released its blueprint, a multi-year plan for comprehensive reform to improve quality of care, enhance oversight of services and ensure children and youth have a voice in helping to plan their care. Immediate actions in the blueprint include increasing the number of unannounced and enhanced inspections of licensed residences by Intensive Site Review Teams, which include interviews with staff and youth, as well as case file and program reviews. The Ministry said that these actions will be rolled out in 2018 and that they should help further ensure that all instances of non-compliance with requirements are documented, brought to the attention of residential care providers, and addressed by the residential care providers on a timely basis.

In the meantime, the Ministry said that it is continuing to improve current licensing processes and practices related to the documentation of licensing non-compliance issues. It is also working on follow-up procedures with residential care providers to ensure that they address all instances of non-compliance on a timely basis. For example, in May 2015, the Ministry started to track and monitor licensing renewals against service standards.

The Ministry conducted staff training in June 2017 that covered the use of consistent tools, documentation, and follow-up processes for addressing all issues identified as non-compliance. In March 2017, the Ministry organized a meeting for its Licensing and Compliance Managers to discuss identifying and communicating issues related to compliance with licensees; the importance of follow up, tracking and documentation of follow up; and to discuss the next steps of the training. The training materials were issued in July 2017 to be available as an ongoing training resource for staff.

Ministry Is Not Verifying That Children’s Aid Societies Are Implementing Recommendations from Death Investigations

Recommendation 6

To reduce the risk of recurrence of circumstances that may have contributed to the death of children who have received child protection services, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services should ensure that Children’s Aid Societies implement all recommendations directed to them from child death reviews on a timely basis and obtain and review relevant progress reports on their implementation.

Status: In the process of being implemented by September 1, 2017.

Details

During our 2015 audit, we found there was no documented evidence that the Ministry’s regional office staff reviewed the appropriateness of corrective actions taken by Societies to address recommendations made by the Paediatric Death Review Committee (Committee) and in the Internal Child Death Reviews.

Since our audit, in October 2016, the Ministry completed a scan of regional Committee information tracking tools. In January 2017, the Ministry also completed a scan of five years of Committee recommendations, Society responses, and Ministry verification practices. The analysis included a review of all bi-annual progress reports from 2009 to 2014 and identified systemic themes within recommendations made by the Committee. The Ministry used the information to develop a new standardized tracking tool designed to track the relevant stage of reporting for each child death, and relevant staff training sessions and materials were delivered in May and July 2017 to regional staff. At the time of our follow-up, the Ministry told us that the new tools will be used across the province as of September 1, 2017.

Once implemented, the tracking tool will be used to record information that will include the following:

- whether the Committee has requested a death review to be completed;
- whether a Committee report is being completed;
- all the recommendations from a death review and a Society's response regarding its progress on these recommendations; and
- the next date of a Society's progress report.

When Societies provide a progress report on their response to the recommendations from a review of a death, they will be expected to input into the response tool the following:

- an outline of actions taken;
- a timeline for implementing these actions; and
- an explanation for any recommendations not implemented.

The tools' analyses will allow the Ministry to identify outstanding responses or incomplete data fields. This will allow the Ministry to quickly identify and follow up with a Society that did not properly document its response to a death report's recommendations.

Ministry's New Funding Model Still Does Not Provide Funding to Societies Based on Service Needs

Recommendation 7

In order to ensure that funding is commensurate with each Children's Aid Society's individual needs, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services should assess the impact that its current funding model has on the delivery of protection services and make the necessary changes to its funding model if service is being adversely affected.

Status: In the process of being implemented by summer 2017.

Details

During our 2015 audit, we found that the new funding model introduced by the Ministry in 2013/14 still did not appropriately allocate funding as intended. This could potentially put Societies under operational pressures and compromise their

ability to provide the necessary and appropriate protection services required of them under the Act. In their responses to the survey we conducted, Societies acknowledged that the new model was an improvement over prior models; however, they expressed concerns that the factors, weights and data sources used to allocate funding to their Society did not reflect their needs and the needs of the communities they serve. We found cases where funding calculated for individual Societies under the new funding model differed vastly from Societies' prior-year funding. These vast differences indicated that, unless Societies were drastically underfunded or overfunded historically, there may be flaws in the new funding model. We also noted that several Societies raised concerns that, although they had been able to deliver protection services to date, their ability to deliver mandated services while operating within their funding allocation was questionable in the future.

In fall 2016, the Ministry hired an external consulting firm to conduct a review of the new funding model's effectiveness. The firm is examining the model's ability both to enable Societies to fulfill their child protection mandate and to allocate a finite amount of funding across individual Societies. At the time of our follow-up, the Ministry told us that it expects to receive a final report from this review in summer 2017. It will then use the report to determine whether any changes to the new funding model are necessary. If changes are needed, the Ministry told us that it would implement them by April 2018.

Potential for Society Amalgamation and Shared Services

Recommendation 8

To ensure that Children's Aid Societies provide quality child protection services cost-effectively, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services should work with Societies to further identify and implement opportunities for improving the efficiency of their service delivery

(including further amalgamations and shared services), while keeping children's needs in the forefront.

Status: In the process of being implemented by summer 2019.

