



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Auditor General: Adults with Developmental Disabilities Face Increasing Wait Times for Services in Ontario

(TORONTO) The timeliness and oversight of supportive services provided to adults with developmental disabilities need improvement, Ontario Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk states in her *2020 Annual Report* released today.

“There is an average wait time of more than eight months to have needs assessed,” Lysyk said. “As well, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is not measuring the effectiveness of agency-delivered services in helping their clients, or client outcomes.”

The audit revealed the Ministry does not verify the number of individuals the 316 transfer payment agencies are getting paid for serving. The audit also found instances where agencies overstated the number of individuals they served.

The Report also addresses 11 service agencies that administer the Ministry’s Passport program, providing funding directly to over 52,500 adults with developmental disabilities to purchase their own supportive services. The number of people waiting for Passport funding has grown by 32%, from over 14,800 in 2015/16 to almost 19,500 in 2019/20. Funding for this program increased from \$184.6 million in 2015/16 to \$434.1 million in 2019/20.

“We found that, despite this pressing demand on resources, some Passport clients as well as their caregivers were reimbursed for professional sports and concert tickets,” stated Lysyk. “This was happening while others waited for funding to purchase critical supports such as employment skills training and caregiver respite.”

The Report also states the number of people waiting for agency supportive services after receiving a needs assessment grew by 80%, from almost 19,000 in 2015/16 to almost 34,200 in 2019/20. In addition, there are regional differences across the province, and the number of people waiting has increased more than 100% in some areas of the province.

The audit found these wait lists were growing despite increases in funding over this period of time. The Ministry’s funding of adult developmental supportive services programs increased by 49% in the past five years from \$578.7 million in 2015/16 to \$859.4 million in 2019/20.

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Read the report at www.auditor.on.ca

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Background and Other Findings:

- About one per cent of Ontarians have a developmental disability – a lifelong condition affecting a person’s intellectual, social, and/or behavioural development.
- Nine service agencies are designated as Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) offices responsible for the intake of applicants for supportive services, which includes confirming the applicant’s eligibility and assessing support needs.
- After reviewing some Ministry inspections of service agencies, the audit found a number of recurring concerns, such as improperly storing medication and failing to provide clients and staff with required training to prevent, identify, and report abuse within required timelines. Agencies were not assigned any consequences for these recurring issues.
- Credentials of psychologists and psychological associates are not verified, despite the reliance on their assessments to determine eligibility for supportive services.
- Inconsistent levels of service provided by service agencies in the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services’ five regions as well as significant differences in the cost of those services.
- The Ministry does not verify the information in reports provided by Service Agencies, and the audit identified instances where the number of people served was overstated.
- Due to a policy change, we determined that the Ministry annually funds Passport clients for a total of at least \$8.4 million in excess of their assessed needs, and clients with greater needs were waiting longer for additional funding.