Details

During our 2015 audit, we noted that, in 2010, the former Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare had identified that a number of smaller Societies should move toward amalgamating with a neighbouring Society to improve cost effectiveness, and to enhance quality, expertise and managerial capacity. In 2011, the Minister encouraged Societies to pursue voluntary amalgamation. Since that time, 16 Societies have amalgamated into seven—including two Societies that amalgamated during our audit. The Commission also recommended that a range of business functions currently performed separately by Societies should be made into shared services across all Societies.

In August 2016, the Ministry, along with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, entered into an agreement to develop a shared services program for the child welfare sector. The program will allow Societies to centrally procure goods and services, such as training, recruitment and IT services. At the time of our follow-up, 32 Societies had already joined the program and an additional five Societies had indicated their intent to join the program. The program is expected to be fully operational and financially self-sustaining by August 2019.

Since our audit, no other Societies pursued amalgamation. However, Bill 89, the *Supporting Children, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, provides the Minister with the authority to order two or more Societies to amalgamate when it is in the public interest to do so. The Act will establish a formal process for approving voluntary amalgamations proposed by Societies. The Ministry anticipates that these provisions in the Act will be proclaimed in spring 2018.

Ministry's Child Protection Information Network System Is Not Currently Delivering on Its Promised Benefits Despite Significant Investments in Time and Money

Recommendation 9

To help ensure that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Children's Aid Societies realize the intended benefits of the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) system, the Ministry should work closely with all stakeholders to:

- *Review and update its recently developed strategy for CPIN to ensure that all critical functionality gaps are identified and resolved before the remaining Societies implement CPIN, and ensure that the strategy allows the system to be functioning as intended by 2020;*

Status: Fully completed.

Details

During our 2015 audit, we found that the Ministry's initial 2010 Cabinet-approved implementation plan expected to have the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) system in use by all Societies by the end of the 2014/15 fiscal year. However, as of March 31, 2015, CPIN had been deployed in only five of the 47 Societies. We surveyed the five Societies that were using CPIN and found that several key components were not performing as expected. For example, the reporting function that was expected to help a Society and the Ministry oversee service delivery was not working properly. Societies also indicated that certain components of CPIN that were not functioning properly had important implications for child safety and Societies' ability to meet legislative requirements. Specifically, Societies indicated that they could not track important legislative milestones for their cases in CPIN, such as due dates for visits with the child and family, and scheduled reviews of Service Plans intended to ensure that caseworkers conducted these on time.

Since our audit, in April 2016, the Ministry updated and approved a 52-month Network deployment plan. The release of this long-term plan allows Societies to include costs associated with the implementation of CPIN as part of their annual operating plans. At the time of our follow-up, CPIN had been deployed at 19 Societies. In August 2016, the Ministry also completed a post-implementation review of CPIN at the initial five Societies. This review yielded more than 50 lessons that the Ministry used to update and improve its CPIN deployment strategy. The Ministry also told us that, in collaboration with all stakeholders, it is working to ensure that all critical gaps in CPIN's components are identified and resolved promptly. For example, a Working Group exists for each area of information within CPIN. These groups review CPIN's gaps identified by Societies for a specific area and determine which changes are required and how they should be prioritized. Since our 2015 audit, the Ministry has installed more than 10 system updates that fixed most of CPIN's defects affecting reporting, case and finance management. The Ministry told us that based on its current progress, by 2020 it plans for CPIN to be fully functioning and deployed at the remaining Societies.

- *Determine the cost of CPIN implementation to the remaining Societies, the impact of such costs on the Societies' ability to deliver mandated child protection services within their budget allocations, and how such costs should be funded.*

Status: First part of recommendation (determining costs and their impact) is in the process of being implemented by fall 2017; second part of recommendation (determining funding) has had little to no progress.

Details

During our 2015 audit, we found that the Ministry had not estimated the additional costs that Societies

would need to incur to get on and use CPIN. Our survey of the 14 Societies that were expected to implement CPIN by the end of the 2012/13 fiscal year found that these Societies had made significant investments in human and financial resources in the previous three years to prepare for using CPIN. Such investments included hiring additional staff, undergoing training activities, and performing data-cleansing activities. The Ministry provided up to \$220,000 in funding to each of these Societies, totalling approximately \$2.8 million, to help support CPIN implementation. However, we found that the Societies that were the first to adopt CPIN actually incurred additional expenses totalling approximately \$18.7 million from 2011/12 to 2014/15, when CPIN went live. This was more than six-and-a-half times the funding they received from the Ministry. In addition, our survey of the five Societies that actually had implemented CPIN indicated that, since going live on CPIN in June 2014, those Societies spent an additional \$5.4 million in total to manage workload pressures resulting from inefficiencies in CPIN. These additional costs were funded through the Societies' own operating funds, which may have further impacted protection services.

In February 2017, the Ministry sent a questionnaire to three Societies to gather information about additional costs they incurred in relation to CPIN deployment. At the time of our follow-up, the Ministry told us that it is expanding the questionnaire to obtain additional information. In July 2017, the Ministry met with the three Societies and OACAS to discuss and confirm these changes. The Ministry expects responses back from the three Societies to the expanded questionnaire in August 2017. It will then use the gathered information to assess the costs' impact on the Societies' ability to deliver mandated child protection services and to plan future implementation of CPIN at other Societies.